

The Baseball Writers' Association of America has elected former Cal Poly baseball standout Ozzie Smith into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame. He will be the only player inducted at the Hall in Cooperstown, N.Y., on July 28.

Smith, who made a routine of doing a back flip as he ran to his position, earned the nickname "The Wizard" while playing at Cal Poly during 1974-77. He currently holds school records for career stolen bases (110), stolen bases in a season (44), and career at bats (754). He took over as shortstop midway through his freshman season in 1974 and went on to have a remarkable career at Cal Poly, twice earning All-California Collegiate Athletic Association first-team honors. In 1977, after leading Cal Poly to a school-record 41 victories and a berth in the NCAA Division II championship tournament, Smith was drafted by the San Diego Padres and began his major league career.

After four years with the Padres, Smith spent 15 seasons with the St. Louis Cardinals. During his 19-year career, he was a 15-time All-Star and won 13 consecutive Gold Gloves. He holds National League records for fielding percentage (.987) and most years leading the league in fielding percentage (7). He also holds numerous major league baseball records, including most

assists in a season, assists in a career, and double plays in a career.

In 1996, the Cardinals retired his No. 1 jersey to mark his accomplishments. "I don't think anybody ever played the position any better than he played it," former Cardinals Manager Whitey Herzog said.

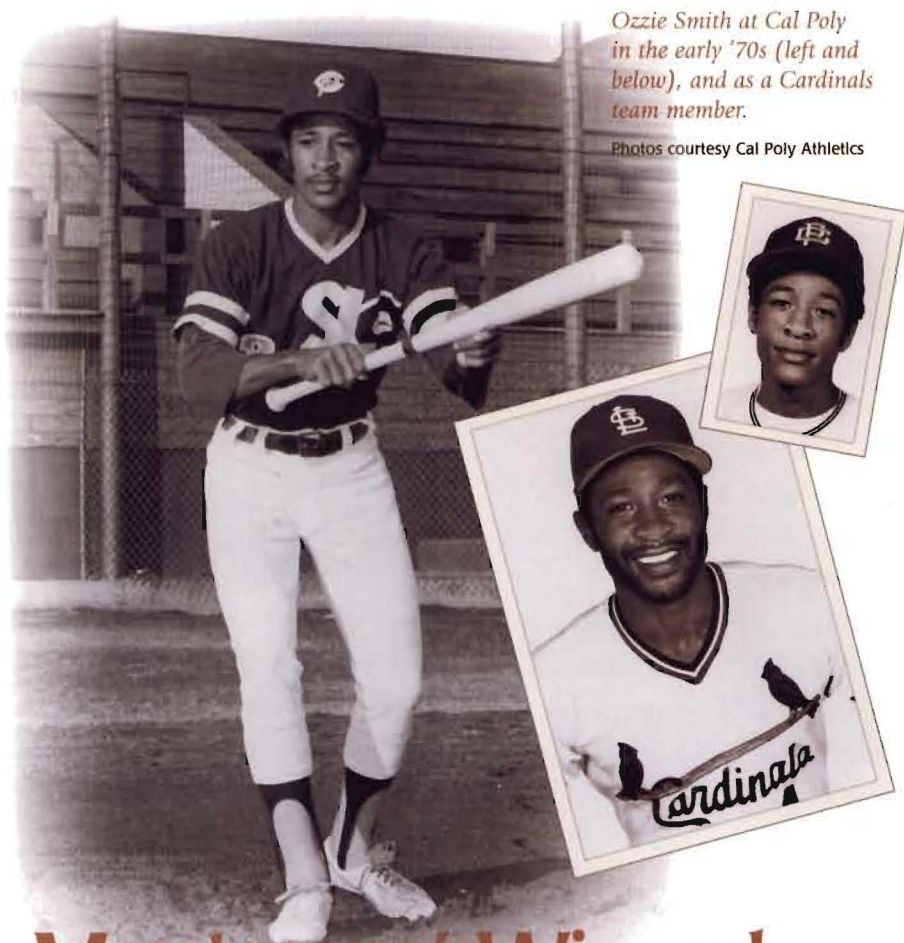
Since retiring, Smith has remained in St. Louis, where he supports the community through his charity work. He has continued to stay close to baseball, serving as host for "This Week in Baseball,"

doing color analysis work for St. Louis Cardinals home games, and working as a baseball analyst for CNN/SI.

Regarded as the finest fielding shortstop ever, Smith was elected to the Hall of Fame on his first try, named on 91.7 percent of the ballots cast. He was the 37th player picked in his first year of eligibility and will become the 254th person inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame.

Ozzie Smith at Cal Poly in the early '70s (left and below), and as a Cardinals team member.

Photos courtesy Cal Poly Athletics



Mustangs' Wizard

Ozzie Smith Is Inducted into the Hall of Fame