



Don Hoak

February 5, 1928 - October 9, 1969

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Don Hoak, the hard-nosed third baseman who won World Series rings with Brooklyn and Pittsburgh, died of a heart attack in Pittsburgh on October 9, 1969. He was forty-one. He collapsed after chasing, by car, a thief who had driven off in his brother-in-law's automobile.

Donald Albert Hoak was born on February 5, 1928, in Roulette, Pennsylvania, and grew up in the coal and timber country of the state's northern tier. He served in the Navy during the Second World War, then spent years climbing through the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor-league system. He reached the majors in 1954 and the following season was part of the Dodgers team that finally beat the Yankees to win Brooklyn's only World Series championship.

He played for the Chicago Cubs and Cincinnati Redlegs, leading the National League in doubles and making the All-Star team in 1957, before joining the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1959. In 1960 he anchored third base for a Pirates club that won the pennant, and he finished second in the league's Most Valuable Player voting behind his teammate Dick Groat. That October the Pirates beat the Yankees in seven games on Bill Mazeroski's home run.

Teammates called him Tiger. He played with a fierceness that made opponents uneasy and fans devoted, and he was known for playing through injuries that would have sat other men down. In a 1957 game for Cincinnati he deliberately fielded a ground ball while running the bases to break up a double play, a stunt that helped prompt a change in the rules.

After his playing days ended in 1964, he worked as a broadcaster and minor-league manager in the Pirates organization. He had just been passed over for the Pirates' managing job when he died. He was survived by his wife, the singer Jill Corey, and his children.

Services

Died in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 9, 1969, of a heart attack, aged 41. Third baseman on the 1955

Brooklyn Dodgers and 1960 Pittsburgh Pirates World Series champions. Portrait: 1953 Bowman baseball card (public domain), hosted by Notice Nearby.

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