THEY CAME TO PLAY
100 Years of the Toy Industry Association

By
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The Hotel McAlpin in New York was the site of the Association’s inaugural meeting in 1916.
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In the spring of 1916, a small group of toy manufacturers gathered in the heart of New York City to discuss the need to form an association. Their vision was to establish an organization that would serve to promote American-made products, encourage year-round sales of toys, and protect the general interests of the burgeoning U.S. toy industry.

One hundred years later, the association born of that meeting continues to thrive. Now known as the Toy Industry Association (TIA), our member companies account for approximately 90% of the entire domestic toy industry—an industry that today is valued at over $22 billion.

Of course, the Association of 2016 looks vastly different than that of a century past. From 46 initial member manufacturers, membership has grown to more than 800 companies and toy professionals, while American toymakers are now joined by retailers, inventors and designers, importers, distributors, licensors, sales representatives, and service providers from around the world. A staff that once consisted of a single secretary now maintains offices in both New York City and Washington, D.C., working year-round to provide robust educational and business-boosting events, resources, and services for our members. The Association also strives to serve as a unifying voice that advocates for the industry as a whole and on an increasingly international scale.

The Association that exists today is a credit to the hard work and wisdom of the companies and individuals who have shaped and guided the organization over the past 100 years. This book is meant to document that journey, and narrate not only the evolution of the Association itself but that of the American toy industry—for what is a trade association but the reflection of its members and those it exists to serve?
You’ll read how the wars of the 20th century impacted the toy community, how the advent of TV gave birth to new marketing practices, how globalization forever changed the nature of toy trade, and how the Association adapted at every turn. But you’ll also see many things have in fact remained consistent throughout the past century: the Association’s commitment to membership excellence, to impactful advocacy, to philanthropy, and to changing attitudes and behaviors about the positive power of childhood play.

The magic of a toy lies in its ability to entertain children, to delight, spark smiles, and bring them comfort. Toys encourage kids to explore their environments and teach them vital skills they will need to successfully navigate the world. Children form social competence as they play with friends, boost their cognitive thinking as they solve puzzles and problems, increase their physical abilities as they enjoy active play, enhance their creativity through imaginative play, and so many more benefits that will serve them over a lifetime!

For 100 years, TIA and our members have taken great pride in helping to foster these joyful learning experiences. Now, we look forward to the next 100 years of advancing children’s development through play and celebrating our industry’s continued innovation and creativity as toys evolve with each passing generation.

So on this historic milestone of our centenary, we honor the toy industry pioneers who set us on this most wonderful path, celebrate our mutual achievements, and move into the next century prepared to continue our collective dedication to brightening the lives of children and families everywhere.

Steve Pasierb
President and CEO
Toy Industry Association
Introduction

In June 1916, a group of toymakers met at the Hotel McAlpin in New York to establish an organization to support and promote the relatively new American toy industry.

A century later, though the industry has evolved, many of the Association’s original core initiatives are still at the heart of its present work. Throughout the years, the Association has actively promoted the toy industry, philanthropy, and the developmental, entertainment, and lifetime benefits of play for children. And to this day, the Association continues to work with medical experts, consumer groups, and government agencies to ensure the safety of toys.

The history of the Toy Industry Association (formed as the Toy Manufacturers of the U.S.A.) is a microcosm of American business over the past century. The Association was founded in part to protect a growing domestic manufacturing economy and a comparatively new toy business. Over the last hundred years, the industry has become global, and through wars, economic upheaval, and more, the Association has helped steer a steady course for the U.S. toy industry, evolving as the world changed. Today, the toy industry is, in many ways, a model of the interdependency of countries and companies in modern enterprise.

Yet for all the business and cultural developments of the past hundred years, fostering great play has been the overriding objective of the Association. The toys and the culture have certainly changed in that time, but play as a
central experience of childhood and child development remains the same, providing a platform for the experiences and the learning that will prepare children for adulthood.

Perhaps more than other industries, the toy business has always been about people. The creative, inventive, and visionary men and women who have shaped this business have devoted their lives to creating the best environment possible for the business—and delivering invaluable and memorable experiences for children. Many of them are featured in the Toy Industry Hall of Fame (see Appendix 1). Their achievements and stories have been an inspiration to many others who have made play their life’s work.

This book recounts some of the business highlights that shaped the toy industry as it grew along with the nation and the world over the past hundred years. Culled from the archives and notes of the Association from 1916 to the present, it looks at the major areas of endeavor for the organization and how they evolved over time.

Yet for all the advances in technology and globalization, little has changed in the challenges and excitement of creating toys that resonate with children. Chances are, people a century from now will look back and say the same thing.

Join us on this journey.
2000
Toy Fair expands to become a full-building show at the Jacob K. Javits Center

2003
100th anniversary of Toy Fair

2000
TOTY Awards are founded to honor the most outstanding toys and properties of the year

2003
The ICTI Care Process is established to ensure safe and humane workplaces for toy factory workers worldwide

2003
Toy Industry Foundation is re-launched and expanded to introduce a new program, The Toy Bank, which provides toys for children in need

2004
International manufacturers are eligible for TIA membership for the first time ever. The Canadian Toy Association becomes an affiliate of TIA with shared membership

2011
Retailers become eligible for full TIA membership alongside manufacturers, inventors & designers, sales reps and licensors

2013
TIA and leading legislators establish the Congressional Toy Caucus to open a positive dialogue about issues facing the toy industry

2008
TIA works with legislators to institute mandatory testing and compliance with toy safety standard ASTM F963 under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act

2014
Toy Bank donations reach $100 million since the program’s launch in 2003, helping to bring smiles to nearly 17 million kids in need

2015
TIA launches the industry-wide Genius of Play program to raise awareness about play’s vital role in child development

2015
Toy Fair ’15 breaks records as the largest show in its history, with 422,797 net square feet of exhibits

2016
TIA celebrates 100 years!

$100,000,000 Raised!
Beginnings and Early Days
A Vision Realized, An Association Formed

June 9, 1916. A warm day in New York. Rain in recent days had left the city damp and a bit uncomfortable, and showers were threatening for the afternoon, according to The New York Times.

In Mexico, there was revolution. In Europe, there were growing tensions as war erupted, and the impact of global uncertainty—and whether the United States would involve itself in other countries’ conflicts—created unrest, provoking stock market jitters. And in the United States, there was shouting and confusion in the Republican party as progressive Theodore Roosevelt was potentially going to run as a third-party candidate, upsetting the party that was spending most of its time criticizing the Democrats. Inflaming passions on both sides were concerns about treaties and America’s sovereignty, as well as arguments about health insurance, birth control, and whether the states or the federal government should determine civil rights. Wage inequality between workers and management was a hot topic, as were working conditions for laborers. A young British actor, Charlie Chaplin, was signed to his first film contract, and the comings and goings of the first million-dollar actress, Mary Pickford, intrigued an entertainment-besotted populace. New technologies were transforming the home and the factory, all promising a better quality of life. In Memphis, Tennessee, the Wegman family was about to debut a new concept—the “supermarket”—that would transform retailing, and there was nervousness about its implications for consumer shopping.

It was against this backdrop that a group of men met at the Hotel McAlpin on 34th Street, with the idea of forming an association for representatives of the growing American toy industry. It was an idea whose time had come. Indeed, the rise of domestic American industries and shifting production to the United States had been meteoric in the latter years of the 19th century—and not just in toys. Mass production had made American-manufactured consumer goods more prevalent and less costly than goods imported from Europe, opening up new opportunities for business and consumption. There was demand for these goods among the growing middle class and a growing population overall.

As a homegrown industry, toys were comparatively “late to the party” when looked at in the context of the American Industrial Revolution. While American manufacturing had boomed in other industries from the beginning of the 19th century, most toys were still largely homemade. Consistent with a cultural view that childhood was all about preparing children to shoulder adult responsibilities as soon as possible—and go to work, in fact—toys had a relatively low priority for the vast majority of the
population. Manufactured toys came from Europe and were considered expensive luxury goods. They certainly weren’t considered essentials. It was a comparatively rare child who received a toy that hadn’t been made by a member of the family. Dolls, games, rocking horses, and even marbles made out of clay were just some of the homemade toys that children of the era played with. Fortunate children had toy pianos, other musical instruments, and a toy circus manufactured by the A. Schoenhut Company, which had been established in 1872 and was, by 1916, the largest U.S. toy company. Lionel Trains was well-established, and two relatively new entries—Tinkertoy and Erector sets—created the category that would come to be called construction toys. After Crayola introduced colors to its crayons in 1903, the workaday wax marker became a popular tool for creativity, and Morris Michtom’s teddy bear put Ideal Toys on the map. Thanks to the rise of the middle class, the shift away from a primarily agrarian culture, and the rise of leisure among children, toys became viable for a broad audience that had not existed previously. In that distinctly American way, an industry had sprouted to serve this new demand. By the time the Association was formed, a substantial number of companies were focusing exclusively on toys, and more were coming in every year. It was, finally, a bona fide industry in the United States.

At the same time, the Progressive Era—which in part arose in response to this boom in manufacturing and disposable income of the rising middle class—had added new government controls on many aspects of business, and manufacturing in particular. These efforts were intended to protect workers (especially in the wake of such tragedies as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911) and to protect consumers from poorly made products or goods of inferior (i.e., dangerous) quality.

Nor could businesses ignore competition from foreign manufacturers, which presented a challenge to many of these fledgling businesses—for if Americans had seen an opportunity to create their own toys, manufacturers in other countries had as well, and they were eager to get in on the action. Given these challenges, competitive companies in a wide variety of industries found that by banding together, they could more effectively work with the government and stimulate markets for the goods that their industries provided.
This was a new era for business. On the one hand, there were huge opportunities. On the other, there were regulations and challenges that could be daunting to small companies putting their time and resources into manufacturing products. Enter trade associations. The early years of the 20th century saw a boom in such associations serving all kinds of industries, from rubber to realtors, booksellers to bankers. Even professional golfers organized as an association in 1916. Associations proved to be effective in a wide variety of endeavors, from promoting industries at large to negotiating the waters of government regulation. The Corset Manufacturers of America, for example, was instrumental in establishing the widespread acceptance of that comparatively new garment, the brassiere. Their efforts made the “unmentionable” mentionable, and transformed how women bought undergarments. Though that particular organization has long since faded into history, its impact on the apparel industry is still being felt today. (And this is not the last time this organization will show up in these pages.)

Given the challenges and opportunities of this new world of business and consumerism, why not establish a toy manufacturers’ association? In fact, as war was disrupting Europe and the United States was teetering on the brink of involvement, the protection and promotion of a potentially vulnerable industry was more important than ever before.

Approximately 50 companies were represented at the first meeting at the Hotel McAlpin, and newspapers the following day reported new enthusiasm for the American toy industry. This inaugural event was the result of an ongoing effort spearheaded by A.C. Gilbert, president of the A.C. Gilbert Company. The father of the Erector set had for years suggested that the industry should organize, but it wasn’t until Gilbert and his supporters proposed a structure for the organization as a stand-alone entity supported by contributions of the members that the idea became
a reality. Indeed, in Gilbert’s note to the inaugural meeting read into the minutes (Gilbert had to be absent owing to the death of his father), he wrote, “I don’t know of any toy meeting in the last 20 or 30 years but what I have been allied with the undertaking and the great difficulty has always been that where a body of men got together, it could not be arranged for the proper work to be done.” He concluded by saying that having an organization with one person, “a secretary,” at the helm was the only way to create an effective structure. It would be important, he wrote, to have one centralized person who is knowledgeable about all the issues facing the industry as a resource for members. “So,” Gilbert wrote, “when we go away to our various offices and factories we will know that we have our man in New York who will keep us in touch with everything that is going on in the Toy Industry.”

