

GEORGIA SPORTS HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES INCOMING CLASS OF 2024



Georgia Sports Hall of Fame Chairman Earl Wright is pleased to announce the following individuals have been selected for induction into the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. The 68th Annual Induction Ceremony will be held the weekend of February 23rd and 24th, 2024 in Macon, Georgia. Activities will begin Friday, February 23rd with the GSHF Golf Classic hosted at River North Country Club. Friday evening, the annual Jacket Ceremony will be held at the Hall. On Saturday at midday the annual FanFest Autograph session will once again be held at the Hall. FanFest is open to the public and free of charge. Saturday evening, we close out the weekend with the 68th Annual Induction Ceremony held at the historic Macon City Auditorium. Please meet the Class of 2024:

Shareef Abdur-Rahim -- Growing up in East Point, Sharif Abdur-Rahim started playing basketball after seeing a flyer from a local community center. He led Joseph Wheeler High School to a state title in 1994 and was named "Mr. Georgia Basketball" in back-to-back seasons by the Atlanta Tipoff Club. Sharif played one season of college basketball at UC Berkeley, being named Pac-10 Player of the Year en route to entering the 1996 NBA Draft, where he was selected third overall by the Vancouver Grizzlies. He quickly became the team's leading scorer and was named All-Rookie First Team. Sharif went on to play for the Atlanta Hawks in 2001 and was selected to the All-Star Game in 2002. He also had stints in Portland and Sacramento before retiring in 2008. Sharif won gold with Team USA in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. His career field goal percentage was .472, with 18.1 points per game and 7.5 rebounds per game. Sharif is the current president of the NBA G League and is active in community outreach in Atlanta.

Eric Berry – Born in Fairburn, Georgia, Eric Berry played both football and ran track at Creekside High School where he excelled at both but ultimately decided to play collegiate football at the University of Tennessee. Playing defensive back, Eric was a two-time first-team All-SEC and was named SEC Defensive Player of the Year in 2008. He also received the Jim Thorpe Award in 2009 as the best college defensive back in the nation. Eric was drafted fifth overall by the Kansas City Chiefs in 2010. He was selected to five Pro Bowls, was named first-team All-Pro three times and was honored as the NFL's Comeback Player of the Year in 2015 after successfully treating Hodgkin's lymphoma. Eric was named to the NFL's 2010s All-Decade Team at safety.

Cris Carpenter –Gainesville's Cris Carpenter was All-State AAA in baseball, football, and basketball in high school and named Georgia's High School Athlete of the year in 1984, before spending his college years setting records as a standout punter for the UGA Bulldogs football team, while at the same time excelling as an ace relief pitcher for the Dawgs baseball team, being named All-American and All-SEC, as well as being named a UGA SEC Baseball Legend in 2016. He remains 4th in career punting average as a Georgia punter and fifth-all time at UGA in career wins as a pitcher. After being drafted in the first round of the 1987 MLB, Cris made the difficult choice to leave football and took a pitching position with the St. Louis Cardinals where he spent five seasons, his finest being in 1991 when he went 10-4 with a 4.23 ERA in 59 games for the Cards. He spent an additional 4 seasons between Florida, Texas, and Milwaukee before retiring.

Thomas Davis, Sr. – Thomas Davis, Sr., was a four-sport athlete at Randolph-Clay High School in Cuthbert, Georgia. He accepted a scholarship to play collegiate football for the Georgia Bulldogs. His exceptional playing at linebacker, as well as defensive back, earned him a consensus All-American and first-team All-SEC in 2004. Thomas was drafted 14th pick overall by the Carolina Panthers in the 2005 NFL Draft. He spent 14 seasons playing linebacker with the Panthers and is the only player to overcome three ACL tears in their career. Thomas was a three-time Pro Bowl selection, as well as a first-team All-Pro in 2015. He finished his last two seasons in the NFL playing for the LA Chargers and the Washington Football Team (now Commanders). Thomas has also been acknowledged for his off-the-field contributions by being awarded the Walter Payton Man of the Year in 2014 and the Bart Starr Award in 2016.

Claude Felton – Savannah native Claude Felton has served the Georgia Athletic Association since 1979 in legendary fashion in positions including Sr. Associate Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director, and Sports Communications Director, among others. He has served as media coordinator in 17 NCAA national champion events and was the chairman of the Ethics Committee of the College Sports Information Directors of America from 1985-91 receiving the organizations Arch Ward Award in 2004. Regarded as the "best of the best" by his peers, Claude has won myriad of awards during his career, including The Football Writers Association of America's prestigious Bert McGrane Award. Claude was inducted into the College Sports Information Directors of America Sports Hall of Fame in 2001 and continues to serve as the Senior Associate Athletic Director for Sports Communications at UGA.

Paul Johnson – A North Carolina-native, Paul Johnson's coaching career truly started at Georgia Southern in 1983 under legendary head coach Erk Russell. There, he was offensive coordinator for the Eagles during their NCAA I-AA (now FCS) Championships in 1985 and 1986. Paul left Statesboro in 1987 to serve as offensive coordinator for the University of Hawaii. After much success there, he took another offensive coordinator position at Navy in 1995. In 1997, Paul returned to Statesboro, this time as head coach. He led the Eagles to five SoCon titles and two NCAA I-AA championships in 1999 and 2000. He returned to Navy in 2002 but left to head coach Georgia Tech in 2008 where he finished his career after 10 seasons with the Yellow Jackets. He was awarded the Eddie Robinson Award in 1998 as the nation's top coach in I-AA and was also a Bobby Dodd Coach of the Year recipient in 2004. Paul was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2023.

Brian McCann – A top-ranked high school baseball catcher from Duluth High, Brian McCann was drafted by the near-by Atlanta Braves in the 2002 MLB Draft. He made his debut with the Braves in 2005. In the next nine seasons, Brian garnered seven All-Star Game appearances and earned five Silver Slugger honors. He was named All-Star MVP in 2010. From 2014 to 2016, Brian played for the New York Yankees, where he was honored with a sixth Silver Slugger in 2015. He joined Houston in 2017 and won a World Series with the Astros that same season. Brian returned to Atlanta for a final season in 2019. His 15-year-long career stats were a .262 batting average, 1018 RBIs, 282 home runs, a .337 on-base percentage, a .993 fielding percentage, and 12048 putouts.

Wendy White-Prausa – A dominating junior tennis player in the state of Georgia, Wendy White-Prausa earned a number one ranking in the 16 and under and 18 and under categories, as well as a number one Southern ranking and a number eight national ranking in the 18 and unders. She also won or was a finalist in over 30 junior and amateur tournaments between 1977 and 1978. She was named Georgia Player of the Year in 1978 and played college tennis at Rollins College. She won the Broderick Award (now Honda Sports Award) in tennis as the nation's best collegiate female athlete. Wendy turned pro and played on the WTA tour from 1978 to 1990. She played all of the grand slams and was ranked in the top 100 in singles play for 12 straight years, earning her highest ranking of 19 in 1982. Wendy was inducted in the Georgia Tennis Hall of Fame in 1996 and the Southern Tennis Hall of Fame in 2001.