**Hank Aaron - Home Run King**

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| **Early Life** Hank Aaron was born February 5, 1934, in Mobile, Alabama. He was the third of eight children. When his father took him to hear a speech given by Jackie Robinson, Hank committed himself to playing baseball. Aaron showed an early propensity for sports and played both baseball and football at Central High School in Mobile and Josephine Allen Institute, a private school. Aaron started played semi-pro baseball at age 15 and earned $10 per day playing for the Mobile Black Bears, an all-black baseball team. In 1951, Aaron was signed by the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro Baseball League. In 1952, he helped his team to the Negro League World Series.  **Called up to the Majors**  Aaron became the last Negro League player to make the jump to the Major Leagues when he was signed by the Boston Braves in 1952. By the time that Aaron reached the majors, the Boston Braves had become the Milwaukee Braves. Sure, he’s remembered mostly for dethroning the Babe to become baseball’s home run king on the way to 755, but don’t forget about the .300 average, or the graceful way he fielded his position, or the deceiving speed he showed on the basepaths. Yet, when talking about the true measure of the man, there was far more to “Hammerin’ Hank” than his brilliance between the lines. Exuding grace and dignity, Aaron spoke bluntly but never bitterly on the many hardships thrown his way — from the poverty and segregation of his Alabama youth to the ugly, racist threats he faced during his pursuit of one of America’s most hallowed records. He wasn’t hesitant about speaking out on the issues of the day, whether it was bemoaning the lack of Blacks in management positions, or lobbying against putting Pete Rose in the Hall of Fame, or calling on those involved in the Houston Astros sign-stealing scandal to be tossed from the game for good.  “He never missed an opportunity to lead,” former President Barack Obama said, describing Aaron as an “unassuming man” who set a “towering example.” Right up to his final days, the Hammer was making a difference. But the Hall of Famer [will be remembered for one swing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjqYThEVoSQ) above all others, the one that made him baseball’s home-run king on April 8, 1974. It was a title he would hold for more than 33 years, a period in which Aaron slowly but surely claimed his rightful place as one of America’s most iconic sporting figures, a true national treasure worthy of mention in the same breath with Ruth or Ali or Jordan. “With courage and dignity, he eclipsed the most hallowed record in sports while absorbing vengeance that would have broken most people,” President Joe Biden said. “But he was unbreakable.” Former President Jimmy Carter, described Aaron as “a personal hero.” “A breaker of records and racial barriers, his remarkable legacy will continue to inspire countless athletes and admirers for generations to come, George W. Bush, a one-time owner of the Texas Rangers, presented Aaron in 2002 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the nation’s highest civilian honor. “The former Home Run King wasn’t handed his throne,“ Bush said in a statement Friday. “He grew up poor and faced racism as he worked to become one of the greatest baseball players of all time. Hank never let the hatred he faced consume him.”  Aaron’s death follows that of seven other baseball Hall of Famers in 2020 and two more — Tommy Lasorda and Don Sutton — already this year. President Clinton presented him with the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2001.  **Home Run Record** He ended his career with 755 home runs (the record has now been eclipsed by Barry Bonds). He remains the all-time leader in RBIs with 2,297. On August 1, 1982, Hank Aaron was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame. Both the Braves and Brewers retired (which means no one can wear it again) his uniform number “44.” Baseball Hall of Famer and **Former MLB home run king Hank Aaron**: His hitting **prowess earned him the nickname “Hammerin’ Hank**,” and his power was attributed to **strong wrists**. Hank Aaron, the quiet, unassuming slugger who broke Babe Ruth’s supposedly unbreakable record for most home runs in a career and battled racism in the process, died on Friday, the Atlanta Braves announced. |