



Jim Kaat

How do you describe a pitcher who pitched in the major leagues for 25 seasons? Let's start with the comment that this man belongs in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown and someday will take his rightful place there.

Jim pitched in the majors in the decades of the '50's, '60's, '70's and '80's. "Kitty" began his career with the Washington Senators in 1959 and stayed with the franchise as they relocated to Minnesota to become the Twins. In all, he played 15 years for the franchise, more than a full career for most players. From 1962 to 1973, Jim never went less than double-digit in wins for the Twins and in fact led the American league with 25 wins in 1966. It was the last year that MLB named only one Cy Young Award winner for both leagues and Sandy Koufax of the Dodgers got the nod – the following year, baseball gave out the ward in each league.

In August of 1973, the Twins put Jim on waivers and he was claimed by the Chicago White Sox. They were rewarded for their foresight when Jim went on to win 21 games in 1974 and 20 games in 1975 for the Chisox. The Sox traded Jim to the Philadelphia Phillies after the 1975 season and Jim went on to play 3+ seasons in the City of Brotherly Love before being sold to the New York Yankees. He went on to play for the St. Louis Cardinals from 1980 until his retirement in 1983.

Kitty could more than just throw the ball. He won the Gold Glove Award for pitchers an unimaginable 16 consecutive years from 1962 to 1977. His statistical domination in his era would take pages to delineate. The 3 time all-star won 283 career games, threw 180 complete games and had a 3.45 career ERA. He threw 4,530 innings and struck out 2,461 batters. It all adds up to Hall of Fame induction. Let's hope it doesn't take much longer.

Since Jim had such a long playing career, you'd expect him to have a long broadcasting career in his post-playing days. Indeed, Jim was a broadcaster from 1990 until 2006 in an era when broadcasters are moved out for the latest retired player on a regular basis.

Kaat was strong in his Christian faith even before the Baseball Chapel program began and he ran team Bible studies from his hotel room.

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