

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hank Aaron

PERSON

Aaron, Hank, 1934-

Alternative Names: Hank Aaron;

Life Dates: February 5, 1934-January 22, 2021

Place of Birth: Mobile, Alabama, USA

Residence: Atlanta, GA

Work: Atlanta, GA

Occupations: Baseball Player

Biographical Note

Baseball player Hank Aaron was born on February 5, 1934 in Mobile, Alabama to Estella Aaron and Herbert Aaron. He attended Central High School in Mobile, Alabama and transferred to the private Josephine Allen Institute, where he graduated in 1951. While finishing high school, Aaron played for the Mobile Black Bears, a semi-professional Negro league baseball team.

In 1951, Aaron signed with the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro American League, where he played for three months before his contract was purchased by the Boston Braves. Aaron was assigned to the Eau Claire Braves, the Class-C minor league affiliate for the Boston Braves and was named Rookie of the Year in 1952. The next season, Aaron was promoted to the Jacksonville Braves, the Class-A affiliate in the South Atlantic League. The following year, Aaron was invited to spring training for the newly relocated Milwaukee Braves and was offered a major league contract. In 1954, he made his major league debut with the Milwaukee Braves. By 1955, Aaron was named to the National League All-Star roster and captured his first National League batting title in 1956. The following season, Aaron won the National League MVP Award and led the Braves to win the 1957 World Series. Aaron went on to lead the Braves to another pennant championship in 1958, and received his first Golden Glove Award. In 1965, the Milwaukee Braves moved to Atlanta, where he became the first franchise player to hit his 500th career home run; and in 1970, he was the first Brave to reach 3,000 career hits. On April 8, 1974 Aaron broke Babe Ruth's all-time homerun record with 715. Aaron was then traded to the Milwaukee Brewers for the 1975-1976 season, when he broke the all-time RBI record. After the 1976 season, Aaron retired from professional baseball and returned to the Atlanta Braves organization as an executive. In 1982, he

was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and was then named the Braves' vice president and director of player development. Aaron continued to serve as vice president of the Braves. He also owned several car dealerships in Georgia and owned over thirty restaurant chains throughout the country. In 1990, he published his memoir *I Had a Hammer*.

Aaron was awarded the Spingarn Medal in 1976, from the NAACP. In 1999, Major League Baseball announced the introduction of the Hank Aaron Award to honor the best overall offensive performer in the American and National League. Later that year, Aaron was ranked fifth on *The Sporting News*' list of the 100 Greatest Baseball Players, and was elected to the Major League Baseball All-Century Team. In 2001, Aaron was presented with the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Bill Clinton. He also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, from President George W. Bush in June 2002.

Hank Aaron was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 1, 2016.

Aaron passed away on January 22, 2021.

Related Entries

Central High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Josephine Allen Institute [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Indianapolis Clowns [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 195111 to 195206]

Shortstop

Jacksonville Braves (Boston Braves) [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1954 to ?]

Second Baseman

Milwaukee Braves [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1984 to 1991]

Outfielder

Atlanta Braves [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1966 to 1974]

Outfielder

Milwaukee Brewers [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1976]

Outfielder

Atlanta Braves [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1976 to 1998]

Executive Vice President, Director of Player Development

Turner Broadcasting, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1990 to ?]

Vice President of Community Relations

Atlanta Braves [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1994 to ?]

Senior Vice President and Assistant to the President

Hank Aaron BMW [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1999 to ?]

Founder/Owner

Eau Claire Bears (Boston Braves) [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1969 to 1970]

Second Baseman

Medallion Financial Corp. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board of Directors

Sports Properties Acquisition Corp. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board of Directors

Signal Apparel Company, Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from 2001 to 2002]

Board of Directors

Atlanta Falcons Football Club, LLC. [MEMBEROF]
[from 2003 to 2012]

Board of Advisors

DSW Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from 2009 to ?]

Board of Directors

The Ravinia Club, Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board of Governors

Atlanta Technical Institute [MEMBEROF]
[from 1996 to 2006]

Board of Directors

Boys and Girls Clubs of America [MEMBEROF]
[from 1997 to 1998]

Board of Directors

Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation [MEMBEROF]

[from 1994 to ?]

Co-Founder