Prior to the meeting, Gilbert and others had prepared and circulated a booklet that strongly argued for the formation of an association and its necessity. With endorsements from many of the leading companies of the time, the booklet was intended to show, “If the toy manufacturers large and small, in every part of the country, can be united into a strong and progressive association with a definite play of action, a great deal of good can be accomplished for every man engaged in toy making.”
The booklet laid out 16 points that would guide the organization. A century later, though the phrasing and a few events would be different, it’s interesting to see how relevant many of the founding concerns are to the toy industry today.

1. The problem of tariff is one that is going to be more serious than ever after the war is over. Every manufacturer should appreciate the absolute necessity of co-operation through an organization for watching our interests.

2. To co-operate and help the toy merchants in every conceivable way.

3. To raise the whole toy industry to a higher ethical standard.

4. To exchange ideas on questions pertaining to our manufacturing problems.

5. To co-operate in every conceivable way in the uplift working being done by the United States Chamber of Commerce and similar associations.

6. To protect ourselves in the matter of credit.

7. To keep statistics that would be of assistance to the various members of the organization.

8. This Organization should not be formed for the purpose of regulating or controlling prices.

9. The Organization should be interested in all things regarding legislations that would effect the interests of the toy merchants in general.

1 Syntax, capitalization, and punctuation are preserved from the original.
An organized effort on the part of the Association of Toy Manufacturers with the Assoc. of National Advertisers could restrict the placing of objectionable advertising alongside of good advertising.

This organization could carry out the ideas of Toy Leaders of the World and it has been suggested to get up an emblem that would be a mark of integrity and honesty in merchandising. Such an emblem could be used by members who were national advertisers in their advertising, and by others on their merchandise so that it would stand for something in purchasing.

Through an organized effort on the part of the members of this organization the sale of American made toys could be carried out in such a way that it would provide wonderfully effective results. The organization could nationally advertise American made toys and the result would be a largely increased sales of our domestic toys.

Plans for handling export business could be considered. For instance, a representative could be sent down to South America to investigate the best method of securing export business.

The social side of the organization is strongly emphasized, for in order to make a success of anything of this nature it is necessary to bring the members together in a friendly way.

To support the Stevens Bill² which is strongly in the interests of the manufacturers and individual merchants.

It should be the aim of the organization to co-operate in National movements.³

An organized effort on the part of the Association of Toy Manufacturers with the Assoc. of National Advertisers could restrict the placing of objectionable advertising alongside of good advertising.

2. The Stevens Bill was a highly controversial bill introduced in 1914 designed to prevent large retailers from undercutting smaller retailers on prices. It was designed to provide a national standard for regarding price-cutting and unify laws that had been passed in 19 states and were causing both chaos and competition among toy manufacturers. The bill was intended to give manufacturers the right to set retail prices as long as no monopoly resulted. Opponents said that it was restrictive of competition, while supporters argued that it ensured fair trade. The passions on either side of the issue would be familiar to observers of politics today. Yet, ultimately, the bill went down to defeat. Pricing remains a highly fraught issue in the toy industry.

3. This was a reference to the attempt to establish a year-round season for selling toys. The writers of the booklet argued that, although gift-giving was becoming more popular for every holiday, why shouldn’t Easter or even the Fourth of July become a gift-giving occasion? As they wrote, “Perhaps the most graphic way we can illustrate this point is the proposed midsummer advertising campaign that could be staged through a Toy organization in unusual style. This Association would probably secure the co-operation of dealers and by working in unison and harmony in all probability the Fourth of July Christmas idea could be fostered and developed in such a way as would prove a great financial success.”
The meeting attendees would have received this booklet in advance. The booklet also discussed the structure of the association, the need to establish a New York office, and the perennial question of creating a year-round season of toys. The booklet’s call for the creation of an association was persuasive, bolstered by a growing awareness of more restrictive government regulations, a changing consumer base, and foreign competition. It was finally evident that an association could allow diverse and often competitive manufacturers to effectively band together to protect their common interests. The growing support for such an organization was evident in the handwritten minutes of that fateful first meeting. And so, by vote and acclamation, the Toy Manufacturers of the United States was formed. A.C. Gilbert was voted the first president and chairman of the Association for a two-year term from 1916 through 1917, and was followed by Harry C. Ives, president of the Ives Corporation. Over the four years that these men helmed the Association, many of its initial practices were instituted, and its identity as the voice of the industry was firmly established.

The newspaper accounts of the organization’s formation stress that the Association was designed to promote the U.S. toy industry and that it would be in compliance with all governmental rules and regulations concerning production and business practices, specifically with relation to price fixing. This was critical in the wake of litigation against companies being pursued by the government at the time for not adhering to these rules.

Leo Schlesinger of Leo Schlesinger & Co., Inc. issued the initial statement, which was widely reported in the papers at the time. It read:

“Our object is to improve the toy industry of this country, which has been growing very extensively from the time when toys could not be brought here from abroad.

“We are not forming for the purpose of regulating or controlling prices. We want to stimulate the use of toys by giving publicity to American made toys and to give preference for toys made in America. We want to encourage the custom of buying toys for our midsummer holiday to have two seasons instead of one. We want to be well equipped to protect our industry when the war is over; to prevent the dumping of toys in this country, which, from reports in the daily press, this country must fear, which will destroy our industry and interfere with the labor now employed.

“We must look after the tariff question. This is most important. We cannot pay our labor the same as has been paid abroad. We are constantly increasing the wages of our workmen, who are difficult to obtain.
“We want to stimulate our trade in foreign countries. Many buyers have visited us this season from South America, London and Australia. The Merchants’ Association of this city has many calls for names of American toy manufacturers; it distributes this information to our industry.

“If we can organize and obtain all or nearly all of those that are manufacturers of toys to join with us, we can have a central office in New York in charge of a competent secretary who is to have charge of all statistics and where all manufacturers will have their lines registered and where they can apply for information and meet when they visit our city.

“A committee on publicity is to be organized to advertise in foreign and domestic toy magazines and where they can forward the request to the manufacturers who make the class of goods desired. With this outline of our organization, I am sure you will find an organization, as proposed, most beneficial.”

Reading these words a century later, it’s remarkable to consider how much, with the exception of “the midsummer holiday,” the organization has been able to stay true to its roots over time. While the men—and at the time it was only men—who were at that first meeting wouldn’t recognize the toys of the 21st century, they would certainly recognize the passion of today’s leaders for supporting and promoting toys, play, and the U.S. toy industry.

Given that the Association was now established, it needed a home. An office was secured in the Flatiron Building, and a lease was signed for $1,000 for a term of three years. A permanent secretary was hired, and regular meetings were scheduled. Plans were made to try to enroll every current toy manufacturer in the United States, and even the social aspects of the Association were put into place with a series of dinners and plans for future meetings in exotic locales.

With the Association founded at last, it was time to get down to work.
Early Years, Early Efforts

Once the Association was established, members wasted no time trying to devise ways to promote toys and the toy industry. Then, as now, the preponderance of business was in the fourth quarter, and securing year-round toy sales remained a challenge.

But how to do that?

It’s a question that baffled—and continues to baffle—toymakers and marketers. It was, as noted earlier, one of the 16 points that drove the formation of the Association in the first place. It’s not that toys weren’t—or aren’t—sold and purchased year-round, but the Holy Grail of the industry has always been finding a major event to stimulate toy sales. In 1916, retailers were trying to promote “Midsummer Christmas” around the Fourth of July. Major department stores promoted it as a gift-giving time, and while toys were not the main focus of these efforts, A.C. Gilbert saw one marketing positioning that seemed sure-fire (pun intended). He believed that marketing toys instead of explosives on the Fourth seemed like an ideal alternative. Gilbert wrote of the efforts of the Wanamakers department store in Philadelphia, “Those ads did not all apply directly to our products but rather to the ‘safe and sane’ idea of giving presents on the Fourth instead of buying dangerous explosives. Some windows were very effective, showing a boy with fingers done up and eyes blown out and on the other side a boy with a construction toy…. It was pleasing to see the fine results which were secured.”

Although Gilbert and other members of the young Association supported these efforts, reported on some increases in sales, and even suggested plans for ensuing years, there are no records of this idea moving forward in any coordinated way. But the promotion of toys in summertime was of course important, as different types of toys were, then as now, being merchandised for the summer months. It’s interesting to note that the modern promotions of “Christmas in July,” which are now a staple of summertime retailing, had their roots in the efforts of diverse retailers and industries in the second decade of the 20th century.

The Association also faced other headwinds in trying to drive year-round toy sales. For most retailers at the time, toy departments were only minimally profitable, if at all. They existed primarily as what we call today “traffic drivers”: a way to attract shoppers into the stores. Just more than
half of the dry goods retailers at the time even had a dedicated toy department, according to a 1915 survey by trade magazine *The Dry Goods Reporter*, though approximately 80 percent had some toys in their stock. However, fewer than 25 percent focused on year-round sales.

To find help with addressing these challenges, the Toy Manufacturers of the U.S.A. turned to one of the most successful associations of the time, and one that is still effective today: The California Associated Raisin Company. From humble beginnings as a cooperative for helping California growers handle their crops, it had evolved by 1916 into an effective promotional arm whose generic national advertising of raisins, as opposed to those of a particular grower or brand, had proven extremely effective.

This example of success confirmed the Association’s belief in promoting an entire industry rather than one company—a strategy that had been part of the founding vision for the organization and would inspire one of its first major efforts. Along with the creation of the first trademarked logo for the Association, the move to promote the toy industry as a whole would be one of the defining events of the Association’s early years.

When the Toy Manufacturers of the U.S.A. was formed, World War I was raging overseas—but the United States was still 10 months away from officially entering the war. That meant that for U.S. manufacturers, there was virtually no competition for shelf space due to lack of imports from overseas. If consumers wanted toys, they had to buy American made. Still, members were looking ahead to the end of the war and were already concerned about what would happen when European toys inevitably started to return. In 1916, imports from Germany, for example, were virtually non-existent. Given that the U.S. toy industry was still in its relative youth, in most consumers’ minds toys that came from overseas were inherently superior. The fear that Europe would dump product that could not be shipped during the war, thus flooding the market with inexpensive goods, posed a potential threat to U.S. manufacturers, as did the rising manufacturing capabilities of China and Japan.

Given all these events and eventualities, the Association realized that there was an opportunity—and a need—to proactively promote American toys and protect against future competition from overseas. Tariffs on imported toys were a possible form of market protection, but government processes were slow and unpredictable—not to mention that tariffs can work both ways, and the Association’s founders were eager to develop export markets. These concerns about tariffs and the potential for international trade would inspire the beginning of the Association’s ongoing involvement with Washington and policy-making.
In the meantime, however, something more immediate was needed. As a result, the Association formed the “Advertising and Midsummer Holiday” committee to propose ways to promote U.S.-made toys. Some of their initial tactics will sound fairly familiar to contemporary readers, even if the expression of the ideas seems a bit quaint. For instance, regarding publicity, the intention was to prepare stories, “on the manufacture of American toys that will be so interesting, newspapers will be glad to print them as news items.” The idea was widely endorsed by members of the Association, though to the 21st century marketing professional it sounds almost unbelievably naïve.

