

The Legacy of Yogi Berra

The quotes. The World Series. The service in World War II. The widely known Yogi Berra named after him. His Hall of Fame plaque. Just a few of the many, many ways that the great Yogi Berra will be remembered.

On the 69th anniversary of his major league debut, Yogi passed away from natural causes in an assisted living community in West Caldwell, New Jersey.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest catchers to ever step behind the plate, Berra enjoyed a lengthy life revolving around baseball. After being passed over by a front office scheme by Branch Rickey, Yogi was signed by the Yankees for the same \$500 bonus the Cardinals gave his childhood best friend Joe Garagiola.

After being assigned Norfolk Tars, Berra took some time away from baseball to serve his country. He served as a gunner's mate in the US Navy in World War II. He served as a gunner's mate while on the attack transport *USS Bayfield* during the D-Day Invasion of France. After being fired at yet not hit, Yogi received multiple recognitions for his bravery.

After his stint in the Navy, Yogi returned to the Yankees, where he made his debut September 22, 1946. After 7 games in '46 and 83 in '47, he would go on to play in more than 100 games behind the plate for the next 14 years. While being selected to 18 All-Star Games and 3 Most Valuable Players awards, Yogi had been part of a dynasty that became the World Series Champions 10 times with Berra serving behind the plate for them.

After 17 remarkable seasons serving as the Yankees' backstop and then another season as the Pinstripes' manager, Yogi went on to be a player-coach for his previous cross-town rival, the New York Mets. While he would only go on to play in 4 games with the Mets, he had left a legacy that will never be forgotten before retiring as a player once and for all just before his 40th birthday. Yogi would continue to serve as a coach in New York under legendary managers, Casey Stengel and Gil Hodges.

1972 was a memorable year for Berra to say the least. Yogi was enshrined in baseball immortality-He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. While most events should pale in comparison to this, Major League Baseball was trying to give it a run for its money. The Yankees had done a "dual retirement ceremony" when they retired both Yogi's and his predecessor's, Bill Dickey, number 8. This honor is the next best thing after the illustrious Hall of Fame. During this summer, the Mets hired Yogi to be their next manager. While they finished '72 with a 83-73 record, good enough for a third place finish, the next year would be the year Yogi made his mark as a manager.

The 1973 season for the mets would go down as the "Ya Gotta Believe," one of the many famous "Yogi-isms." Berra took the mets to a 1st place finish with a 82-79 record and guided the team to the National League pennant.

Player and coach for the Yankees. Player-coach, and manager for the Mets. Gunner's Mate in the Navy. Yogi has left many legacies from his career on and off the field.

As he once said, "It ain't over 'till its over," it appears it it actually is over for the legendary Yogi Berra.