

The Washington Post

D.C. reviving hall of fame for stars of its sports world

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Two years ago, an Arlington reader wrote with a question: What was up with the Washington Hall of Stars, a collection of D.C. sports greats whose names were displayed in RFK Stadium and then in Nationals Park?

Well, to be honest it's kind of moribund.

Until now.

On Monday, the Washington Nationals will announce that the hall is being revived, with a new name — the D.C. Sports Hall of Fame — and six new members. In a pregame ceremony before the team's March 31 opener against Atlanta, these D.C. sports figures will be inducted. Among them is Olympic gold medal gymnast Dominique Dawes, former Washington Redskins running back Brian Mitchell, former Anacostia High head football coach Willie Stewart, former Post columnist Michael Wilbon and former DeMatha High head basketball coach Morgan Wootten. They join Wes Unseld, Sonny Jurgensen and Walter Johnson.



CHARLES PLATIAU / REUTERS - Olympic gymnast Dominique Dawes, of Silver Spring, is the third woman to be inducted into the D.C. hall of fame.

Dominique Dawes, the Silver Spring native who competed in three Olympics and is now co-chairman of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. "Her accomplishments speak for themselves. And what a wonderful professional, regal presence she is, an awesome inspiration for men and women."

Dawes is the third woman to be inducted into the hall, which was founded in 1980. The other women are 1946 Wimbledon champ Pauline Betz Addie and 1972 Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer Melissa Belote.

More people, Dawes said, need "to voice their opinion and say they want to see more women be recognized, not just as athletes but as reporters, coaches and people in the industry who are leaving a legacy and making a difference."

The D.C. Sports Hall of Fame is not a physical space but a mythical one, a way for triumphs to be filtered through the warm glow of nostalgia and enjoyed once again. It also speaks to the continuity of sports, how children who grew up watching ended up playing, coaching or commentating.