Inclusion of the newly created Association logo on packaging and in trade advertisements was considered essential, and the general sense of growing patriotism in light of the escalating war was an attractive hook.

There was one avenue of promotion that would probably not occur to 21st century marketers but in 1916 was considered so important that the Association could justify a significant financial investment: store windows. A.C. Gilbert believed that if the Association could secure 10,000 windows promoting American-made toys, the message would reach a significant audience. In the days before television and radio, of course, town centers were bustling, and chances were good that shoppers would inevitably see the windows, as would people who were just out for a casual stroll. The Association believed that displays of American-made goods would inspire people to make that a significant criterion in their toy purchasing decisions. The hope was that consumers would become accustomed to buying American-made toys and would continue to do so even after less expensive, foreign-made toys were once again available.

Association members needed little convincing. After all, the power of the shop window was already the stuff of legend, as just two years earlier, Charles Pajeau had saved his Tinkertoy line from going under by having costumed “elves” play with the toys in the windows of the Marshall Field’s department store, leading to huge sales of a toy that buyers had originally rejected. The Association’s first chairman, Gilbert, subsequently cited the use of store windows as an example of the effectiveness of “foresight” versus “hindsight” when it came to promoting the industry. An emphasis on using store windows to promote toy sales during the holidays would continue through the 1940s. Though they are still effective in contemporary retailing, they do not have the power or reach that they had in their heyday.
The “Buy American” campaign would take nearly two years to come to fruition. Again, it was Gilbert whose diligent pressure kept plans moving forward. Since the earliest days of the Association, he had said, “We have to convince the public that ‘toys’ does not mean ‘made in Germany.’” By 1918, the war was over, consumers were spending again, passionate patriotism was the mood, and marketers were rushing to take advantage of it. At a special meeting of the board of directors that year, it was voted that the Association would spend $65,000 to promote American toys—an unprecedented sum at the time.

The Association’s program was in line with those run by other organizations also promoting American-made (or grown) products as superior to imported goods, as well as patriotic in that they helped support American workers and businesses. Other associations that were launching Buy American campaigns in 1918 and 1919 included the Walnut Manufacturers, Merchant Tailors, candy associations, and even, without any irony, the Irish Linen Society.

This was also the first time that the Association would engage in a cooperative advertising program, a relatively new development in business that mirrored the rise of associations and trade groups. For this effort, Association members were asked to contribute one-half of one percent of sales. The ad itself featured an image of Uncle Sam holding a boy and a girl on his knees, holding a model horse and a doll, respectively. Beneath that image was a poem shown below. To modern ears, it may seem a little stilted, but at the time it was very much in the style of Edgar Guest, whose popular verses were sentimental, optimistic, and full of homespun emotions. Written in iambic tetrameter, it could have graced any of the popular magazines of the time.

**AMERICAN TOYS**

*The pennies spent on little toys*  
*For Uncle Sam’s own girls and boys*  
*In turn, of course, go back again*  
*To our own loyal working men*  
*American—the Workman’s Hand*  
*American—‘twas Built and Planned*  
*American—in Spirit, too*  
*America’s Toy Gift to YOU.*
Of course, the ad (and poem) did appear in the magazines, as the Association placed it in popular publications like The Saturday Evening Post. Although the Post is mostly remembered today for the covers by Norman Rockwell, it was one of the most effective vehicles for reaching a broad-based audience, with its combination of high- and low-brow material and its anticipated weekly arrival in homes. Among the stories of heroes and the edge-of-the-seat serials, the new ad program would have been perfectly at home.

Association archives from the period provide no record for how these ads performed on any statistical level, but minutes of the board meetings record the positive responses to the program and list a significant number of shops that had signed on to build window displays with materials provided by the Association. Sales representatives had been provided with “creed cards,” which stated the importance of promoting American-made toys, and the Association sent out reminders that the message could never be promoted enough, even if it was the second or third time a prospect heard it. This was a hard press sales plan, and, as in other industries, promoting American-made became a good business strategy. Toy sales jumped in 1919 due to the end of the war, and it can be inferred that the patriotic zeitgeist didn’t hurt. This would not be the last time that the Association would successfully capitalize on the spirit of the times to promote play to the general public.
Ads created by the Association to promote American-made toys.
Soon after its formation, the Association found itself trying to balance consumer sentiment with the promotion of toys. Throughout the years leading up to the war, military toys had grown in popularity. With peace came a concern that children (boys) should not be encouraged to play war, and local ordinances arose trying to limit the sale of military toys. For example, there was a proposed ban on cap pistols in upstate New York, which the Association’s representatives successfully fought on the grounds that inconsistent regulations would create undue challenges for businesses. (Remember: This was a time of business boosterism in the United States, and despite cultural pressures, moves that limited American business were unwelcome.) Instead of eliminating toy guns, then, the emphasis shifted to promoting play with G-Men and other domestic heroes, preserving the classic good guy/bad guy play pattern. The same cultural shift would happen again 50 years later as frustration with U.S. involvement in Vietnam would change play from combat-driven to being focused on American heroes and superhero play. The early successes in this area validated the Association’s notion that speaking for the industry as a whole was far more effective than what any toy company could do individually.

The cultural response to toys, as noted above and in countless cases through the years, has always gone well beyond the impact of any one toy on a child’s play. Perhaps because the industry serves children, it has often been a “lightning rod” for criticism. From the earliest days of the Association, certain special interest groups have targeted toys and stirred fear or concern as a means of generating publicity. In one early case, it wasn’t one type of toy that was targeted, but all toys. In 1919, a religious group not affiliated with any standard denomination attempted to mount a public campaign to discourage all gift-giving for Christmas, with a special emphasis on toys. This is the first instance in the Association’s records that a group seeking to generate publicity for itself had been critical of toys. Despite mentions of concern, there is no indication that this push received any traction with consumers, particularly not as toy sales continued to climb. However, this event set the stage for the Association’s ongoing work in protecting and promoting the toy industry.

As the war ended, the Association responded to new economic challenges facing the industry. The war didn’t just cause havoc in European busi-

Did you know?

The Tariff Act of 1922 placed duties of as much as 70% on toys from Japan and Germany. Under the Act, the President had the ability to raise or lower tariffs by as much as 50%.
nesses, it also affected the comparatively new toy industries in Japan and Australia. The Germans were selling toys at significantly reduced prices, which, particularly in England, threatened the stability of the English toy market. England responded by limiting exports from the United States to 20 percent of its 1913 levels—a significant reduction, particularly for businesses that were looking to exports as a means of stimulating growth in the aftermath of the war. Similarly, Japan was seeking to enter the U.S. market with prices for basic goods that were significantly lower than what U.S. manufacturers could provide. As reconstruction began, embargoes and tariffs became common, which limited international trade. In addition to England, there were also countries that tried to embargo all American toys. On one hand, these moves recognized how far and fast the U.S. toy industry had grown, and how much progress had been made toward Gilbert’s desire to redefine toys and promote the U.S. industry. On the other hand, these embargoes threatened to put the brakes on the industry’s ability to capitalize on recovering consumer markets worldwide, though it would take months, if not years, for prices, availability of labor, and consumer spending to find a new level of normality.

In the face of these challenges, the Association repeatedly stressed the importance of the “buy U.S.–made toys” campaign and emphasized how vital it was that “every man do his part” to get dealers on board. The dealers apparently continued to respond positively, as at an auction of European toys in 1919, the auctioneers were grilled about the origin of the toys being auctioned. In another situation, right after the end of the war, a charitable organization threatened that it would buy German toys to give to children, which at the time were being sold inexpensively, if U.S. manufacturers didn’t meet the prices. Acknowledging that this was tantamount to extortion, the Association nonetheless worked with its members to try to resolve the situation. Though no record exists of how this was finally resolved, the passions evoked were very much reflective of the time.

As the emphasis on domestic trade grew, talk of reactive tariffs loomed. With embargoes impacting the industry, the Association began its formal
relationship with Washington, providing a voice for the toy industry and ensuring that it would be heard. The Association hired a Washington representative who often worked with other associations to promote common causes. One of the earliest successes of these lobbying and communications efforts might, on the surface, seem small, but it was anything but. The Association successfully argued that the toy business was not “non-essential,” and as a result did not have its coal and paperboard supplies cut off during and immediately following the war. (Any industry deemed “non-essential” had its supplies heavily curtailed, in some cases effectively putting companies out of business.) The effect of this was immediate and direct: It meant that U.S. manufacturers could continue producing toys, even during the height of the war in 1917 and 1918.

The Association was also very active in ensuring that its members were in compliance with changing labor laws. Due to the war, many children had gone to work to help support their families. The Federal Child Labor Law of 1917 limited work for children ages 14 to 16 to no more than eight hours a day, six days a week. To a modern reader this may seem unthinkable, but it was a big step at the time: roughly a 15 percent drop in work hours. The law was controversial and actively opposed by many other industries on the grounds that it would harm productivity. But the Association, both sensitive to potential criticism of the industry and supportive of positive working conditions for all labor, was instrumental in ensuring that all members complied.

Clearly, there was much to keep the Association and its members busy in its earliest years—yet they still found time for industry-wide social gatherings. Whether escaping the summer heat or the winter chill, the Association began its practice of repairing to different climes to talk about the industry and how to build it. Though the companies were diverse and often highly competitive, it was also a collegial group. Whether in Atlantic City, Bermuda, New Hampshire, or at A.C. Gilbert’s lodge, the members met regularly to discuss the issues of the day and take breaks for kite flying, canoe tilting, dart throwing, a dip in the ocean, or other recreational activities. It was also the beginning of the tradition.
of annual dinners, to which such luminaries as Teddy Roosevelt were invited to speak and Houdini to perform. Serious business as toys were, the dedication to creating some adult fun was never ignored. All of these factors—together with a stabilizing post-War economy, a pervading spirit of optimism, and, of course, growing toy sales—led Association President Ives to praise the “get together spirit which has been so well-established in the year and a half since the organization of the Association.”

And it was only the beginning. As we’ll see, the history of the Association’s key areas of endeavor would reflect not only the changing global economic conditions but also a changing culture and, most importantly for the toy industry, the evolution of childhood.
Policy and Politics

If the Association was founded in a tumultuous time for business, that wasn’t going to slow down. With the organization now established, it was clear to members that they needed to have a voice in shaping policy. Despite its high profile, the toy industry was small compared to the fuel, transportation, and agriculture concerns all clamoring to be heard in Washington.

As the Association and its successes became known, membership grew. While names like E.I. Horsman and Fleischaker & Baum would be known to some today, the roster of membership included companies like Paramount Rubber Consolidate, Garton Toy Company, and a host of other names now largely lost to history.

The young Association studied the work of other successful associations, including the Silk Association and the Corset and Brassiere Manufacturer’s Association, with which it shared office space from 1925 through 1931. These associations had been highly effective in promoting their respective industries and creating sets of unified standards for all of the United States. At the time, state and even local laws varied, and as businesses became national, developing unified standards was essential to effective operation.

The tariffs that had begun during the war years continued for nearly a decade. Designed to protect American industries, they were nonetheless a challenge. The toy industry and the Association were caught at times in the middle of a volatile argument. The protectionist policies espoused by the Republicans were countered by Democrats’ freer trade positions. Certainly the domestic toy industry would benefit from tariffs, as they would protect U.S. companies. The Tariff Act of 1922 placed duties of as much as 70 percent on toys from Japan and Germany, and under the act the president had the ability to raise or lower tariffs selectively by as much as 50 percent, which allowed companies to even out production costs. For an industry still establishing itself in the post-War years, protecting the U.S. industry and discouraging countries from undercutting domestic prices with dumped merchandise was of great importance.

