



Larry Eugene Doby, was born December 13, 1923 in Camden, South Carolina. Death June 18, 2003 in Montclair, New Jersey

Larry Doby, the 7-time All-Star and 2-time American League home run leader, became the first African American to play in the A.L. when he made his debut on July 5, 1947. Doby's first appearance occurred less than three months after Jackie Robinson had become the first African American major leaguer in the 20th Century when he debuted with the National League's Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947, breaking the ban on black players dating back to 1889. Doby's first season lasted but 29 games, but when he returned to the Big Leagues in 1948, it was for good and for real: batting 301 with 14 home runs and 66 runs batted in, the rookie's 83 runs scored helped the Cleveland Indians win the American League pennant and the 1948 World Series against the Boston Braves after they beat the Boston Red Sox in a one-game playoff at the end of the regular season.

Doby played in an era when the Yankees won the American League pennant every year, and the World Series almost as often, giving rise to the 1954 book by Douglas Wallop "The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant", which required none other than a Washington Senators fan selling his soul to the devil. (The book was the basis of the smash-hit musical "[Damn Yankees!](#)" (1958)", which was not then an epithet used solely by Southerners but by all baseball fans who weren't American League affiliated New Yorkers.) Between 1947 and 1964, only teams that Doby played on (Cleveland Indians, 1948 & '54) and the Chicago White Sox (1959) beat the hated Yankees for the A.L. pennant. (Unfortunately, Doby -- then at the end of his career -- did not appear with the ChiSox in the '59 World Series, a loss to the Los Angeles Dodgers, having been released in June).

In 1954, the year Doby's Indians once again won the American League pennant, Doby hit .272 and tied his career best with 32 dingers while driving in 126 and scoring 94 runs, leading the A.L. in home runs and R.B.I. Inevitably, it seems, Doby lost the M.V.P. award to the Yankees' [Yogi Berra](#), who had already won the award in 1951 and who would win it

again the following year.

During his Major League career, Larry Doby batted in 100 runs five times. He also played in the Negro Leagues before being signed by the Indians, and was twice an All-Star for the Newark Eagles, which must be considered a team between Triple-A minor league ball and the major leagues, just as the Pacific Coast League was before expansion.

In 1943, Cleveland Indians owner [Bill Veeck](#), the son of a former Chicago Cubs executive, had made an attempt to buy the floundering Philadelphia Phillies. It was Veeck's idea to stock the team with Negro League All-Stars such as 'Leroy 'Satchel' Paige' and disputed baseball home run king 'Josh Gibson' ("The Black Babe Ruth", who might have hit as many as 84 dingers in a season, but Negro League records are spotty) in order to take the place of departed white major leaguers, doing time in the military service. However, that plan was vetoed by Baseball Commissioner [Kenesaw M. Landis](#) and by owners who made more money from the income derived from renting their stadia to Negro League teams, who frequently outdrew the white Major League clubs. When Veeck finally got his hands on a team, he did integrate it, first with Doby and then by realizing his dream of bringing up Satchel Paige to the Indians in 1948, the oldest rookie ever to play in the Bigs.

Most of the credit for integrating Major League Baseball has accrued to Jackie Robinson, as he was the first in 1947, played a full season, won Rookie of the Year honors and a Most Valuable Player award two years later on a team that while he was on it, nearly rivaled the Yankees in terms of its dominance of its league. However, Larry Doby's accomplishment in integrating the American League was not forgotten, and he justly was enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1998.

- *IMDb Mini Biography* By: [Jon C. Hopwood](#)