

Mickey Mantle: Baseball Hero in Black and White

Baseball heroes, you ask? In the 1950s the increased television viewing and media coverage combined with his athleticism helped to propel Mickey Mantle into a superstar, often compared to Babe Ruth. The Oklahoma native known as the Commerce Comet exemplified the spirit of a hero through his determination, perseverance, and courage.

The Daily Oklahoman extensively covered Mantle throughout his career and life. Oklahomans and baby boomers across the nation were captivated by his talent and sportsmanship. This new exhibit explores his life through black and white photographs seen in newsprint and uses the original reporters' captions to highlight this Baseball Hall of Famer's milestones.



"Smiling Mickey Mantle waves his freshly signed 1962 Yankee contract." 1961



Rival centerfielders and sluggers Mickey Mantle of the Yankees and Hank Aaron of the Braves make with the bats before the 1st game of the 1957 World Series. October 2, 1957.

Mickey Mantle was born on October 20, 1931, in Spavinaw, Oklahoma. His father, Elvin Mantle, also known as "Mutt," was a former amateur pitcher and named his son after Philadelphia A's catcher Mickey Cochrane. In 1949 Mantle graduated from Commerce High School in Oklahoma, and by 1950 played shortstop for the New York Yankees.

Despite a downturn in his statistics and a brief move to the minor leagues, he soon replaced the legendary Joe DiMaggio in centerfield. Mantle battled a leg injury most of his career, which earned respect among his teammates and admiration from his fans.

"Tape Measure Home Run" was coined on April 17, 1953, when Mantle hit a 565' home run in Griffith Stadium. The record length still stands today as the longest measured home run in the history of baseball.

In his eighteen year career Mantle hit 536 homeruns with a .298 batting average and 1,509 runs batted in. He won the American League's Most Valuable Player three times and the Triple Crown (.353 batting average, 52 homeruns, and 130 RBIs) in 1956. In 1974 "The Mick" was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Mantle died in Dallas, Texas in 1995. He was married to Meryln and they had four sons, Mickey Jr., David, Danny, and Billy.

A team is where a boy can prove his courage on his own. A gang is where a coward goes to hide.

~Mickey Mantle