One of the key roles that the Association played in the establishment of these tariffs was in defining the categories of toys to be covered. The Association set up meetings in Washington, where it demonstrated toys that were made by U.S. manufacturers compared to similar foreign-made toys at lower prices. It turned out to be an effective demonstration, and one that was used often—and not something that could be done with other products as dramatically.
The industry would be protected again in 1930 when the new tariff act would expand duties on all imported toys. Known as the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, it had been originally designed to only cover agricultural products, but due to pressure from toy industry and other representatives, by the time the bill was signed into law by President Hoover it covered more than 890 products, representing the largest tariff increase in U.S. history. The ultimate contraction of international trade that would arise from these tariffs—and the retaliatory measures taken by other countries—appear not to have impacted the toy industry as severely as it did others. Though some U.S. manufacturers were looking to export as early as World War I, for more of them, meeting domestic demand was about all they could do at that time. After all, the 1920s saw a great expansion of the toy market. Moreover, the industry was helped by keeping out foreign competition. This was an era when many toys would be considered basic goods by current standards: dolls, blocks, and so forth. With American companies such as Lionel and Ideal becoming even more firmly established as leaders in their categories, toys that for an earlier generation would have had to have been imported from Europe now came from the United States. It may have taken a decade, but Gilbert’s vision for “toys” meaning more than “made in Germany” was being realized.

The years of the Great Depression were as challenging for toy manufacturers as they were for manufacturers in every other industry. But as always, the industry responded with goods tailored to the new reality. Then, as now, when in economic hard times, parents tried to provide for their children. With the election of Franklin Roosevelt, new policies were instituted in the famous First 100 Days to try to reverse the tide of the Depression. Of the 16 laws enacted, the only one that figures in the Association’s records is the National Industrial Recovery Act. Promoted by Roosevelt, who was a big advocate of trade associations as an effective means of regulating industry standards and competition, the act was designed to give the president the ability to raise prices after severe deflation in order to stimulate an industry. It also included standards for progressive work practices and means to foster fair competition. Initially the law was praised, but the Association was wary about its impact on the toy industry. At the time, the scope of the law was largely unknown and Association notes indicate some concern about redundancy with existing laws. The Association decided to be watchful and see how the law developed, for in practice, it threatened to create the very monopolies it sought to avoid. Furthermore, it resulted in confusion and a mass of regulations that stressed businesses more than they had been. Ultimately, the law was challenged—one of the only laws in the New Deal to be—and was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1935.
Shirley Temple
The Bright Spot in the Great Depression

In the darkest days of the Great Depression, there was one ray of sunshine that seemed to brighten everyone’s lives: Shirley Temple. The resolutely upbeat little girl was big business, saving Fox Studios from bankruptcy and becoming one of the biggest box office draws of all time.

Ideal Toy & Novelty Company launched the Shirley Temple doll in 1934 under the watchful eyes of Shirley’s mother, who maintained that the doll, like the star, had 52 perfect ringlets. When she was launched in 1934, people stood in long lines to buy her. In fact, the nation went crazy for all things Shirley, and later toy fads pale by comparison. Ideal continued to make Shirley Temple dolls through 1957, when Shirley became popular on TV, and then again in the 1970s and 1980s.

Still it was those dolls that came out in the 1930s that fostered that can-do, never-give-up spirit that certainly contributed to the recovery after the Depression.
World War II and the Korean War: Preserving an Industry

By the time the U.S. entered World War II in 1941 after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the war in Europe had been going on for more than two years. This had already had an impact on toy markets around the world, but as the United States entered the war, materials and manufacturing facilities were once again used for the war efforts. New factories sprang up, and factories that had been manufacturing toys converted to making needed items for the war. Production of toys slowed incrementally.

Just as it had during World War I, the Association again found itself convincing the government that toy production was a necessary industry. The War Production Board, established in 1942, prohibited all non-essential manufacturing. But once again the Association successfully argued that toys and play were such an important part of childhood that toys must be—and ultimately were—deemed essential. This ensured that production could continue, virtually saving the entire industry. Nonetheless, there were severe limits put on the quantities of essential materials to be used. Order L–81 prohibited the production of toys with iron, steel, zinc, or rayon (considered the most essential materials for the war effort) comprising more than seven percent of their weight. Many toys contained these materials, so even with toys deemed essential, the restriction of materials posed an almost business-stopping challenge for some companies. But resilient enterprises found a way. For example, while Lionel used the materials it usually put into its trains to manufacture compasses and other materials needed for the front, the company also created the Wartime Freight Train—made entirely of cardboard.

Lionel's Wartime Freight Train was made entirely of cardboard—a perfect example of the creativity that toy companies displayed when essential materials were in shortage during World War II.
The industry did the best it could, doing its part to provide needed goods and stay afloat, and in June 1945, the Association board began to hear from Washington about when it could project going back into full-scale toy production. When the war ended in September of that year, the reconversion process began, though it was not without its challenges. It caused a huge transition in the workforce, massive layoffs, and a sudden decline in revenues that was not immediately replaced by toy production.

There was also concern as the war wound down that Japan and Germany might be prompted to again dump toys in the United States. These countries would have built up inventories of toys that they could not sell during the war, and as production resumed afterward, they could potentially sell these goods at greatly reduced prices, flooding the U.S. market and hurting domestic companies. As legitimate as this concern was, the government didn’t want to harm its reconstruction processes. So the Association and its members were asked to recommend a list of products that would be least harmful to the American toy industry. In a move that came as a surprise to some, the Office of Military Government for Germany invited representatives of the U.S. toy industry to Germany to discuss the proper pricing and manufacturing of toys. This was certainly an indication of how the U.S. toy industry had evolved from upstart to world standard.

Other challenges arose that were reminiscent of the end of World War I, as countries tried to protect their domestic industries. Great Britain was not honoring export licenses. Sweden banned certain toys. Exports from Germany and Japan were still in shambles. In the U.S., toy companies were concerned that the government might create allocations of steel and rubber, which would have seriously affected manufacturing.

It was also after World War II that the first knockoff toys started filtering into the market, mostly from Japan. Factories eager to start producing toys as quickly as possible, rather than investing the time in development, started making copies of other, comparatively simple toys. The first toy that was flagged by the Association was, in fact, very basic: a rubber dagger that was easily produced. As other copies of existing toys—whether from the U.S. or other markets—were making their way into the U.S. market, the Association became concerned about what might happen as Japan’s manufacturing capabilities were fully restored and knockoffs became even more common.
Through all of this, the Association and its representatives worked closely with Washington to address these issues and assist members in seeking direct assistance from their individual congressmen.

Coming so soon after the end of World War II, the Korean War (1950–1953) once again put a tremendous strain on material and manufacturing. As the war heated up, the availability of wood and steel once again became dire. In the first half of 1950, procuring any materials at all was difficult, so naturally competition for these scarce resources was intense. The Association worked with the newly formed National Production Board, which was designed to help ensure that smaller factories wouldn’t suffer from lack of military production contracts if they couldn’t produce their core items due to material limitations. The Association also advocated for the toy industry when The Defense Production Act of 1950 sought to apply the curtailment of materials to all industries equally.

During the war, the toy industry was also caught up in the inflationary moves that prompted the creation of the Price Stabilization Board. Created as part of the Defense Production Act of 1950 in the face of rising prices, its intention was to slow the speed at which prices were increasing for materials and finished goods. Sluggish economic growth and declines in domestic production were driving inflation, though there were undoubtedly other causes as well. President Truman established the Price Stabilization Board when it was clear that voluntary controls were not going to work. Though these controls were largely intended to cover commodity prices, toys fell under some categories. Wholesale prices jumped by nine and then twelve percent in the early years of the war, and the Federal Reserve Board became involved in trying to rein in inflation. Association board notes from January 1953 express hope that the price controls would soon be lifted, and indeed, President Eisenhower issued an Executive Order in 1953 ending price controls. Though it would take some months to fully implement, the lifting of price controls was expected to have a beneficial impact on the 1953 holiday season.

Even as price controls were being lifted, the industry was also just finishing another nail-biting chapter: fallout from the Steel Strike of 1952. A great number of factors caused the strike, largely having to do with wage and price controls, as the government was demanding steel for military use at a much lower price than it could be sold on the civilian market. Under the authority of the Defense Production Act of 1950, President Truman
seized control of the steel mills. In the face of the growing Cold War, Truman wanted to demonstrate that he rejected communism, and he was accused of being soft on communism by not being hard on labor. His seizure of the mills launched a contentious legal battle that would go all the way to the Supreme Court, which ultimately deemed Truman’s seizure unconstitutional. In addition, the new sets of wage and price controls spurred unprecedented, rapid inflation that caused consumer prices to soar, and the only way to stop the inflationary spiral was to unlink wages from prices.

In response, the steelworkers struck. Though the strike only lasted 53 days, and ironically ended with a contract not materially different than the one proposed before the strike, the impact on the toy industry was significant in that all steel allotments for the first half of 1953 were in question. Companies such as Tonka, Gilbert, and many others that relied on steel for their toys didn’t know whether they’d be able to get materials or at what prices, making projections for the season and sales virtually impossible. Losses were felt throughout the economy, as manufacturers that had no access to steel began layoffs. The Federal Reserve Board estimated that overall industrial output had dropped to 1949 levels.

Again the toy industry demonstrated its resilience and kept on, though one can only imagine the relief of toy professionals as they made it through 1953—battered to be sure, but with another season under their belts.

After the end of the Korean conflict, ongoing debates about tariffs would engage the Association over the next few years, including when to hold the line on further reductions. The Association was also engaged in Washington to try to create consistent classifications for duties. At one point, in the late 1950s and as late as 1961, a beach ball could be assigned to one of three different merchandise categories. This was significant in that duties assessed by category could vary by as much as 10 percent. The Association worked to create these definitions and hoped to have them applied consistently—or help manufacturers when they were not.

Unlike the previous two wars, the end of the Korean conflict did not usher in a time of protectionism. Combined with the rise of television and greater international awareness, the stage was set for the toy industry to become the global enterprise it is today.
What remains so fascinating about the toy industry are the levels of its interdependence on so many different industries, and the far-reaching impact of even the smallest changes on toy production. Industries of all types were competing for the scarce resources and raw materials they needed to stay in operation. For the men—and by the 1950s, women—who were involved, being able to stay in production was a fairly constant challenge. The consistent and diligent attention to meeting the myriad demands of a changing market have made it possible for the industry to weather good times and bad—and still deliver moments of joy.

Even in the period of relative economic quiescence, as trade and supply issues quieted down, there was still plenty else to keep the Association occupied.
Mr. Potato Head
Unlikely Cold War Hero

No, it’s not that he penetrated enemy lines or cracked a code. Mr. Potato Head, who debuted in 1952, represents a different kind of success during this period. As materials were hard to come by, finding ways to reduce what was needed while still making a substantial toy was a challenge. George Lerner, who originally conceived Mr. Potato Head as a cereal box premium, ended up selling it to Hasbro. What came in the box were a lot of small pieces to inspire kids to create their own kooky characters using the produce in Mom’s pantry as the head—the largest part of the toy. (Sure, the original Mr. Potato Head came with a small Styrofoam potato for a head, but that was flat and not really as satisfying as a genuine spud.)

Mr. Potato Head was also the first toy to be advertised on television, and became so popular that Hasbro quickly introduced a whole gang of fruit and vegetable friends for him, including a Mrs. Potato Head.

