



# **SOUTH CAROLINA HALL OF FAME**



**Teacher Guide**

*Bobby Richardson*



## **South Carolina Social Studies Standards**

*Bobby Richardson*

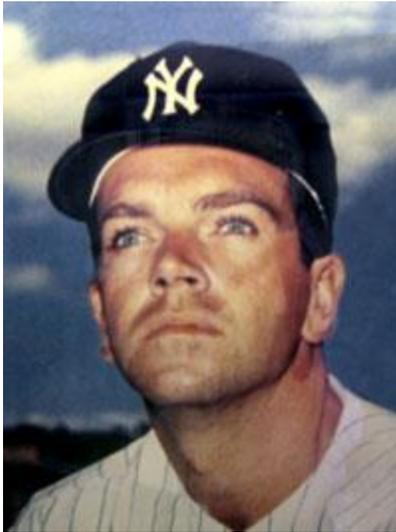
*Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries*

*Topics include - Baseball, N.Y. Yankees, USC baseball*



## S.C. Hall of Fame Biography

### *Bobby Richardson*



Joining the famed New York Yankees baseball team in 1954, Bobby Richardson was named the Most Valuable Player in the 1960 World Series. He still holds such World Series records as having played in 30 consecutive World Series games, most runs-batted-in in a series, and most hits in a series. He was a member of seven American League All-Star teams and won five consecutive Rawlings Gold Glove awards. Retiring from the Yankees at age 31, Richardson began a successful coaching career with the University of South Carolina and other colleges. Born in Sumter, South Carolina, he is active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletics.



## Transcript

### *Bobby Richardson*

Bobby Richardson, native of Sumter, South Carolina, played second base for the New York Yankees from 1955 to 1966. He won the Gold Glove Award five times and was selected to the American League All-Star team eight times. The double play combo of Richardson and Tony Kubek and was among the best in the big leagues.

Richardson played in seven World Series, 36 games in all, including a major league record 30 consecutive World Series games. He is the only player from a losing team to win the coveted Sport Magazine World Series Most Valuable Player award.

Robert Clinton Richardson, Jr., was born August 19, 1935, the second child of Robert Clinton Richardson, Sr. and Willie Owens Richardson.

My father was in the tombstone business—marble and granite—and as a little four or five year old, six year old I'd go down to his place of business, pick up a little marble chip, and I had a bat I made out of a piece of wood and I would just envision a baseball game. I just loved baseball. The very first team I played on was sponsored by the Salvation Army. So as a very young boy, I started out in baseball as a catcher for the Salvation Army, moved into the Knee Pants League, and then from there on into high school and American Legion Baseball.

In June 1953, Bobby signed with the Yankees.

I did sign at 17, the day I graduated from high school. In those days, there was no draft. There was just—you could sign with whoever you wanted to. And there were eight teams in the American League, eight teams in the National League, and out of the 16 teams, I had a chance to sign with 12. No money involved in it, and in fact the \$4,000 included my first year's salary as well.

When I signed, I was given a four-day trip to New York. And I remember as a 17-year-old putting on a uniform and walking through the dugout and out to Yankee Stadium. The wonderful green grass, the expansive stadium. And then I watched the game, after I took some batting practice with the Yankees and fielded some ground balls, and I sat in the stands where



there were 65,000 people—my home town probably had about 12,000 at that time. That’s something I’ll never forget.

In 1955 at age 19, Richardson was called up to the majors.

As I walked through the dugout this time, not as a 17-year-old but as a teammate and a player, and actually walked out on the field as a 19-year-old and played in that first game at Yankee Stadium—the thing I remember is I never touched the ball, they never hit a ground ball to me at second base, I didn’t have a pop up, I did pass the ball around the infield, and I got a base hit, and I stole second base, and Yogi Berra hit a three-run homer, and we won the game 3-1. I’ll not forget that.

In 1957, Richardson became an All-Star.

Bobby, a Southern Baptist, was a positive influence in the Yankee dugout and took some good-natured ribbing from his manager, Casey Stengel.

Casey was quoted as saying, “Bobby doesn’t drink, he doesn’t smoke, he doesn’t curse, he doesn’t chew, but he still can’t hit .250.”

Richardson was MVP of the 1960 World Series, in a losing cause against Pittsburgh.

