

Bench, Johnny (1947-) Encyclopedia Article

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Bench, Johnny (1947—)

Known as the popular catcher for the Cincinnati Reds during the 1970s, Johnny Bench set a standard of success as perhaps the finest at his position in modern Major League baseball. Bench first gained national attention by winning the National League MVP (Most Valuable Player) award in 1970 and 1972, recording ten straight Gold Gloves, and helping Cincinnati's "Big Red Machine" to World Series victories in 1975 and 1976. Bench revolutionized his position by popularizing a one-handed catching method that gave him greater mobility with his throwing arm. After retiring from baseball, Bench remained in the public spotlight through television appearances, golf outings, and broadcasting. He is President of Johnny Bench Enterprises and won an Emmy for a program called *The Baseball Bunch*. His success and popularity led to his induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1989.

Further Reading:

Bench, Johnny, with William Brashler. *Catch You Later: The Autobiography of Johnny Bench*. New York, Harper and Row, 1979.