He’s had quite the history since that time, but stands out as an example of how the toy industry has always responded to changing conditions with imagination and innovation.
Playing Safe: The Evolution of Safety Standards

Toys sold in the United States—regardless of where they are manufactured—have been subject to highly protective toy safety standards for decades. As the current Association website notes: “Since the first toy safety requirements were published in the 1930s, experts from industry, government, consumer groups, retailers, academia and the medical profession have worked together to ensure that they [standards] are continually revised to keep pace with the latest innovation in products. Updates to these standards are shaped by the latest child development research, medical and toy-related incident data, risk assessment techniques, scientific reports, and product manufacturing innovations from around the globe. U.S. standards are recognized as among the most protective toy safety specifications in the world.”

The most comprehensive of these, ASTM F963, is the current mandatory federal rule that is updated frequently to accommodate emerging hazards and the constant product innovation that is so characteristic of this industry. Over the years, the process of safety standards and regulation has been built on experience, knowledge, science, testing, and minimizing risk to the fullest extent possible, with new protections added as more is known.

The path to today’s toy safety standards began in the 1930s. From the early years of the 20th century, federal legislation had covered the content of food and cosmetics. In the 1930s, this legislation was broadened and strengthened, as product safety in all categories was getting more governmental attention. It was during this time that the Association created its first safety standards committee and began a long-lasting partnership with the National Safety Council. In the 1940s, the Association collaborated with the Council to establish a National Accident Reporting Service, and in the 1950s worked with the Council to create the National Injury Information Clearinghouse.

In the years following World War II, the National Safety Council was very active and had initiated a broad range of programs promoting safety at home. Though much of what the program covered were accidents, poisoning, and the danger of cigarette burns on upholstery, as the program expanded to cover more and more product categories, the Council turned its attention to toys. This was one of the first instances in which a national organization had questioned the safety of the physical construction of toys beyond the safety of the materials used in construction. The Council contacted the Association regarding stuffed animals and dolls,
writing, “Of special concern were those eyes attached with sharp prongs, pins, wires, staples, etc.” Among retailers, Macy’s in particular was concerned about the ways in which stuffed animal eyes could be potentially loosened, posing possible risks, and had expressed its concerns to the Association. The Association wasted no time in addressing this concern and began working with the Council and manufacturers to ensure that these issues were rectified. This was the beginning of a close partnership between the Association and the government that continues to this day.

In addition, society’s concept of risk and risk tolerance has evolved over time. Although chemistry sets containing substances that could present a risk if misused were common as recently as the 1960s, this is no longer the case. The more potentially dangerous of these materials were removed from toys as a result of the Hazardous Substances Labeling Act of 1960, which gave the government the right to determine which substances were too dangerous. Although the Act required labeling, it did not ban the sale or use of these materials altogether or limit the amounts that could be contained in a toy. Rather, it required that any product containing materials at what were deemed to be dangerous levels had to bear the copy “Keep Out of Reach of Children.” However, a toy labeled “Keep Out of Reach of Children” defeated the purpose of the toy, so toymakers removed these materials from their products to avoid having to put the warning on their packaging.

In 1969, the National Council on Product Safety identified eight toy characteristics that should be banned due to safety concerns, such as sharp points, thermal hazards and other design features that could be dangerous for kids. These toys violated no federal law at the time, but since concern was naturally high, a move was underfoot to create a law that would protect children from potential hazards in toys.

The push at that time was partially driven by greater public awareness of toy safety, which had grown over the years. As noted earlier, questions about lead in toys arose as early as the 1920s. However, in the post–World War II years, from the late 1950s on, lead became a hot-button issue for journalists and even the smallest accusation could get play in the media. One case even included the Journal of the American Medical Association, in which two doctors presumed that a child contracted “acute plumbism” (lead poisoning) from drinking orange juice out of an aluminum toy cup. The Association obtained the actual dishes from the case, tested them for lead, and, not surprisingly, found that there was more environmental lead in the orange juice than in the dishes. Working with the Lead Institute and the National Paint, Varnish & Lacquer
Association, the Toy Association aggressively pursued the journal and published a letter that refuted the science of the original article. Other, similar stories met with equally assertive responses, refusing to allow general and unsubstantiated accusations to stand. These efforts to counteract misleading information were generally successful, and in 1944 the Association wrote, “The results have been that the writers of syndicated articles have become more cautious, and there is much less of this type of bad, and for the most part, wholly unwarranted publicity.”

More than two decades later, public awareness about product safety in general had been elevated largely as a result of the work of Ralph Nader, whose *Unsafe at Any Speed*, first published in 1965, created a cultural awareness of potential risks in consumer products. Looking out for the consumer was considered good business—and compelling politics. And so, the pressure was on to create formal legislation that would protect children from potential dangers related to toys. In 1969, President Nixon signed the Toy Safety Act, which further amended the Hazardous Substances Act. It specified that toys that had “electrical, mechanical or thermal dangers and substances that could be harmful to children” could be banned automatically. In the process leading up to the creation and signing of the law, the Association had been actively involved in defining the types and categories of toys that would be covered by the act. Everything from bicycles to Christmas trees were considered for regulation as toys, and as with duties and embargoes in the 1950s, there was a struggle to figure out how to categorize each product.

Implementation was not easy. In fact, Nixon faced challenges to this legislation from within and outside his own party. The primary problem, in which the Association became actively involved, was in determining criteria for establishing uniform standards. How to age grade? At what age can the average child manage different toys? What about small parts? What tests can be required? All of these questions were new and contentious at the time, and the Association continued to advocate on behalf of its members and the industry as a whole, urging requirements based on demonstrable risk. As the law was implemented, enforcement came under the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

At that point, although the Toy Safety Act was a great step forward, implementing safety was a mix of politics, business, and concern for consumers. In 1971, the FDA issued an accident report claiming 700,000 toy-related deaths or injuries a year. Toy safety had emerged as
a hot-button issue. An analysis of the report conducted by the Association proved highly effective at showing its shortcomings, demonstrating that the report contained incidents where the involvement of the toy was merely incidental to the injury (such as an injury incurred when tripping over a toy), as well as numerous incidents involving children’s products that were not in fact toys, such as bicycles, playground equipment, and cribs. This report raised consumer concern about the safety of products to be sure, but the Association took a leadership role in clarifying how few injuries were directly related to toys, and in promoting the difference between a toy-related accident and one that might be caused by an inherent flaw in a toy—an important distinction made today by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) when it issues its annual incident reports.

Among the state activity around toy safety at the time was the California Anti-War Toys Bill, which covered not merely military toys but toys that could be “psychologically harmful,” as well as a separate labeling bill that would call out toys depicting violence. Both of these early state bills failed to pass. Given the range of concerns raised (many based on fear and supposition) and the lack of consistency among state laws, something needed to be done. In 1971, the Association worked with the National Board of Standards to begin drafting a coherent and comprehensive safety standard that could be applied across the country.

To try to simplify this process, in 1972 the Association worked with Congress to develop the toy safety section of the Consumer Product Safety Act. The Association helped define the various toy categories and the safety standards that would apply to them—everything from the size of holes permissible to avoid finger entrapment, to strings and fasteners, and so forth. Perhaps the two most famous parts of the toy safety act were the removal of lead paint from toys and the standardization of what constituted a choking hazard through the small parts test requirement. This requirement was developed with input from the American Academy of Pediatrics to mimic the size and shape of a child’s throat and is now the standard utilized around the world.
The act also established the Consumer Product Safety Commission as an independent governmental agency. In the early days of the CPSC, the Association advocated for broad regulations, whereas the CPSC promoted a toy-by-toy evaluation. The latter approach proved not to be flexible enough, given the range of products in the market; neither did it allow safety to keep pace with innovation and creation of new products. So, over time, the Association helped establish regulations to address potential safety issues (regardless of toy type or design), including sharp edges and points, among others. The goal, of course, was that all manufacturers would have clear rules to follow, based on current, collective knowledge of hazard and risk, in order to develop safe products.

Among the thousands of products covered by the CPSC at the time, some were regulated under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, whereas others fell under the Consumer Product Safety Act. The Association successfully advocated that a manufactured product should be considered as a single item and not evaluated on the basis of its component parts or materials. As a result, toys fell under the “consumer products” designation, greatly simplifying the process and, importantly, signifying that the safety of a product would be considered as one unit.

By 1975, there were fairly consistent rules in place, and for the first time there was mention of toy testing to demonstrate and ensure compliance with toy safety requirements. The Association even established and funded a laboratory certification program to assist members in getting certifications of compliance.

Also by 1975, toys were an international business, and toys that were to be sold in the United States needed, naturally, to be in compliance with U.S. regulations. In 1976, the Voluntary Safety Standard PS72-76 was published, which was designed to minimize potential toy injuries or foreseeable abuse. Of course, “voluntary” meant that the specifications in the standards were not mandated by legislation, but toymakers who wanted to sell toys in the United States needed to be in compliance. As the number of companies doing business in countries around the world continued to expand, the Association joined with other national toy associations to create the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) in 1975. The organization continues to serve many purposes, but primarily acts as a forum for sharing information on current toy safety standards used around the world, and takes an active role in developing these standards. (See more on ICTI in Chapter 4.)
As worldwide markets opened for both products and manufacturing, the Association recognized early on the importance of educating the industry on toy safety standards—at the source. In the 1970s, the Association created an industry education program, and in 1996 expanded the program to focus on educating Chinese manufacturers on safety standards, working in cooperation with the U.S. CPSC and Chinese government officials. By that time, China had become a major supplier of toys (more than 70 percent of toys sold in the U.S. were produced in China), supported by China’s “most favored nation” status, which earned toys imported from China duty-free entry. With additional countries (notably Mexico) seeing duties on toys eliminated thanks to the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the international toy market was more firmly established, and the need for compliance with international safety standards became more important.

In 2007, a breakdown in manufacturers’ material supply process resulted in some toys being sold in the U.S. market with coatings that contained lead in excess of the then-voluntary toy safety standard. Toy companies involved issued recalls for the affected items, but the issue became a major media story and prompted calls in Congress for legislation. In response, the Association advocated for the adoption of ASTM F963 as a mandatory requirement and for mandatory testing to the standard. Many companies were already observing these requirements, but the number of recalls that year pointed to a need for consistency across the industry in order to repair cracks in the toy safety system and public confidence. In 2008, Congress passed (unanimously in the House and by a 79-13 margin in the Senate) the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA). It was the first time specific standards for lead levels in children’s products were codified in law—a significant change for the industry.

In addition to expanding the budget and size of the CPSC, the CPSIA mandated compliance with ASTM F963—while preserving the multi-stakeholder process under which the standard is continually reviewed and revised—and established a mechanism for adopting other children’s products standards following the model of the toy safety standard. The CPSIA also significantly reduced the amount of lead and phthalates that could be present in toys and other children’s products, and made independent testing and certification mandatory for all toys intended for children ages 12 and under.

Did you know?

The Children’s Television Act of 1990 limited the amount of commercial time in children’s shows to 10½ minutes of commercials per 30 minutes of programming on weekends and 12 minutes per 30 minutes on weekdays.
In the years since the passage of the law, the Association has continued to work with legislators on the implementation of these regulations and required testing for all products sold in the United States. For example, the Association developed and implemented a standard to eliminate the ingestion hazard of small magnets in toys, which is now a federal law. The Association also maintains partnerships to promote toy safety compliance best practices throughout the industry. The Association has consistently been recognized by governmental agencies for its role in promoting safety and protecting consumers.

