

Hank Aaron

For Hank Aaron, the moment came on April 15, 1947. The moment that he realized that he wasn't just chasing a pipe dream. Aaron was only 13 years old at the time – seven years away from his Boston Braves debut – but growing up in Mobile, Ala., segregation was all he knew.

“We all knew that Babe Ruth was a great home run hitter and a great player, but what he accomplished was virtually meaningless to black kids,” Aaron told *The New York Times*. “We paid little attention to the records of white professional players. It wasn't until 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the color line that I started thinking seriously of playing Major League Baseball.”



A baseball icon associated with shattering a seemingly unbreakable record, sometimes it bears reminding that Hank Aaron was born into poverty, during the heart of the Great Depression. He was the third of eight children, living in a modest, one-story white house built by his father, Herbert. But Hank himself never needed reminding, as he committed to a lifetime of uplifting children who grew up in circumstances much like he did.

“As a Hall of Famer on the field, Henry Aaron changed the game with his incredible ability and consistency,” said Erik Strohl, vice president of exhibitions and collections at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. “But his work off the field in support of his community and society have left a legacy that is unparalleled.”

Years after his playing career ended, Aaron still recognized that there are many young people who need that helping hand to give them a boost in their lives. With that, he and his wife Billye began the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation in 1994. More than 20 years later, the Aarons' foundation has awarded hundreds of scholarships to underprivileged youth from across the United States, enabling them the assistance necessary to help fulfill their dreams.

Excerpts from:

Life of Hank Aaron - Written by: Alex Coffey - <https://baseballhall.org/discover-more/stories/baseball-history/life-of-hank-aaron-celebration>

Hank's Giving - Written by: Matt Rothenberg - <https://baseballhall.org/discover-more/stories/support/hank-aaron-continues-legacy-through-giving>