



## NEWS RELEASE

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### A Record Number Expected for *NFL Homecoming*

**CANTON, OH** – Each summer the eyes of the pro football world focus on Canton, Ohio as another group of pro football elite is enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. This year the attention will be even greater as the Hall of Fame and the National Football League combine to present *NFL Homecoming*, a gala reunion of all Hall of Fame members.

The reunion, which is being held as a part of the Hall's year-long celebration of its 40th Anniversary, is expected to draw as many as 120 of the 144 living Hall of Famers during the three-day enshrinement celebration (August 2-4). The Hall of Fame staff has already received word from 77 Hall of Fame members confirming their attendance. That exceeds the pace set in 2000 when 106 gridiron greats came back to Canton for *Pro Football's Greatest Reunion*.

"This is only the second time we've been able to invite all of our members back in the same year," explained Hall of Fame Executive Director John Bankert. "The first was in 2000, when NFL Commissioner Tagliabue conceived of the idea of *Pro Football's Greatest Reunion* as the kickoff event for the 2000 season, the first of the new millennium. We're confident that this year's version will be even more exciting and successful."

A virtual who's who in pro football including the likes of Gale Sayers, Jim Kelly, Mike Ditka, Lynn Swann, Don Shula, George Blanda, Ozzie Newsome, and Ronnie Lott will be in Canton as a part of the celebration.

"Ever since that first reunion, it seems whenever I run into a Hall of Famer, he refers to that gathering and asks me 'when will we do that again?'" NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue explained. "The Hall of Fame's 40th Anniversary is the perfect occasion to again pay tribute to the game's greatest contributors."

The returning Hall of Fame members, who will welcome the most recently elected members to their elite fraternity – Marcus Allen, Elvin Bethea, Joe DeLamielleure, James Lofton, and Hank Stram – will participate in a number of public events. Thousands of fans will have the opportunity to see and cheer the pro football immortals as they walk across the Enshrinement stage on Sunday afternoon. Hundreds of thousands more will witness the historic gathering during the live (2 p.m. ET) broadcast on ESPN.

"This will undoubtedly be an anniversary celebration to be remembered," commented Bankert. "The Hall of Fame staff, the City of Canton, and thousands of local volunteers, are anxiously preparing to once again roll out the red carpet and 'welcome home' our Hall of Fame members."