As history has demonstrated, product safety is an ongoing process as innovation leads to new toys, and consumer tastes and behaviors continue to change.

In an industry whose mission is to bring joy, and whose ultimate customers are children and families, toy safety must always be top of mind. The holiday gift-gifting season inevitably focuses more attention on toy safety—especially in the media and with certain self-appointed “watchdog” groups. Over the years, various organizations have published lists of allegedly dangerous toys as a means of generating publicity. (Remember that group that in 1919 wanted to ban all Christmas gifts, especially toys? That was just the beginning.) Despite being based on flawed data and incorporating little accuracy, these lists are covered often by the media and unnecessarily frighten consumers. In 2014, the Association published its own analysis that demonstrated the flaws in these reports. It revealed them for what they are: a bid for publicity at the expense of consumers’ peace of mind. Though these lists still appear annually, the Association’s ongoing efforts and quick response have been successful enough to make these lists of “dangerous toys” a one-day story. Focusing communications efforts on the fact that toys sold in the United States must meet some of the strictest safety standards in the world, the Association continues to help consumers choose U.S. toys with confidence, something Association members in 1918 would surely have applauded.

Today, the Association’s safety initiatives focus on three distinct categories: establishing and implementing the most advanced safety standards; educating the industry and others about these standards to assure compliance; and guiding caregivers on how to choose appropriate toys and enjoy fun, safe play.

The Association conducts media outreach in both traditional and new media to stress the inherent safety of toys and works with a wide range of organizations to share messaging about child safety—including tips for ensuring safe play.
Creepy Crawlers
Classic Fun Revised

One of the hits of the 1964 season, and one of the most fondly remembered toys among Baby Boomers, Mattel’s Creepy Crawlers Thingmaker let kids make their own plastic bugs. Kids squirted liquid plastic, Plastigoop, into molds, which were then set on an open hot plate to cook. The mold was lifted off the hot plate and placed in a water bath to cool. What could go wrong? Not much really. Millions of kids made it a hit for years, but it did not comply with the new toy legislation in 1970.

In 1996, however, Toymax introduced a redesigned version with a reformulated Plastigoop and an enclosed oven that wouldn’t release the finished bugs until the molds were sufficiently cool. The oven was taken over by Jakks Pacific and remained in the line until 2002.

The toy and the play pattern remained a classic, simply reconfigured to meet new standards without taking away what always excited kids—making their own bugs.
**TV Transforms the Industry**

In the past century, no single cultural development transformed the toy industry more than the introduction of television. From accelerating the development of kid culture, unifying children’s entertainment experiences nationwide, launching characters, and promoting toys, it was influential on virtually every level.

As a platform for entertainment, there had never been anything like it. It led to iconic shows such as The Mickey Mouse Club, Wonderama, Howdy Doody, Rootie Kazootie—the list goes on and on. Broadcasters were eager to capitalize on this huge—and growing—market of kids. The commonality of entertainment was one of the defining, and unifying, components of the Baby Boomers, creating a level of shared experience across the wider culture that was unprecedented.

Mr. Potato Head was the first toy to be advertised on television.
Advertisers seized on this as well, making the timed one-to-two-minute commercial a standard feature of Saturday morning TV. With only a handful of networks and channels, it was easy to assume that virtually all kids watching TV would be glued to three primary channels (though with the rise of UHF broadcasting, more came online in the 1960s and 1970s). Brands like PF Flyers, Cheerios, Beech-Nut gum, and many more addressed young viewers, and toy commercials were especially effective. Almost every Baby Boomer who grew up watching TV has memories of commercials that convinced them that certain toys were must-haves. The medium proved extremely effective in very short order.

TV also provided the launching pad for characters that would be reflected in toys. Characters based on entertainment were nothing new. In fact, Ideal Toys had launched the first licensed character on a toy in 1907 with The Yellow Kid, which was based on a comic strip. Shirley Temple, as noted, was a huge success as a doll. Yet these were comparatively isolated incidents in light of what was starting to happen—and what was to come. In a few short years, the toy industry was effectively transformed, and the list of toys and characters birthed by TV is monumental. Nor was it just advertising that drove awareness and demand for toys. Captain Kangaroo was probably the most influential show for an entire

Captain Kangaroo on CBS was a powerful launching platform for toys. LEGO, Crayola, and Colorforms all benefited from being on the show.
generation of young people and became an essential part of their before-school viewing five days a week. Brands like LEGO, Crayola, and Colorforms became household names because of their appearances in the Captain’s Treasure House. So powerful was television in promoting toys and toy purchases that companies using the medium experienced an unprecedented boom in sales, which, naturally, drove more toy manufacturers to use TV. Unlike today, limited viewing options meant that advertisers always knew what kids were watching and could deliver messages very efficiently. Moreover, because the medium was so new, there were no regulations limiting content, and as a result, the TV toy commercial became a form of entertainment on its own. As the medium evolved and marketers became more sophisticated, there began to be questions about the ethical use of advertising to children.

The first record of the Association becoming involved in the discussion of TV advertising targeted to children was in 1956. Faced with growing awareness of advertising’s impact on sales, it became apparent that in order to balance promotion of the industry with children’s well-being, the Association and the industry would do well to have a clear set of ethical standards related to promotion. This would both benefit consumers and preempt government regulations on toy advertising. It proved to be an ongoing process and negotiation, and over the next few years the Association would work with the National Advertising Board (NAB) to formulate a code, which first appeared in 1961. The code was primarily designed to present toys as authentically as possible in the context of a play environment. A commercial for a toy that did not fly on its own, for example, should show a child’s hand making it fly. The other major issue of the NAB code had to do with pricing, eliminating the words “just” and “only” from prices quoted in advertising.

Under these new guidelines, TV advertising continued to grow. Toy companies began to consider the “TV moment” in designing toys, looking at those toy elements that could be effectively communicated in a commercial. To this day, having that TV moment is essential in developing any toy that will be advertised on TV.

Indeed, self-regulation was successful and effective for nearly a decade after the initial NAB code was published. However, TV changed a great deal in that time. There was a proliferation of shows that had toys not merely associated with them but central to the plot and the action. There were more channels, and more programming was being designed for children. In 1970, Peggy Charren, activist and founder of Action for Children’s Television, proposed to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that all advertising be eliminated from children’s television. Though she wasn’t successful, she transformed the business once again. Charren’s accomplishments were many, including such things as banning
commercials that presented vitamins as candy and limiting the number of commercials in each hour of children’s programming. Charren opposed shows that she called “program-length commercials” for toys and successfully helped create the “bumpers” that are now standard between programs and commercials, which are intended to clearly convey to children the distinction between programming and advertisements.

Charren was successful in creating awareness of how children were consuming and being influenced by television. As a result, there were more controls on programming to children at the network level, and by 1974, the Association was working closely with the Federal Trade Commission, the National Association of Broadcasters, and its Children’s Advertising Committee. The Association proposed a “single definitive set of guidelines and interpretations consistent with the children’s television advertising Statement of Principles of the National Association of Broadcasters Code authority.” This proposal, combined with the work of the newly formed Children’s Advertising Review Board, would provide sufficient controls that the industry could be voluntarily self-regulating.

Shockwaves ran through the industry when the FTC proposed legislation that would ban all children’s television advertising as being inherently “unfair” to children. The Association was directly involved in lobbying or monitoring the many hearings on the topic. Congress ultimately determined that the rather amorphous concept of “fairness” wasn’t sufficient to support regulations for all child-directed advertising.

While the issue would take many years to be resolved, guideline enforcement ultimately shifted to the networks’ standards and practices divisions, and by 1983, the FCC dropped its guidelines in favor of those voluntary standards determined by the networks. These voluntary standards were not that much different than the original guidelines from 1961 and were largely concerned with accurate representation of the toys, their operation, assembly and battery requirements, and showing what’s in the box. To anyone watching or producing TV advertising today, these will be very familiar.

In 1990, the issue of children’s television and advertising came before Congress, which then passed the Children’s Television Act of 1990. This largely had to do with mandating a percentage of educational content of programs targeted to children, but it also limited the amount of commercial time in children’s shows to 10½ minutes of commercials per 30 minutes of programming on weekends and 12 minutes per 30 minutes on weekdays. In the ensuing years, the act has been updated to accommodate changes in television and, of course, the rise of the Internet.
Tickle Me Elmo and His TV Moment

What began as Tickles the Chimp became Tickle Me Elmo when Tyco acquired the Sesame Street license.

The doll, as the name implies, erupted in Elmo’s characteristic laugh when tickled. However, when Tyco worked with its advertising agency, it became apparent that the laugh alone, infectious as it was, wasn’t sufficient for that big TV “wow” moment.

Legend has it that Marty Scheman, who was running Tyco at the time, was visiting toy stores and saw a monkey that had a jiggling mechanism in it. He suggested that it be added to Elmo, and it was. Adding the movement to Elmo’s infectious laugh is what made the difference—and that sometimes-elusive TV moment.

The rest, of course, is history. Elmo became such a phenomenon in 1996 that it was difficult to keep up with consumer demand, and the TV advertising was pulled for much of its launch period. Still, whether in an ad or in the hands of Al Roker, Bryant Gumbel, or perhaps most famously Rosie O’Donnell, it’s that magic television moment that makes a star.

Today, marketing to children is more diverse and prevalent than ever before. In a dynamic media market, no single development has transformed how children are communicated to as much as the Internet. It has been a boon to toy marketing, allowing for new levels of engagement, interaction, and content consumption. At the same time, the Internet created unprecedented issues of safety and control, notably in the risks of collecting personal information about children 13 and under. This concern led to the creation of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). First created in 1998, the act was designed to protect children from companies collecting personal information that could be used to target them with advertising.

The Association has stayed at the forefront of this constantly changing field, monitoring changes and providing resources to help members understand and comply with responsible practices of marketing to children.
Promoting Play—
A Consistent Message for 100 Years

Nearly from day one, the Association was keenly aware that one of the best ways to promote toys was to promote play. In the early days of the Association, one of the major jobs was convincing consumers that American toys were a viable and attractive alternative to European toys.

The Association was also in its early years and, as part of its foundational statements, was intent on finding more purchase occasions for toys that retailers could plan for and promote. Perhaps inspired by Mother’s Day, which had been initiated in 1908 and was by the early 1920s well-established as a gift-giving holiday, and later by Father’s Day, the Association began trying to promote a Children’s Day. Designed to be a Sunday in June (it moved several times in its lifetime, ultimately to the last Saturday in June), the Association put a great deal of effort behind promoting it to the retail trade and among families. In fact, in 1928, the Association ran promotions with prizes of $1,000 and $500 “in gold” for the best window displays.

Over several years, some retailers embraced the concept and sought to spread the word through community groups, but it remained a localized event. Although Children’s Day never became a national holiday, as had been envisioned, the Association would continue to lobby Congress for the creation of the day through the 1940s.
Yet, if Children’s Day never achieved national holiday status, the effort to establish it did serve another purpose that would have a long-term, positive impact on the Association: It put a renewed focus on not merely selling toys but on promoting the importance of play in the lives of children and as essential to healthy development.