During the time I played the dozen years in New York, I had some wonderful moments in sports. But I guess my biggest thrill was more of a surprise than a thrill. The Yankees lost the ball game to the Pirates when Bill Mazeroski hit that home run out of the park to win the game. And we were very down and in our club house, and the editor of Sport magazine walked in and came over to me and said, “You’ve been named the Most Valuable Player in the World Series.” Now all year long, I only had 26 runs batted in, but in that series I ended up with 12 RBIs, six in one game—there was that grand slam. And the funny thing about that is of course when I walked up to the plate—I was batting eighth in the lineup, and the bases were loaded—we had already scored one run—it was the first inning. Casey Stengel very often that year would pinch hit for me with men on base. He had Enos Slaughter standing by in the dugout—he was a great hitter, had a wonderful career with the Cardinals—he would holler out, “Hold that gun!” And that meant come on back, let Slaughter hit for you. I listened for that, didn’t hear it, walked up to home plate, and then I knew why—Frank Crosetti our third base coach gave the signs and I was bunting. Not a good play in baseball—based loaded, pitcher up next, one out—to bunt. I



fouled it off twice, and the count went out to 3 and 2, and Frank Crosetti our third base coach hollered, “Hit the ball to right field, try to stay out of the double play!” And the fast ball came in here, and I hit a line drive to left field, and I guess I was more surprised than anybody when it went out of the park for a grand slam.

There was the time in 1962, when I was playing second base, and it came down to the ninth inning—the score was the Yankees ahead by one run, but they had two runners on second and third, in fact it was Mattie Alou and Willie Mays on second base. Willie McCovey was hitting, and he was a power hitter that was probably the best hitter on the Giant ballclub at that time. And he hit a line drive right to me, and I remember my pitcher Ralph Terry looked around and said, “Man, he’s playing out of position.” He started to move me, and then he said, “No, he’s been playing second base—in fact he’s played second base for well over a thousand games at second base—maybe I better let him play where he wants to play.” When I caught that ball, we were indeed the world champions of baseball. I remember handing the ball to the pitcher, and he was voted the most valuable player of that world series, and he was the same pitcher that two years earlier was the goat of the series, because Bill Mazeroski hit the home run out of the park that won the game for the Pirates.

Certainly Gold Gloves are an honor in baseball, and I was privileged to pick up five in a row. Nellie Fox was before me, with the White Sox, and he was the perennial Gold Glove winner at second base. He was traded to Houston, and I picked up five in a row after he retired, then I retired in 1966.

They decided since I was retiring and had actually played one extra year that I could have a “Day” at Yankee Stadium. At that time, only ten had been honored with a Day at Yankee Stadium—it was just a wonderful day in baseball, and I was just grateful for that.

And I came back to my home in Sumter, and Paul Dietzel came on board as Coach and Athletic Director at the University of South Carolina. He came over to speak at a banquet and asked if I’d like to be the baseball coach. And I said, “Paul, I’m sure I’d enjoy that, but I’ve got a four-year contract with the Yankees and I just can’t do it right now.” Well, the Yankees were glad to release me, they paid me off, and then Lee MacPhail the General Manager made this statement. He said, “When you get settled, just give us a call, and we’ll bring the Yankees down to play your ballclub.” Three years later, we had just lost out to Miami by one run in regional play, and I thought, “What a time to call.” So I called Lee MacPhail and I said, “I’m ready for the



Yankees!” He kind of laughed and he said, “Well, we’ve got a little problem—we’re traveling north with the Mets. Would it be all right if the Yankees and Mets come down to play your ballclub?” And it was night we just put our team on the map. Not too long after that, we were able to play in the College World Series, and I just thought that was a big boost to starting our program here at the University of South Carolina.

Extremely active in Christian ministries throughout his career, Bobby Richardson delivered the eulogy at Mickey Mantle’s funeral in 1995.

One of the things that I’ve realized is baseball has a lot of things that are similar to life. Starting out with, “Keep the rules.” Certainly in baseball there are rules that you have to abide by, there’s a rule book, the umpire enforces those rules. In life, it’s the Bible. And the Bible has certainly meant a lot in my life. And as a young boy I realized that these are rules for life and it was important to have a personal relationship with a living Savior who gives to us an abundant life and that so many principles in God’s word are good for you as an individual, and certainly we find that that’s true in every aspect of our life.



## Credits

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The purpose of the [South Carolina Hall of Fame](#) is to recognize and honor both contemporary and past citizens who have made outstanding contributions to South Carolina's heritage and progress.

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