

# Hockey journeyman gets call to the Hall

By Jake Courtepatte

When the NHL expanded from six to twelve teams in 1967, an unprecedented move in North American professional sports, there was a period of utter chaos for both executives and players alike.

Bob Wall, who will see his name inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame in November, was smack dab in the middle of it. Born just outside of Aurora in Oak Ridges in 1942, Wall cut his teeth with the Aurora Bantam and Aurora Midget minor systems as a defenseman, before earning the chance to join the Junior A Hamilton Red Wings at the age of 16.

Three stellar seasons with the Wings, including a nod as Rookie of the Year and a Memorial Cup as league champions, advanced Wall to the AHL level where he found success with the Pittsburgh Hornets in 1965 through to 1967, the year of the expansion. With scores of opportunities available to play in the greatest league on earth and executives desperately looking to fill out rosters, communication was a difficult task. Mr. Wall found out he was claimed in the Expansion Draft by the Los Angeles Kings by reading about it in the Toronto Star, finding himself named captain at camp just a few months later, the first in the franchise's history. He immediately negotiated a three-month contract with Larry Regan, the General Manager of the Kings.

"We had no agents in those days," said Mr. Wall. "You had to negotiate yourself. And, quote, \$18,000 for the first year, \$21,000 for the second and \$23,000 for the third.

"I was happy. I was really happy. That meant I didn't have to work in the summer and my wife didn't have to work."

Mr. Wall spent three full seasons with the Kings, before finding himself hopping between teams in the AHL, CHL, and NHL, playing 25 games with newly-minted St. Louis Blues in 1970-71 and the Detroit Red Wings in 1971-72.

Closing out his career in the budding World Hockey Association was perhaps where he found the most success, where at the age of thirty in 1973-74 he put up 45 points with the Alberta Oilers, who became the Edmonton Oilers the following season.

He returned to Aurora following his playing career, taking up coaching positions for four years, and now owns Tim Hortons franchises.

Mr. Wall is one of four inductees into this year's Aurora Sports Hall of Fame class, all inducted under the "Athletes" category.

Mr. Wall has been inducted to the ASHoF alongside Dan Thompson, a record-breaking swimmer, William Fleury, a pioneer in the Canadian cricket community, and Mike Palmateer, a prolific ex-Toronto Maple Leaf goaltender.

"My childhood dream was to play in the NHL," said Mr. Wall. "I was given the chance to play hockey in Aurora and that is where I was discovered, so to be in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is a fantastic honour."

Held annually at St. Andrew's College, the ASHoF Induction dinner is one of the most spectacular nights of the calendar year in the Aurora sports community. This year's dinner will be held on November 8, and more information can be found at [www.aurorashof.ca](http://www.aurorashof.ca).