Play, of course, has been around through human history, but it was certainly never considered important enough to study in isolation. For much of history, childhood was a transitory phase to be gotten through as quickly as possible so children could contribute to the economy and the family. It did not merit study. Yet as the modern science of psychology began to develop in the 19th century, people began to understand childhood as a distinct life stage with a series of developmental milestones as children progressed from infancy to quasi-adulthood (meaning being ready to take on adult responsibilities such as work). Even with this growing body of theory and knowledge, play wasn’t examined as an isolated process until the 1930s. The breakthrough work of Jean Piaget was the first to look at the cognitive development of children and how their cognitive abilities developed as a function of physical maturation. Even Piaget did not focus on play, though his conclusions and theories would have a profound impact on it. It’s a gross simplification of his work, but Piaget demonstrated how children’s process of acquiring and organizing information was distinct and defined four different stages of development.

Piaget’s work—and the work of other psychologists—was influential and sometimes controversial. It had a comparatively swift impact on how education was structured in the United States and, by extension, the role of toys in children’s lives. Where previously learning toys had largely been related to basic letters and numbers, the educational toys category emerged in the years between the world wars. The impact on the toy industry was profound, as companies like Playskool, Fisher-Price, and Child Guidance went after this growing segment of parents who wanted to give their children the best possible start. While the Association largely left it to the individual companies to promote their products, in speaking for the industry, the Association promoted the developmental benefits of play in a healthy childhood—something that has continued throughout its history.

One of the first concerted communications programs to capitalize on this was in 1935. As part of a series of articles in trade and consumer publications, the Association emphasized what constituted “modern” play. Information published by the Association was designed to help make play not just fun but also productive. Among the features of the program were educational materials to help retailers inform their customers about the value of play. For instance, one piece included information on how druggists could make positive recommendations to customers about the toys that would be most helpful for developing children, almost as if it was a quasi-prescription. It made sense: The local druggist was often
a source for health advice in lieu of seeing a doctor. The Association also promoted what toy salespeople should know about play. From the Association’s 1935 materials:

“Sales clerks who preside over toy counters should be familiar with the following points on modern play. The child learns by doing. He requires playthings which will supply the following types of activity....” The description continues to detail types of play—active, creative, dramatic, and social—and ends with this advice: “Modern toys are purposeful. Tell your customer the uses of each toy on your counter and suggest other accessories that will increase their play value.”

After World War II, with the threat of imported toys once again challenging the U.S. market and the post-War spirit of patriotism renewed, the “Buy American” message was a high priority for the Association—particularly in the early 1950s, as imports from Japan began filtering into the U.S. market. Yet this time, the campaign was infused with an emphasis on the quality of play and presenting American toys as leaders in that field.

As peacetime arrived and the Baby Boom began, the Association sought to demonstrate the centrality of toys and play to modern life. At the time, it was common practice for industry trade associations to prepare
articles for a variety of publications, but the Association found a particularly receptive audience in what were called “women’s columns” or on “women’s programs” for radio. In providing these stories, the Association effectively created a toy news bureau, or, as it was called at the time, the “headquarters for information pertaining to the industry.” This practice remained for many years, and the Association archives include typescripts of stories on a wide range of topics, from dealing with tantrums to the convalescent child, to the importance of play as part of lesson planning for schools. Flipping through these pages, one also finds evergreen stories about picking toys that are appropriate for children’s ages, how different children play differently, and any number of the types of articles that still appear in today’s mainstream media.

These programs reflected the thirst for knowledge among new mothers who were eager to be modern and embrace the latest information for their children. Driven in no small measure by the 1946 publication of Benjamin Spock’s *Baby and Child Care*, there was, it seemed, a “right way” to raise children. Dr. Spock was just the tip of the iceberg. The post-War era was the beginning of the “age of experts,” where individuals could provide sage advice on everything from making the perfect Jell-O mold to picking the right toys—all of which promised a better life for the up-to-date, in-the-know family.
Given this atmosphere, the Association’s programs were extremely strategic, successful, and, even by today’s standards, impressive. In 1944 alone—the 10th year of the program and one of the few years for which more complete records survive—more than 40 print stories were created and placed, generating thousands of press clips from papers and magazines of all sizes. The Association also scripted nearly 20 radio stories, which were used by more than 300 stations, with approximately 150 directly contacting the Association to request more material of the same nature.

Other consumer-oriented outreach efforts in the post-War period are not well documented, but meeting minutes of the late 1940s detail meetings with educators to determine how to more fully integrate play into learning. With play identified as critical to children’s development, “active learning” became more and more prevalent, and school days for children were not always spent at a desk. The Association wanted to find out how play and, in particular, toys could integrate into that process.

As an indication of the shifting role of the child in the American family, the Association also worked with various builders of model houses in 1947 to create exhibits of model playrooms, something the modern home could not be without.

As part of its communications plan, and in keeping with the popularity of experts mentioned previously, in 1948 the Association created the American Toy Institute. The Institute was designed to develop original research on the role and function of toys and play in children’s lives at a time when there was little or no formal research in this area. The intention was that it would be academic in nature but also serve to share results with manufacturers and government bodies, and promote the value of play to consumers. One of its first consumer-facing projects was to work with child development advisor Dr. Grace Langdon to create a consumer booklet called “How to Choose Toys.”

By far the biggest and most visible work of the Institute during its first years were annual mini-catalogs that ran in *Life* magazine. Drawing on Langdon’s work, the inserts served two important purposes at the time: highlight the developmental benefits of toys and play and promote American-made playthings. As the introduction to the 1953 catalog read:

“When you buy gifts for a child at Christmas, or any other time, choose American toys—the toys that are scientifically designed to give children the most fun and educational value. These are the toys that help develop initiative, imagination, dexterity—toys that prepare for careers. These toys, which reproduce the best in American life, are the gifts your child is sure to prefer above all others.”
A small sample of the news clips generated by the Association’s PR efforts in 1936.
The cultural impact of Life was tremendous. It was the first news pictorial magazine and was one of the most powerful consumer media in the country. At the peak of its popularity, it had a circulation of more than 13.5 million copies per week. By the mid-1960s, however, TV advertising had more or less completely taken over the job of promoting individual toys, and as manufacturing began to become more global, promoting American toys exclusively was less attractive. Indeed, by the mid-1960s, when the Institute stopped publishing the annual insert, the great migration of manufacturing out of the United States had already begun.

In the early 1960s, the American Toy Institute commissioned academic research on the value of play from Arizona State University School of Education. The study was groundbreaking at the time in that it specifically looked at the ways toys could be added to, or complement, traditional teaching methods in reading and language development. This multi-year study was fielded with Navajo children, and one of the concrete findings was that children...
who used toys as an aid in learning English picked up the language at almost twice the speed of children who did not use toys. As A.C. Gilbert reported when the concept for this study was proposed in the late 1950s, the findings could be extremely important to educators nationwide and result in the greater use of toys in schools and other educational institutions.

Other studies were commissioned from Wheelock College in 1966 as the Association sought to understand play in the context of the contemporary culture. Although a great deal of research in this field has been conducted over the past 55 years or so, at the time of this study, it was relatively unheard of to isolate toys as an individual subject for research. More importantly, these studies helped cement the relationship between toys and learning, particularly in the early 1960s when, under President Kennedy, the cultural focus on math and science became pronounced.

Since its creation, the American Toy Institute had been a function of the Association. But in 1961, the board became concerned that the Institute might be perceived as a marketing effort rather than a serious research and information resource, and subsequently decided to establish the Institute as a separate entity. As an independent foundation distinct from any commercial enterprise, the Institute would be better able to make a significant contribution to the cultural understanding of play and its essential role in child development.

In the ensuing years, the newly formed foundation would put less and less emphasis on funding original research and more on educating consumers about toys and play. The foundation regularly published a series of pamphlets, and in 1979 began more formally publishing consumer-oriented information. In 1983, the foundation published The ABC’s of Toys and Play, following up with Learning About Labels in 1985 and, in 1990, the first version of The TMA Guide to Toys and Play. The foundation also published a Guide to Toys for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. Although these publications never varied from promoting the importance of choosing safe toys and the critical role of toys and play in child development, they were updated to reflect the latest research in a constantly changing field.

In 2000, the American Toy Institute was re-launched as the Toy Industry Foundation, and in 2003 it unveiled its signature program, The Toy Bank. Chapter 4 covers the Association’s history of philanthropic work in supporting play and providing toys for those who otherwise would not have them.
Over the next years, the Association would continue various projects designed to promote the value of play to consumers. In 1961, a particularly active year as we’ve seen, the Association produced an 11-minute film called *Beginnings*. Notes of the time indicate that it was designed to help parents understand the importance of toys and play for children right from their first days. Response to the film, according to Association notes, was highly positive, but no copy of the film exists today.

In addition to fully organized programs, the Association also was fast to respond when opportunities arose. In 1954, the Association helped create a float for the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade that promoted U.S. toys. This was part of the efforts to promote American toys following the Korean War, when imports from, most notably, Japan were seen as a potential threat to the domestic industry.

In 1981, singer Lena Horne recorded a series of public service announcements (PSAs) for the Association in support of toys and play. At the time, Horne was the toast of Broadway with her autobiographical revue, *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*. The content of the spots is lost, but she was one more voice supporting the importance of toys and play. In 1999, the first female astronaut, Sally Ride, also recorded a series of PSAs for the Foundation. The goal of these was to promote more play. Indeed, the announcement stated that “America is play-deprived.” Ride’s PSA was designed as the kickoff to a five-year program called “The Power of Play.”
As the Foundation stated at the time, the program was designed to:

Create awareness about the importance of play and to encourage incorporating play into the lives of children and adults. Crossing ethnic, national and generation lines, the PSAs [and other program elements] emphasize play as a natural means of developing imagination, cooperation, problem solving, creativity and self-confidence, and highlight the findings that play, like affection, is something that children—and adults—must be exposed to regularly in order to mature normally.

“The Power of Play” was extensive, and for the first time in 25 years, the Foundation commissioned a study on play. The findings discovered a lack of play in children’s lives and that “parents may be denying their children the opportunity to achieve balance and happiness in the years to come,” according to Dr. Michael Cohen, president of Applied Research and Consulting, which conducted the research. In addition to this study, the Foundation also created a national survey to determine the role of play in contemporary children’s lives, as well as other initiatives with the U.S. Department of Education and local and national programs. The program culminated with the 100th anniversary of the New York Toy Fair in 2003.

Did you know?

In 1999, the first female astronaut, Sally Ride, recorded a series of PSAs for the Foundation to help promote play.

Sally Ride, 1984
A dozen years later, in 2015, the Association inaugurated its largest and potentially most far-reaching program promoting play, which continues to this day. Called “The Genius of Play,” the program drew on a wide body of research that reinforced play’s essential role in children’s physical, cognitive, creative, social, and emotional development. The program also included interviews and advice columns with leading play experts, as well as a series of videos about the benefits of different types of play at different ages, all contributing to the overall goal of educating parents, teachers, and others who interact with children about the importance of play.

Studies showed that due to overbooked afterschool schedules and an overemphasis on academic achievement, children’s playtime is dwindling. In fact, a survey conducted in 2015 by the Association indicated that only 12 percent of modern parents think of playtime as a key element of childrearing. Given the constraints on time in modern families with two working parents and highly scheduled lives, making time for open-ended play wasn’t seen as a parenting priority.
The program set out to communicate how play prepares children for success, enhancing their creative problem-solving, critical thinking, ability to collaborate, and so much more.

To share the message, the Association created a thoroughly modern communications strategy, including the launch of a website (www.TheGeniusOfPlay.org) and extensive social media outreach through a variety of platforms. The campaign also encouraged thousands of parents to take an online pledge to support the children in their lives with opportunities to play.

