

National Inventors Hall of Fame

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The former National Inventors Hall of Fame in Akron, Ohio as viewed from across the street.



Abbreviation	NIHF
Formation	1973
Type	NPO
Legal status	Organization
Purpose/focus	"Honor[ing] the women and men responsible for the great technological advances that make human, social and economic progress possible."
Headquarters	3701 Highland Park N.W. North Canton, Ohio 44720
Location	Akron, Ohio (school) and Alexandria, Va. (Hall of Fame)
Region served	United States
Membership	487 inventors
Official languages	English
Affiliations	Invent Now America
Website	www.invent.org ^[1]

The **National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF)** is an American not-for-profit organization dedicated to the inventors and their inventions. Founded in 1973, its primary mission is to "honor the women and men responsible for the great technological advances that make human, social and economic progress possible." Besides the Hall of Fame, it also operates a museum in Alexandria, Virginia and a middle school in Akron, Ohio and sponsors educational programs, a collegiate competition, and special projects all over the United States to encourage creativity among the students.^[2]

As of 2013^[3], 487 inventors, male and female, are enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Alexandria, Virginia. Every year, in the middle of February, a class of inductees is announced. It is chosen by the National Selection Committee and the Blue Ribbon Panel. To qualify, the inventor must have had an U.S. patent that has improved the welfare of humanity and promoted the progress of science and technology.

History

The National Inventors Hall of Fame was founded in 1973 on the initiative of H. Hume Mathews, then the chairman of the National Council of Patent Law Associations (now the National Council of Intellectual Property Law Associations).^[4] In the following year, it gained a major sponsor in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office from Washington, D.C.^[5]

At first, the Hall was housed in the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office in Washington, D. C., near the Washington National Airport but it soon needed more room at a more prominent location. A committee was formed in 1986 to find a new home for it. For a time, the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the frontrunner. But in 1987, a patent attorney from Akron, Edwin “Ned” Oldham, the representative from the National Council of Patent Law Associations, led the drive to move the Hall to Akron. The construction of the new building was finished in 1995 and the Hall opened to the public with the name of the Inventure Place.^[6]

From the beginning, the Inventure Place was intended to be more than a science and technology museum and library. It was designed to double as an inventor’s workshop and a national resource center for creativity. Designed by an architect from New York City, James Stewart Polshek, it was a stainless-steel building, shaped like a curving row of white sails, with five tiers of exhibits. One of the exhibits allowed the visitors to use computer programs for making animations and mechanisms for running laser-light shows.^[7]

But attendance did not meet the expectations and the museum never made a profit, although its related ventures and programs, such as Invent Now and Camp Invention, proved to be more successful. In 2002, its name was changed to the National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum. Six years later, in 2008, the Hall moved to Alexandria. Its former facility was converted to a magnet school for students in grades between 5th and 8th. It is now the NIHF STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Learning Center, a middle school for the Akron Public Schools.^{[8][9][10][11]}

Activities

In Alexandria, the National Inventors Hall of Fame, as the wing of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Museum, has a gallery of digital portraits of the honorees, interactive kiosks and a theater.^[12] In addition to the exhibits of the artifacts and documents from the collections of the Patent and Trademark Office, it also promotes future generations of inventors by sponsoring the Invent Now Kids program, Camp Invention, Club Invention and the Collegiate Inventors Competition as well as, with national partners, many ventures and special projects.

Camp Invention, founded in 1990, is a daytime summer camp for children, with, by 2006, more than 860 locations in 47 states. Every summer, it offers three programs: “Explore”, “Encounter” and “Imagine”. “Encounter” covers probability, sea exploration and outdoor survival while the other programs cover subjects such as astronomy, physics and forensics.^[13]

The Collegiate Inventors Competition was created in 1990 to encourage college and university students to be creative and innovative with science, engineering and technology for dealing with the problems of the world. Since then, with the help from the sponsors, it has awarded more than \$1 million to the winning students in two categories, Undergraduate and Graduate. In 2012, the first places were won with a delivery therapy for treating cancer and a way to facilitate suturing in abdominal surgery. Other finalists included the use of CT scanning and 3-D printing technology to replicate an amputee’s lost hand, a low-profile shoulder brace that can be applied by the athletes themselves, and an electric motorcycle that runs on spheres instead of wheels.^[14]

References

General

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Specific

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- [6] Amy Gamerman, "A cooperstown for gadgeteers and tinkers", *The Wall Street Journal*, Thursday, 17 August 1995, p. A9.
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- [8] Carol Biliczky, "Officials OK plans for ailing museum: National Inventors Hall of Fame will remain in operation, but will be resource for new school, undergo other changes", *Akron Beacon Journal* (Akron, Ohio, USA), Saturday, 17 May 2008; in: Newspaper Source Plus, *EBSCOhost* (Ipswich, Massachusetts, USA). Retrieved 17 February 2013.
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- [12] "National Inventors Hall of Fame and Museum, Alexandria, VA" (http://www.invent.org/hall_of_fame/1_5_0_museum.asp), *HALL OF FAME/Museums*, Invent.org.
- [13] Aman Ali, "Camp demands creativity: Youngsters enjoy hands-on learning in one of many National Inventors Hall of Fame programs", *Akron Beacon Journal* (Akron, Ohio, USA), Thursday, 15 June 2006; in: Newspaper Source Plus, *EBSCOhost* (Ipswich, Massachusetts, USA). Retrieved 17 February 2013.
- [14] "Collegiate Inventors Honored for Innovative Science and Technology Advances", *PR Newswire US*, Tuesday, 13 November 2012; in: Newspaper Source Plus, *EBSCOhost* (Ipswich, Massachusetts, USA). Retrieved 17 February 2013.

External links

- National Inventors (<http://www.invent.org>) website

Coordinates: 38.80124°N 77.064031°W﻿ (http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=National_Inventors_Hall_of_Fame¶ms=38.80124_N_77.064031_W_region:US-VA_type:landmark_source:google)

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