

= Jim Bottomley =

James Leroy Bottomley (April 23 , 1900 ? December 11 , 1959) was an American professional baseball player . A first baseman , Bottomley played in Major League Baseball from 1922 through 1937 for the St. Louis Cardinals , Cincinnati Reds , and St. Louis Browns . He also served as player @-@ manager for the Browns in 1937 . Playing for the Cardinals against Brooklyn at Ebbets Field on September 16 , 1924 , he set the all @-@ time single game RBI record with 12 .

Born in Oglesby , Illinois , Bottomley grew up in Nokomis , Illinois . He dropped out of high school at the age of 16 to raise money for his family . After playing semi @-@ professional baseball , the Cardinals scouted and signed Bottomley . He won the League Award , given to the most valuable player , in 1928 , and was a part of World Series championship teams in 1926 and 1931 . He played for the Cardinals through the 1932 season , after which he was traded to the Reds . After playing for Cincinnati for three years , he played two more seasons with the Browns .

After finishing his playing career with the Browns , Bottomley joined the Chicago Cubs organization as a scout and minor league baseball manager . After suffering a heart attack , Bottomley and his wife retired to raise cattle in Missouri . Bottomley was nicknamed " Sunny Jim " because of his cheerful disposition . Bottomley was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1974 by the Veterans Committee and to the Cardinals Hall of Fame in 2014 .

= = Early life = =

Bottomley was born on April 23 , 1900 , to Elizabeth (née Carter) and John Bottomley in Oglesby , Illinois . His family later moved to Nokomis , Illinois , where Bottomley enrolled in grade school and Nokomis High School . He dropped out when he was 16 years old in order to help support his family financially . Bottomley worked as a coal miner , truck driver , grocery clerk , and railroad clerk . His younger brother , Ralph , died in a mining accident in 1920 .

Bottomley also played semi @-@ professional baseball for several local teams to make additional money , earning \$ 5 a game (\$ 79 in current dollar terms) . A police officer who knew Branch Rickey , the general manager of the St. Louis Cardinals , saw Bottomley play , and recommended Bottomley to Rickey .

= = Professional career = =

= = = St. Louis Cardinals = = =

Rickey dispatched scout Charley Barrett to investigate Bottomley . The Cardinals decided to invite Bottomley to a tryout in late 1919 , and signed him to a \$ 150 @-@ a @-@ month (\$ 2 @,@ 047 in current dollar terms) contract . Bottomley began his professional career in minor league baseball in 1920 . That year , Bottomley played for the Mitchell Kernels of the Class @-@ D South Dakota League , posting a .312 batting average in 97 games , as Barrett continued to scout him . He also played six games for the Sioux City Packers of the Class @-@ A Western League . During his time in the minor leagues , the media began to call Bottomley " Sunny Jim " , due to his pleasant disposition .

The next season , Bottomley played for the Houston Buffaloes of the Class @-@ A Texas League . Bottomley suffered a leg injury early in the season which became infected , and impeded his performance during the season . Bottomley managed only a .227 batting average in 130 games and struggled with his fielding . Unable to sell Bottomley to Houston for \$ 1 @,@ 200 after the season (\$ 15 @,@ 920 in current dollar terms) , Rickey sold Bottomley to the Syracuse Chiefs of the Class @-@ AA International League for \$ 1 @,@ 000 (\$ 13 @,@ 267 in current dollar terms) . Fully recovered from his leg injury in 1922 , Bottomley batted .348 with 14 home runs , 15 triples , and a .567 slugging percentage for the Chiefs . After the season , the Cardinals purchased Bottomley from the Chiefs for \$ 15 @,@ 000 (\$ 212 @,@ 058 in current dollar terms) .

Bottomley made his Major League Baseball debut for the St. Louis Cardinals on August 18 , 1922 . Replacing Jack Fournier , Bottomley batted .325 in 37 games . The Cardinals named Bottomley their starting first baseman in 1923 . As a rookie , Bottomley batted .371 , finishing second in the National League (NL) behind teammate Rogers Hornsby , who batted .384 . His .425 on @-@ base percentage also finished second in the NL behind Hornsby , while he finished sixth in slugging percentage , with a .535 mark . His 94 runs batted in (RBIs) were tenth @-@ best in the league .

