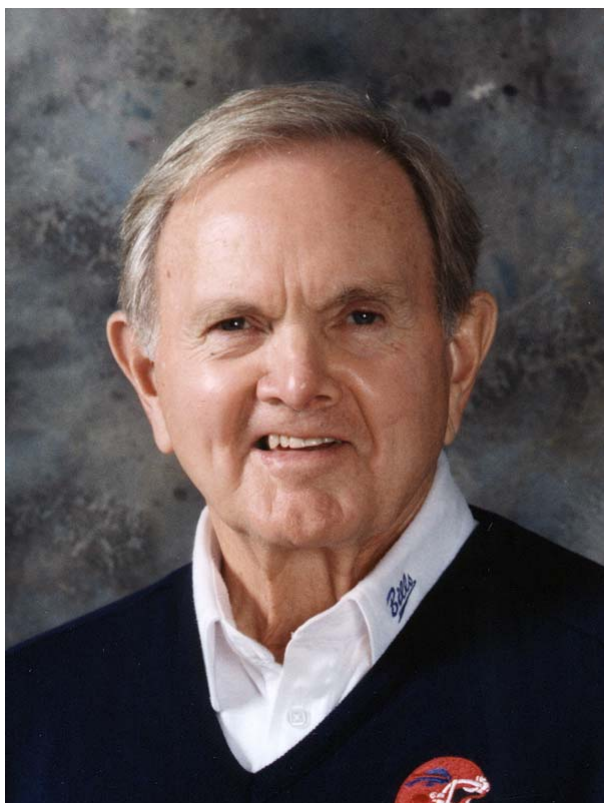


# The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

The Michigan-based Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation established two funds at Rochester Area Community Foundation, signaling a strategic community investment in the Rochester region.



## About Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.

He was born in Columbus, Ohio, but called the Detroit area home for most of his life. Mr. Wilson was best known as the 54-year-owner of the Buffalo Bills football franchise. When he passed away at the age of 95 in March 2014, proceeds from the sale of his beloved Bills were directed by him into the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

Mr. Wilson considered Western New York – Rochester and Buffalo – his adopted hometowns because of his passion for the Bills, which he founded in 1959. Rochester's connection to the Bills

was strengthened in 2000 when the team moved its summer training camp to St. John Fisher College in Pittsford. About 15 percent of the Bills' 60,000 season ticketholders live in the greater Rochester area.

## **About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation**

The grantmaking foundation that bears Mr. Wilson's name, based in Detroit, is dedicated to sustained investment in the quality of life for the people in Western New York and Southeastern Michigan. Per his directive, the foundation's \$1.2 billion in assets will be spent over the course of 20 years – through 2035. Grantmaking by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation focuses on four key areas:

- Active lifestyles;
- Early childhood, after school, young adults and working families;
- Caregivers;
- Entrepreneurship and economic development; and
- Nonprofit support and innovation.

## **Wilson Legacy Funds in Rochester**

Rochester Area Community Foundation is honored that the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation chose to work with us to provide annual and ongoing support for youth sports and recreation in our region and to help ensure a strategic community investment approach in Rochester.

**The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Fund for Youth Sports:** This endowed fund was established in December 2016 with a \$5 million gift to increase access and affordability of all forms of physical activity for youth through organized sports and casual play. This fund provides annual and ongoing grants to support current and new youth sports and recreation programs and initiatives run by local communities or organizations.

The Community Foundation and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation partnered with the Aspen Institute's Sports & Society Program to study existing youth sports opportunities in Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates counties and highlight where gaps exist. Findings from the Aspen Institute study were released in a June 2017 report, *State of Play: Greater Rochester & The Fingers Lakes*, and will help focus the Community Foundation's grantmaking investments from this fund.

The first five grant rounds (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022) provided a total investment of \$1,463,221 in local youth sports and recreation programs.

**The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Fund for Smart Strategy:** In December 2015, this endowment fund was established with a \$500,000 gift. It supports expert research, evaluation, intelligence gathering, and assessment of best practices to advance powerful solutions for positive community change. This fund has supported these key projects:

- The report, *Poverty and Self-Sufficiency in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area*, released in September 2016, analyzed poverty data from the U.S. Census' five-year American Community Survey. Its findings will help provide baseline data for measuring local anti-poverty efforts.
- *Hard Facts: Race and Ethnicity in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area*, released in August 2017, found that the status of African Americans and Latinos in our region is worse across the board than their counterparts in New York State and the nation. The *Hard Facts Update* report was released in August 2020.
- Commissioned a 2018 scientific poll by Siena College on race and racial attitudes in Monroe County – the third since 2012 – in conjunction with the *Democrat and Chronicle*.
- In 2019, the Center for Governmental Research compiled

an updated *Profile of the Hispanic Community*, a study that provided a statistical snapshot of the Finger Lakes Region's Latino population. In addition to demographic data, the report presents findings on prenatal care and infant health, education, and economic security.

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Nonprofit organizations from the Rochester region are welcome to apply directly to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for grants to support their projects and programs that meet the foundation's grantmaking guidelines. [Learn more here.](#)