



An American Tour: 125



Canton's Pro Football Hall of Fame

The Pro Football Hall of Fame is the hall of fame for professional American football, located in Canton, Ohio. Opened in 1963, the Hall of Fame enshrines exceptional figures in the sport of professional football, including players, coaches, franchise owners, and front-office personnel, almost all of whom made their primary contributions to the game in the National Football League (NFL); the Hall inducts between four and eight new members each year.

The community of Canton successfully lobbied the NFL to have the Hall of Fame built in their city for two reasons: first, the NFL was founded in Canton in 1920 (at that time it was known as the American Professional Football Association); second, the now-defunct Canton Bulldogs were a successful NFL team based in Canton during the first few years of the league. Groundbreaking for the building was held on August 11, 1962. The original building contained just two rooms, and 19,000 square feet (1,800 m²) of interior space.

In April 1970, ground was broken for the first of many expansions. This first expansion cost \$620,000, and was completed in May 1971. The size was increased to 34,000 square feet (3,200 m²) by adding another room. The pro shop opened with this expansion.

This was also an important milestone for the Pro Football Hall of Fame, as yearly attendance passed the 200,000 mark for the first time. This was at least in some part due to the increase in popularity of professional football caused by the advent of the American Football League and its success in the final two AFL-NFL World Championship games.

In 2013, the Hall of Fame completed its largest expansion and renovation today. Currently, the Hall of Fame consists of 118,000 square feet. An \$800 million expansion project, Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village, is underway and will be completed to coincide with the NFL's Centennial in 2020.

The Chicago Bears have the most Hall of Famers among the league's franchises with either 34 or 28 enshrinees depending on whether you count players that only played a small portion of their careers with the team. Enshrinees are selected by a 48-person committee, largely made up of media members, officially known as the Selection Committee. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pro_Football_Hall_of_Fame]

