

The San Diego Hall of Champions. 1649 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA 92101. Barry Humphrey, Executive Director, (619) 234-2544.

Florence Chadwick, Billy Casper, Maureen Connolly, Archie Moore, and Ted Williams are but a few of the impressive names that grace the walls of San Diego's "Hall of Champions" multi-sports museum. Located in scenic Balboa Park, the 15,000-square-foot complex, which opened in 1961, includes a 5,000-foot balcony with a board room, offices, and a library. A product of the Breitbard Athletic Foundation, the initial proposal for a museum took place in 1946, to promote, in part, "the recognition of significant athletic achievements, the encouragement of competition, and the stimulation of interest in athletics among the youths of San Diego County." Since its opening in 1961, the museum's honorees has grown to sixty-six athletes. The film library has 209 titles. In all, the Hall boasts a collection of over 2,000 files, photographs, and other materials on San Diegan athletic greats in its archives.

Among the facility's interesting features are exhibits that focus on the achievements of distinguished disabled and military athletes. High school sports are also recognized. For example, there is an exhibit featuring the 1984 and 1985 Point Loma High School football teams, winners of twenty-eight straight contests. The most eye-catching display is Bill Muncie's 1972 Gold Cup winning speedboat, dominating the center of the main floor. Much attention, of course, is given to baseball and football. The Padres (both the minor and major league versions) the Chargers (football), and San Diego State University's Aztec football squads are featured. With the help of modern video equipment, visitors can relive the past achievements of such greats as football's Lance Alworth and Haven Moses, basketball's Bill Walton, and a contemporary hero, baseball's Tony Gwynn. The Ted Williams exhibit is among the most popular, with its memorabilia of bats, gloves, and an array of trophies. Williams, in fact, serves on the Hall advisory board. Other areas of interest include the *Union Tribune* Theater featuring sports films, meeting rooms for press conferences, luncheons, and banquets; and a museum gift shop.

While the Hall of Champions is an impressive gallery for sports-minded tourists, researchers will encounter drawbacks. Records, for instance, are loosely catalogued. Indeed, artifacts, many of which scholars might find useful, are in a large unorganized storage room. Literature, guides, videos, trophies, and even old baseball bats are literally scattered throughout the room. Finally, working areas are sparse. The lack of appropriate space, of course, has much to do with these problems.

The future, however, is bright. By 1995, with the help of generous donations, the museum will be housed in a new 58,000 square-foot building. Museum officials plan to upgrade their research facilities and ultimately make the Hall of Champions the leading center for the study of sport history. "It will be a place where anybody, no matter how sophisticated a researcher, can find out about any level of sport," claims Barry Humphrey, executive director of the museum.

A nonprofit organization, the San Diego Hall of Champions is a member of the National Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame and the American Association of Museums. Complete with a staff of nearly fifteen very congenial employees, this captivating multi-sport museum substantiates *Sports Illustrated's* 1979 claim that San Diego is, in fact "Sports Town U.S.A." More importantly, San Diego's Hall of Champions is an epitome of civic pride.

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