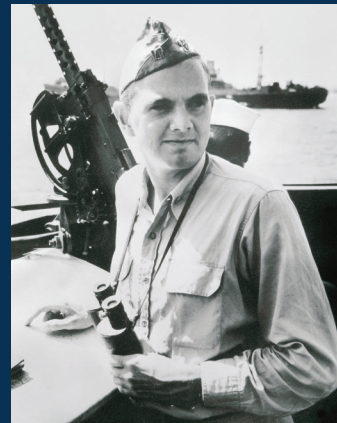


RALPH C. WILSON, JR. CONSIDERED HIMSELF PRIVILEGED TO CALL TWO SPECIAL PLACES HOME: SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN, WHERE HE SPENT MUCH OF HIS YOUTH AND MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE, AND WESTERN NEW YORK, WHICH BECAME HIS BELOVED SECOND HOME. WHILE HUMILITY, A LOW-KEY CHARACTER AND AN AFFINITY FOR THE RUST BELT SPIRIT WERE HIS HALLMARKS, HIS LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENTS DESERVE RECOGNITION HE WOULD NEVER HAVE ASKED FOR HIMSELF.

OCTOBER 17, 1918

Ralph Cookerly Wilson, Jr. is born in Columbus, Ohio to Ralph C. and Edith (Cole) Wilson. Two years later, he moves with his family to Detroit, Michigan.



◀ 1941-46

Proudly serves in U.S. Navy during World War II; is promoted to lieutenant; he saw action commanding a minesweeper throughout the Mediterranean and near Japan. Mr. Wilson was always known as a patriot, though not a partisan.



◀ 1959

Seeking to become more involved in the game he loved, he joins the so-called "Foolish Club," a group of men committed to founding a new football league. After failing to get a stadium deal to set his team in Miami, Mr. Wilson announces that he will place an AFL franchise, to be officially named the Bills, in Buffalo.

JANUARY 29, 1964 ▶

Bringing success to his business partners and the fledgling league they'd created, Mr. Wilson is integral in completing the AFL's five-year, \$36 million contract with NBC to televise games. That put the young league on near-equal footing with the NFL, which had already been around for over 40 years.



SEPTEMBER 23, 1971

During this period, he was considering relocating the Bills. In order to avoid that, and after a protracted 3+ year debate, the Erie County Legislature approves a \$23 million bond to build a stadium in Orchard Park. The County and the Bills sign a lease agreement.

AUGUST 7, 1973

Rich Stadium opens to sellout crowd of 80,020 for a preseason game vs. Washington.

1934

Attends first pro football game with his father; young Ralph was thrilled to be part of history as he watched the Detroit Lions in their inaugural NFL season. A lifetime love of the game was born.



◀ 1944

His actions contribute to U.S. forces being able to land on the beaches of Anzio, Italy. His Navy commendation letter said that he "showed courage, stamina and initiative."

1946 ▶

Mr. Wilson's military career ended, and he returned home to Detroit to join his father's insurance agency. Ever-ambitious, the Wilsons quickly started expanding. Over time, his father focused on trucking, manufacturing and construction; Ralph Jr. diversified into football, oil and gas drilling, television stations, breeding racehorses and, eventually, venture capital.



JULY 30, 1960

At War Memorial Stadium, a crowd of 16,500 watches the Bills play their first game, an exhibition against Boston.



◀ 1966

As football booms and transforms American entertainment, Wilson serves on the committee that negotiates the AFL's historic merger with the NFL. The merger goes into full effect in 1970.

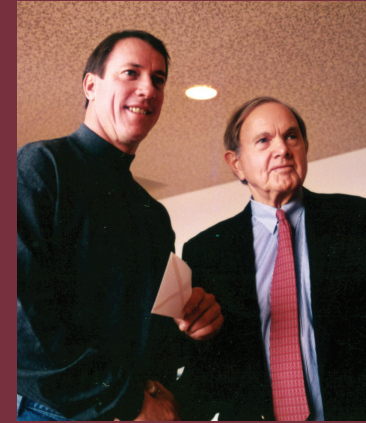
1970s ▶

Mr. Wilson loved being active and involved, and was known as a risk-taker. He began expanding his holdings to owning broadcast TV stations throughout the country; he stayed in the business through the late '90s.



