

Hed: Who Is Jackie Robinson's Wife? All About the Legendary Baseball Player's Wife Rachel Robinson — and How She's Carrying on His Legacy

Meta: Jackie Robinson and his wife Rachel Robinson were married for 26 years. Here's everything to know about Jackie Robinson's wife.

Dek: Jackie and Rachel started dating when they were in college at UCLA in the 1940s.

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[Jackie Robinson](#) and Rachel Robinson were married for nearly three decades before the baseball legend died in 1972.

They met in college before they started dating in the 1940s. While at first Rachel [thought he was going to be "arrogant,"](#) she was pleasantly surprised to find he was the opposite, she told PEOPLE in 2013.

"When I met Jack, he was so humble, so thoughtful — and handsome," she said. "I thought, 'I'm glad I was wrong!'"

Rachel has been preserving her husband's legacy for over 50 years. In 1972, she helped start the Jackie Robinson Foundation to provide financial assistance and leadership training for college-bound students in need. Over the years, she has been recognized for her humanitarian efforts. In 2007, she became the first woman and non-player to receive the MLB Commissioner's Award, per the [Jackie Robinson website](#).

In July 2022, Rachel celebrated her 100th birthday with a shoutout from the Los Angeles Dodgers, per [X](#).

So who is Jackie Robinson's wife? Here's everything to know about Rachel Robinson and her relationship with the baseball player who integrated the sport.

She is from Los Angeles

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Born on July 19, 1922, Rachel Robinson was raised in Los Angeles alongside her two brothers. At an early age, her parents Zellee and Charles Raymond Isum, instilled in her the value of education and serving others. Before joining the army, her father worked as a bookbinder and linotype at the *Los Angeles Times*.

Her mother was an entrepreneur who owned a catering business. When she was 12 years old, Rachel's mother enlisted her as one of her employees. In an interview with the [Visionary Project](#), Rachel shared how working with her mother taught her about responsibility and entrepreneurship.

"I learned a lot from those early experiences," she said in March 2010. "She paid me 50 cents an hour. I learned to make money and feel that I needed to be independent very early. From the time I was 12 until now, I have always worked."

She continued, "My mother and grandmother are very independent women, but not aggressively. They always cared for other people. Part of the beauty of their type of independence is that you have the responsibility for taking care of others. And you do it with joy and not feeling like you're making sacrifices."

She has a background in nursing

Image: [Getty](#)

Rachel attended the University of California, Los Angeles and graduated in 1945 with a degree in nursing. Committed to helping others, she traveled across the country to further her education.

"I was always interested in mental health and the combination of the mind, body, and soul," she told the [Visionary Project](#) in March 2010. "I was always concerned about trying to intervene and help."

In May 1961, she earned her master's degree in psychiatric nursing from New York University. After graduating, she began working as a clinical nurse at the First Day Hospital in the Bronx, N.Y. There, she worked with mentally ill patients and provided assessments, treatment plans and rehabilitation during the day to help them improve their daily lives.

She also worked in a research unit at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine before becoming the head of psychiatric nursing. By June 1965, Rachel became the director of nursing for the state mental health center in New Haven, Conn. and an assistant professor at Yale University School of Nursing, per the Jackie Robinson website.

Rachel met Jackie in college at UCLA

Image: [Getty](#)

One of Rachel's friends introduced her to Jackie at UCLA. As one of the popular athletes on campus, Rachel told the [Visionary Project](#) that she watched him from a distance before interacting with him. She said that it wasn't his popularity that was attractive, but his humility that she adored.

"My favorite and most important trait was his humility," she said. "I cannot tolerate arrogance and self-importance. He had none of that. He just came in and blended in with the students and accepted their greetings of him in a positive way."

After parking beside each other in the parking lot one day, they started talking and instantly connected. From there, they began getting to know each other and started dating.

They were married for 26 years

Image: [Getty](#)

After meeting in college, the two started spending quality time together and eventually developed romantic feelings for each other. According to the [Society for American Baseball Research](#), Jackie took Rachel to a football homecoming dinner for their first date, where they danced lovingly together.

Shortly after Robinson was contracted to the Dodgers, the couple wed on Feb. 10, 1946, at Independent Church of Christ in Los Angeles, per the Jackie Robinson website. The Robinsons traveled to San Jose, Calif., for their honeymoon to celebrate their union. They were married for over two decades before Jackie died in October 1972 at 53 years old from the effects of heart disease and diabetes.

When Rachel reflected on her marriage with the baseball player, she told [Sports Illustrated](#) in April 2013 that their friendship helped them overcome the challenges they faced.

"Jack and I had known each other for five years before we got married," she said. "That was extremely important because we trusted each other, and it helped us bond during that time. There was such an incredible amount of pressure it might have driven two people apart. But it had the opposite effect on us, it pushed us together."

They shared three children together

Image: [Getty](#)

Nearly two years after their wedding, Rachel gave birth to their son, Jackie Jr., on Nov. 18, 1946. As Rachel continued to support her husband's career, their family grew with the addition of two more children. By the 1950s, she had given birth to a daughter, Sharon, and another son, David.

Spending quality time with her children and husband was central to Rachel. While speaking with Visionary Projects, she talked about how she enjoyed cooking and sitting around the dining table for family dinners.

Rachel adored her children and was struck with grief when her oldest, Jackie Jr., died in June 1971 after being killed in a car crash. With the support of her younger kids and husband, she found healing in being with them.

According to the Jackie Robinson website, she now has 12 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

The Robinsons were civil rights activists

Image: [Getty](#)

After Jackie integrated the MLB, he and Rachel became leaders in the Civil Rights Movement. They hosted annual jazz concerts in their home in Stamford, Conn., to raise bail money for jailed civil rights activists and continued until 2001, according to the Jackie Robinson Museum.

She became the president of her late husband's development company

Image: [Getty](#)

Alongside her husband, Rachel supported the social causes of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). One pillar the Robinsons championed was homeownership for Black families. In 1970, the baseball legend founded the Jackie Robinson Construction Company to build and provide housing for low-income families.

Rachel took over her husband's corporation in 1972 after his death. She became the president and renamed it the Jackie Robinson Development Corporation. Under her leadership, the company built 1,600 low-to-moderate-income housing units.

She is the co-founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation

Image: [Getty](#)

In 1972, Rachel joined forces with co-founders Martin Edelman, Charles Williams and Franklin Williams to establish the Jackie Robinson Foundation, honoring her husband's life and legacy. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded four-year scholarships to college-bound students.

"We established it to promote education and the next generation of leaders," Rachel said at the [National Baseball Hall of Fame](#) in July 2017. "We are so proud of the near 100% education rate of our Jackie Robinson Foundation scholars."

According to the Jackie Robinson website, the foundation also provides development services for college students in need of financial assistance, including career guidance, internship placement and leadership development opportunities. Over the past five decades, the foundation has awarded more than \$121.5 million in college grants and assisted more than 2,200 scholars and alumni along their college and postgraduate journeys.

She was honored with the MLB Commissioner's Award

Image: [Getty](#)

Rachel's determination to preserve her husband's legacy has been recognized by several organizations over the years, including Major League Baseball. On the 60th anniversary of her husband integrating the sport, she was honored with the Commissioner's Historic Achievement Award.

In July 2007, MLB Commissioner Bud Selig presented her with the trophy on the baseball field. According to the Jackie Robinson website, the philanthropist made history as the first woman and non-player to be honored.