Bottomley posted a .316 batting average in 1924 . In a game against the Brooklyn Dodgers on September 16 , 1924 , Bottomley set the major league record for RBIs in a single game , with 12 , breaking Wilbert Robinson 's record of 11 , set in 1892 . Robinson was serving as the manager of the Dodgers at the time . This mark has since been tied by Mark Whiten in 1993 . Finishing the season with 111 RBIs , placing third in the NL , Bottomley 's 14 home runs were seventh @-@ best in the NL , while his .500 slugging percentage was good for tenth .

Bottomley hit .367 in 1925 , finishing second in the NL to Hornsby . He led the NL with 227 hits , while his 128 RBIs were third @-@ best , and his .413 on @-@ base percentage was seventh @-@ best in the league . Bottomley batted .298 during the 1926 season , with an NL @-@ leading 120 RBIs . His 19 home runs placed second in the NL , behind Hack Wilson 's 21 , while his .506 slugging percentage was sixth @-@ best . He batted .345 in the 1926 World Series , as the Cardinals defeated the New York Yankees .

In 1927 , Bottomley finished the season with 124 RBIs , fourth best in the league , and a .509 slugging percentage , finishing sixth in the NL . Bottomley hit .325 with 31 home runs and 136 RBIs in 1928 , leading the league in home runs and RBIs . He also became the second Major League player in history to join the 20 ? 20 ? 20 club . That year , he won the League Award , given to the most valuable player of the NL . The Cardinals reached the 1928 World Series , and Bottomley batted .214 as they lost to the New York Yankees .

In 1929 , Bottomley hit 29 home runs , finishing seventh in the NL , while his 137 RBIs were fifth @-@ best , and his .568 slugging percentage placed him in eighth . After having what manager Gabby Street considered a " poor year " in 1930 , Bottomley struggled in the 1930 World Series , batting .045 in 22 at @-@ bats , as the Cardinals lost to the Philadelphia Athletics . Following the series , Bottomley described his World Series performance as " a bust as far as hitting goes " .

Amid questions about Bottomley 's status with the Cardinals heading into the 1931 season , he demonstrated renewed hitting ability during spring training . Despite the presence of Ripper Collins , a superior fielder who transferred to the Cardinals from the Rochester Red Wings of the International League , Street announced that Bottomley would remain the starting first baseman . However , Bottomley suffered an injury and struggled early in the 1931 season after returning to the game , and it appeared that he might lose his job to Collins , who filled in for Bottomley during his injury . Bottomley returned to form after his return , and he finished the season with a .3482 batting average , placing third behind teammate Chick Hafey 's .3489 and Bill Terry 's .3486 , the closest batting average finish in MLB history . His .534 slugging percentage was the sixth best in the league . The Cardinals reached the 1931 World Series , with Bottomley batting .160 , as the Cardinals defeated the Athletics . That offseason , other teams began to attempt to trade for either Bottomley or Collins . Bottomley batted .296 in 1932 , though he only played in 91 games .

= = = Cincinnati Reds = = =

After the 1932 season , the Cardinals traded Bottomley to the Cincinnati Reds for Ownie Carroll and Estel Crabtree , in an attempt to partner Bottomley with Chick Hafey in developing a more potent offensive attack . Bottomley had also sought Cincinnati 's managerial position that offseason , which instead went to Donie Bush .

Bottomley threatened to quit baseball in a salary dispute with the Reds , as he attempted to negotiate a raise from his \$ 8 @, @ 000 salary (\$ 146 @, @ 242 in current dollar terms) , a reduction from the \$ 13 @, @ 000 salary (\$ 225 @, @ 471 in current dollar terms) he earned with the Cardinals the previous year . He and the Reds eventually came to terms on a one @-@ year contract believed to be worth between \$ 10 @, @ 000 and \$ 13 @, @ 000 . Bottomley finished eighth

in the NL with 83 RBIs in 1933 , and ninth with 13 home runs . In three seasons with the Reds , Bottomley failed to hit higher than .283 or record more than 83 RBIs in a season . Bottomley left the Reds during spring training in 1935 due to a salary dispute , deciding to return to the team in April .