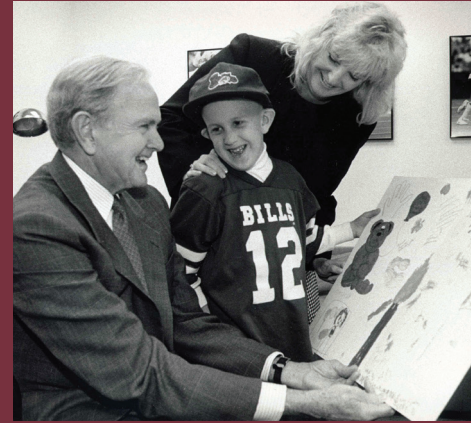
1986 ▶

Jim Kelly joins the Buffalo Bills as starting quarterback.



JULY 31, 1997

Mr. Wilson signs a 15-year lease deal with Erie County and New York State that deepens his team's connection to Buffalo, committing to remain in the area at least through 2012.



◀ 1999

Wilson establishes the Ralph Wilson Medical Research Foundation, which contributes more than \$11 million to research facilities, including Buffalo's Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center (formerly Roswell Park Cancer Institute).

1999 ▶

Still a risk-taker at age 80, Mr. Wilson decided to try the venture capital business, establishing the Ralph Wilson Equity Fund.



AUGUST 8, 2009 ▶

Another proud moment, when the humble Mr. Wilson is acknowledged with a well-deserved honor; he is inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.



RW

PARKS & TRAILS

◀ OCTOBER 17, 2018

In honor of Mr. Wilson's 100th birthday, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation officially announces two \$100 million commitments, for a total of \$200 million. The funds will be invested in Southeast Michigan and Western New York, in support of their parks, trails and greenway systems—further reinforcing his lasting impact on the two communities he loved.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1980

The Bills snap a 20-game losing streak when they beat Miami 17-7. Bills fans tear down the goal posts and carry one of them up to Mr. Wilson's box. He famously tells reporters that he was just as excited as the fans, and didn't mind purchasing new goalposts.

1990 ▼

Buffalo Bills make the first of their four consecutive Super Bowl appearances.



OCTOBER 14, 1992

Mr. Wilson is honored to be inducted into Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame.

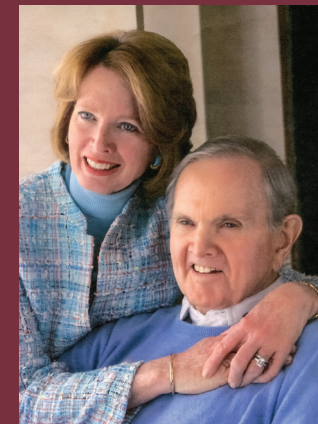
DECEMBER 19, 1998 ▶

Under the terms of the new lease agreement, Rich Stadium is renamed Ralph Wilson Stadium. It becomes affectionately known and widely referred to as "The Ralph."



OCTOBER, 1999 ▶

Mr. Wilson marries the former Mary McLean.



2011 ▶

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is established in 2011 as the permanent vehicle for Wilson's philanthropy. The Foundation would later become the principal beneficiary of his Trust.



MARCH 25, 2014

Mr. Wilson passes away at his home in Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan.

SEPTEMBER, 2014

His estate announces that Terry and Kim Pegula, owners of the Buffalo Sabres hockey franchise, would purchase the Buffalo Bills for around \$1.4 billion. Mr. Wilson's wife Mary said: "Ralph brought professional football to Buffalo in 1959; it was his life's passion. He loved his team and he cherished the fans. His legacy will remain for all time." Per his wishes, most of the funds go to his foundation, which has instructions to spend down the money within 20 years.