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Ernie Banks

Ernie was probably the most popular player in the history of the Chicago Cubs Franchise, Ernie Banks was the best power-hitting shortstop in baseball in the 1950s and early 1960s. His enthusiasm for the game of baseball was legendary. Baseball fans will always remember him as the ballplayer who said, "What a great day for baseball. Let's play two!" For 19 years, Ernie Banks delighted Wrigley Field fans with his long and frequent home runs, with his steady fielding and with his cheerful disposition. Cubs fans affectionately refer to Ernie Banks as "Mr. Cub," for his years of dedicated service to their team. He belted 512 home runs, five times hitting over 40 in a single season. Banks smashed a record five grand slams in 1955 and his 47 round-trippers in



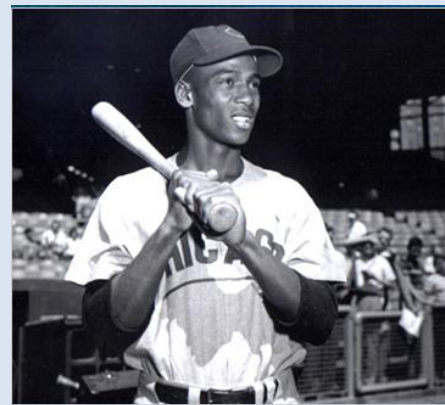
1958 are the most ever hit by a shortstop.

Ernie Banks has career totals of 512 home runs, good for 12th on the all-time list, with 1636 RBI, 1305 runs scored, 2583 hits with a .274 lifetime average. Banks came to the majors directly from the Negro Leagues, appearing late in the 1953 season, starting full-time in 1954. Banks hit 40 or more home runs five times in his career, winning two MVP awards in the process. His first MVP came in 1958, as he hit .313, with league-leading totals of 47 homers and 129 RBI.

He won the award again in 1959, leading the league in RBI again, as well as fielding percentage. Banks was named to 11 All-Star teams in his career.

Following his retirement in 1971, Ernie Banks was active as a minor league instructor in the Cubs system. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1977. His uniform No. 14 was the first retired by the Cubs organization and currently flies on game days from the leftfield foul pole.

Truly a goodwill ambassador, Ernie Banks founded the Live Above and Beyond Foundation, which provides educational scholarships, and promotes social welfare through programs that lessen neighborhood tensions, eliminate prejudice and discrimination among various age groups and races, and improve and develop the capabilities of children who are underprivileged and reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods.



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