= = = St. Louis Browns = = =

Before the 1936 season , the Reds traded Bottomley to the St. Louis Browns of the American League (AL) , who were managed by Hornsby , for Johnny Burnett . During a July road trip , Bottomley announced his retirement as a result of an injured back ; however , he changed his mind and decided to remain with the team . Bottomley batted .298 for the 1936 season .

Bottomley decided to return to baseball in 1937 . When the Browns struggled during the 1937 season , beginning the season with a 25 ? 52 win @-@ loss record , the Browns fired Hornsby and named Bottomley their player @-@ manager . Bottomley led the Browns to 21 more victories , as the team finished the season in eighth place , with a 46 ? 108 record . The Browns trailed the seventh place Athletics by 9 1 ? 2 games , and were 56 games out of first place . As a player , Bottomley batted .239 in 65 games during the 1937 season . Bottomley was among the ten oldest players in the AL that year .

The Browns did not retain Bottomley after the 1937 season , replacing him with Street , who served as his first assistant during the 1937 season . In 1938 , Bottomley served as the player @-@ manager of Syracuse . After a bad start to the season , and with team president Jack Corbett not adding capable players , Bottomley resigned and was replaced with Dick Porter . Bottomley also indicated that he did not want to continue playing .

Bottomley also holds the single @-@ season record for most unassisted double plays by a first baseman , with eight . Bottomley is also known as the only man to be sued for hitting a home run when a fan was hit by the ball when he was not looking . He had over 100 RBIs in each season from 1924 to 1929 . Bottomley was the second player in baseball history to hit 20 or more doubles , triples , and home runs in one season (Frank Schulte being the first) and the first of two players (Lou Gehrig being the other) to collect 150 or more doubles , triples , and home runs in a career .

= = Personal = =

Bottomley married Elizabeth " Betty " Browner , who operated a St. Louis beauty parlor , on February 4 , 1933 . The couple had no children . After he retired from baseball in 1938 , Bottomley and his wife moved to the Bourbon , Missouri , area , where he raised Hereford cattle . In 1939 , Bottomley became a radio broadcaster , signing a deal with KWK , an AM broadcasting station , to broadcast Cardinals and Browns games .

Bottomley returned to baseball as a scout for the Cardinals in 1955 . In 1957 , he joined the Chicago Cubs as a scout and managed the Pulaski Cubs of the Class D Appalachian League . While managing in Pulaski , Bottomley suffered a heart attack . The Bottomleys moved to nearby Sullivan , Missouri . Bottomley died of a heart ailment in December 1959 . He and his wife Betty were interred in the International Order of Fellows Cemetery , Sullivan , Missouri .

= = Honors = =

Bottomley was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame posthumously in 1974 by the Veterans Committee . The Baseball Writers ' Association of America charged that the Veterans Committee was not selective enough in choosing members . Charges of cronyism were levied against the Veterans Committee . When Bottomley was elected , the Veterans Committee included Frankie Frisch , a teammate of Bottomley 's with the Cardinals . Frisch and Bill Terry , also a member of the Veterans Committee at the time , shepherded the selections of teammates Jesse Haines in 1970 , Dave Bancroft and Chick Hafey in 1971 , Ross Youngs in 1972 , George Kelly in 1973 , and Freddie Lindstrom in 1976 . This led to the Veterans Committee having its powers reduced in subsequent years . In 2014 , the Cardinals announced Bottomley among 22 former players and personnel to be

inducted into the St. Louis Cardinals Hall of Fame Museum for the inaugural class of 2014 .

The city park in Sullivan is named for Bottomley . A museum in Nokomis , Illinois , the Bottomley
@-@ Ruffing @-@ Schalk Baseball Museum , is dedicated to Bottomley and fellow Hall of Famers
Ray Schalk and Red Ruffing , who were also Nokomis natives .