

Mini-Bio: Dick McCann

Richard (Dick) McCann was born in Washington, D.C. He attended Immaculate Conception grade school and studied at a seminary in Beacon, New York, before writing for the old Herald, the Evening Star, and the Daily News in his native hometown. He served in several capacities including court and police reporter and sports columnist. He joined the Newspaper Enterprise Association at Cleveland in 1937.

The following year he joined King Features Syndicate in New York. It was here he held several public relations jobs, including doing publicity for the committee for the celebration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's birthday, free lance writing, and serving as press relations director for longtime boxing manager Mike Jacobs.

In 1945 he was a sports columnist for the Washington Times- Herald. A year later he joined the Washington Redskins as publicity director. He moved up to general manager the next season. He served as G.M. for fifteen years.

In the spring of 1962 the newly established Professional Football Hall of Fame interviewed McCann, along with Edward M. (Bud) Erickson (assistant G.M. for the Detroit Lions) and William M. Edwards (athletic director at Wittenberg University) to become the Hall's first director. McCann was the Hall's top candidate all along and on April 4th, 1962, at the tender age of 51 he was hired to run the Hall of Fame. He was given a annual salary of \$20,000.

"Dick McCann," recalled then NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle, "left his job as general manager of the Washington Redskins to become the director of the Hall of Fame at a time when it was little more than a hole in the ground."

McCann's first responsibility was to locate and gather the football memorabilia that would help trace the game's history. His main goal was to display these nostalgic items through modern displays and exhibits, so every fan regardless of age would enjoy the Hall. His endless dedication and inspired innovation made the Hall of Fame a unique American institution from the very beginning.

On September 7, 1963, the Pro Football Hall of Fame opened to the public and the first seventeen charter members were inducted. McCann's famous words greeted these greats when they were first announced in January of '63. "These , McCann said "are the milestone men of pro football. Their deeds and dogged faith wrote the history of this great game."

Today the Hall of Fame has 175 members and has been seen by over 5 million vistors. McCann, who died in 1967, was without a doubt the driving force behind the early success of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He, himself has a place among the "milestone men of pro football."