Of course, those tactics may be modern, but the Association’s mission to promote play over the decades has remained unchanged. A parent poring over Life magazine in the Eisenhower years and a 21st-century parent clicking through information on a mobile device are still motivated by the same thing: the desire to provide a wholesome, healthy, and play-filled childhood for their young ones. For 100 years, the Association has consistently made that message the centerpiece of its communications.

Play matters.
Those who study the toy industry acknowledge that toys always reflect the societal culture of the time. After all, one of the main developmental functions of play is to prepare children for the world they will inhabit as adults. Changes over the past century have been monumental, and yet the role of toys and the function of play in childhood remain constant.

The toy industry has definitely evolved over the years, and the Association has grown and changed along with it. What began as a small group of American manufacturers looking to establish, promote, and protect a comparatively new domestic industry in 1916 has evolved into a wide-reaching, multi-national enterprise that engages business, government, and consumers. The founders could not possibly have foreseen the global toy industry as it exists today. Nor would they have anticipated the essential interdependence of all the various economies, countries, and concerns that are essential to a successful and thriving industry.

In fact, the history of the Association and its evolution, quite naturally, mirrors the evolution of business and the rise of the global economy. The Association was formed at a time when manufacturing was based in the United States, when cheaper foreign goods
threatened the domestic market and American toys were perceived as not of the same quality as toys from Europe. Today, in many respects, the U.S. toy industry leads the world. And yet in 2016, many of the essential issues facing the Association remain unchanged. Going back to the original 16 points from the founding documents, one sees that most of these are still central to the work of the Association. From participating in legislative activities to promoting ethical standards and, most importantly, promoting the industry—like play itself, these functions remain constant, and necessary, in a dynamic world.

In the previous chapters, we looked at some of these issues and their evolution within the context of a changing cultural and business environment. In this chapter, we’ll look at several key areas of the Association today: its present function and highlights of its transformation over time to meet the needs of the industry.

Did you know?

Today, the Association includes more than 800 members whose sales account for more than 90% of the U.S. toy market.

A Century of Expansion: From TMUSA to TIA

According to the TIA’s official statements, today the Association’s membership includes more than 800 members whose sales account for approximately 90 percent of the U.S. toy market. Criteria for membership are as follows:

Regular members may include any business that is actively engaged in the manufacture, development, importation, sale, or general distribution of toys and consumer products intended for the youth market in North America, provided they derive substantial portion of their revenue from such business.

Associate members may include testing laboratories or factory audit services; businesses that are primarily engaged in the promotion of children’s toys and other children’s products; other trade associations with some overlapping membership or interests and concerns in common with TIA; publishers of magazines or newsletters; or other businesses that provide essential services to regular members.

In its earliest days, the Association was restricted to members who manufactured in the continental United States. Membership changed
on a regular basis and included everyone from traditional toymakers to manufacturers of sleds, cap pistols, paper products, and many others that wouldn’t be recognized today.

Increasing membership was always a goal for the organization, as there is power in numbers. An Association that can boast broad-based membership can legitimately speak for the whole industry and have a stronger voice in Washington and government affairs. Early membership efforts concentrated on promoting the benefits of membership and convincing manufacturers, who had previously been working independently, that the organization would be as beneficial to individual companies as it would to the industry as a whole. Moreover, as other associations, such as the independent cap pistol group, closed down, they merged with the Association, expanding the opportunities for reach and influence.

Also in the early years, a lot of manufacturing was centered in the eastern half of the country. After World War II and the Korean War, however, more and more manufacturing was being done in California as well as overseas, beginning to create big change in the definition of a U.S. manufacturer.

During the mid to late 1950s, Ruth Handler, co-founder of Mattel and Association member, took an active role in developing and establishing regional Association chapters and meetings to address issues unique to the different areas. Membership grew by nearly 10 percent in less than two years, as she enrolled companies based on the West Coast. Handler’s success at attracting members was noted continually in Association records. Thanks in part to her tireless efforts, as well as the boom in toy production during the post-War years, the organization experienced one of its first growth spurts.

The 1950s also saw another major change: the addition of toy importers as members. Though in 1916 this was seen as a challenge to the nascent domestic industry, four decades later the business had become more global in terms of sourcing product. In the early years of the 1950s, the Association had allowed members who imported some of their goods, and in 1955, Max Eckardt & Sons became the first company that dealt exclusively in imported toys to join as a member. Four years later, in 1959, the Association welcomed members who exclusively manufactured overseas. In the following years, reflecting the changes in the industry, more and more companies were invited to join. On the Association’s 50th anniversary in 1966, the organization was renamed the Toy Manufacturers
of America (TMA). In part, the name change acknowledged that many companies from Canada—part of the Americas—were being admitted as members and were an important part of the toy market. Since 1926, for example, Irwin Toy had distributed most major U.S. toys in Canada, and proved to be highly instrumental in both opening the market to U.S. toys and establishing the Canadian toy industry, which is thriving today. In 2014, the Canadian Toy Association became an affiliate of TIA, resulting in a shared membership. The same year, international manufacturers that sell into the U.S. market became eligible for membership in the Association.

Over the years, membership continued to grow and expand. With entertainment becoming more and more important to the toy business, studios and networks became members. Toy testing labs became associate members in 1985, and provided an especially valuable voice in the mid-1980s as the toy safety standards of ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) International were developed and adopted.

The Association continued to grow and evolve, as did the industry. In acknowledgment of this growth, the Association was renamed the Toy Industry Association (TIA) in 2001 to reflect the many diverse disciplines and stakeholders that the modern toy industry encompasses.

In the mid-1950s, Ruth Handler of Mattel helped expand the Association by enrolling West Coast manufacturers as members. She and her husband Elliot were inducted into the Toy Industry Hall of Fame in 1989.
Supporting the Business of Toys

To an outside observer, the annual Toy Fair is probably the most visible activity of the Association. Indeed, given the attention it receives in national and international media, it would be difficult to miss it in February. Today, the North American International Toy Fair is the third-largest toy marketplace in the world and the largest in the Western Hemisphere. It attracts exhibitors and buyers from all over the world and remains one of the most effective events for launching, selling, and celebrating new products. In 2015, Toy Fair welcomed more than 1,000 exhibitors and over 9,000 buyers from nearly 100 different countries.

Like the industry itself, Toy Fair has evolved over the years. The first official Toy Fair was in 1903 and predated the Association by 13 years. At the time, as we’ve seen, much of the toy manufacturing was based in Europe, especially Germany. The fledgling U.S. manufacturers seeking to attract the attention of buyers set up their wares in locations near the New York City docks in hopes of being able to, quite literally, catch them before they set sail for Europe or after they returned.

Toy Fair, in its various forms and locations, has taken place every year, with one exception: In 1945, Toy Fair was cancelled after a request by the War Mobilization Office. This did not only affect the toy industry; many trade shows based in New York were cancelled that year. Accounts vary as to why this happened, but by the beginning of 1945, the tide of the war had turned, certainly after the Allied victory at the Battle of the Bulge in January. According to toy industry lore, Toy Fair was cancelled as the government prepared to bring home soldiers, and hotel rooms and exhibit space would have been unavailable. The Fair came back in a big way in 1946, however, with more and more companies seeking to exhibit, particularly as a means of promoting U.S. toys.

Even before the war, Toy Fair became more established as the industry grew and U.S. toys began to find a toehold with buyers and consumers. But in the early years, the show dates were often changeable. There were various competing shows in different regions around the country, notably in Chicago, and the timing of these shows was in flux. Of course, figuring out the optimal time for Toy Fair was a concern, as being able to manufacture for holiday sales was always paramount. In the early years and into the 1930s, Toy Fair took place in April and May, but slowly moved earlier over the years. In 1930, a Summer Toy Week was established in New York as a secondary event to the winter Toy Fair. It attracted some level of attendance and continued for several years, but it was ultimately determined that this wasn’t a productive time for ordering toys and was abandoned.
Experimentation with dates and ongoing member surveys attempted to determine the ideal timing for the show, and it wasn’t until the early 1970s that Toy Fair began to settle into the mid-February timeframe that it still has today.

Throughout much of its history, Toy Fair was about one thing. As early as 1949 and through 1964, materials created for Toy Fair promoted, “The one and only purpose of a Toy Fair is to decrease the cost of buying and selling.” The early Toy Fairs remained true to the Association’s founding principle of promoting the U.S. toy industry, and records throughout the early years describe the challenges for manufacturers in finding sufficient exhibition space. Rooms and suites in hotels, notably the Hotel McAlpin, became highly prized among manufacturers, and the difficulty of getting buyers from one exhibit space to another became a perennial challenge, as was who would get to exhibit. In the early years, only manufacturers were allowed to exhibit, and jobbers (today called wholesalers or sales representative groups) were barred from showing. Even as recently as 1958, Toy Fair was limited to manufacturers that had at least one U.S. factory in operation for at least two years. Yet the industry was growing and changing, and as more and more companies believed in the power of Toy Fair, the Association worked to accommodate the change. One thing became clear: The industry needed a home.
Shortly after the Association’s formation in 1916, one of the goals was to begin to provide a centralized geographic area for selling toys. This certainly made sense at the time, as other areas of Manhattan were associated with different industries: dry goods occupied Sixth Avenue and, probably most famously, the garment district stretched between 34th and 42nd streets from Fifth to Ninth avenues. In 1917, the first toy companies moved into the Fifth Avenue Building (later known as the International Toy Center), and in the following years, it would become more and more devoted to toys. The area of the city around the intersection of Fifth Avenue and 23rd Street began to be known informally as the toy district. In 1949, the Association moved its offices to the Fifth Avenue building in order to, as the board wrote at the time, “provide an anchor for the U.S. toy industry.” In the post-War years and throughout the 1950s, toy companies of all sizes flocked to the building, taking over huge showrooms and tiny offices and eventually expanding into 1107 Broadway, which became known as “Toy Center North.” By 1960, the International Toy Center would reach its peak activity, with the entirety of the space leased exclusively to toy companies in both permanent offices and temporary showrooms.

For the next 45 years, the Toy Building, as it was known in the industry and throughout New York, would continue to attract companies of all sizes. By 1981, there were 600 toy and related companies with offices and showrooms in the building. For most of the year, the Toy Building would seem to the casual observer to be just another elegant, old office building, identified with toys only by a sign and an awning. Yet for two weeks in February, it would erupt into virtually non-stop activity. The elevators would be packed from morning to night, and waits of 10 to 15 minutes to get to an upper floor were common. The lobby buzzed with excitement as friends, colleagues,
and competitors alike converged, shared news, discussed the hottest toys, and raced from appointment to appointment. The activity spilled out onto Fifth Avenue, and attendees arriving at the show could count on being waylaid by any number of costumed characters and promotional stunts as they made their way to the entrance. It didn’t matter whether it was snowing, freezing, or fair: It was a circus-like atmosphere. Even as showrooms opened up across Madison Square Park at 41 Madison Avenue, or when the Jacob K. Javits Center opened in 1986, the Toy Center was still the center of all activity.

Yet times would change. The industry became more decentralized and global. More and more of the world converged on New York, and in 1985, the fair’s name was officially changed to the American International Toy Fair. Growth continued, and in 1987 the Association launched the first Toy Fair at the recently opened Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. The addition expanded the industry’s New York City footprint to include the International Toy Center as well as the Javits exhibits on the west side of Manhattan. The Javits-based event continued to grow, and in 2000 the American International Toy Fair took over the entire Javits Center.

The Toy Building remained an important home for much of the toy industry until 2005, when it was sold to real estate developers. By 2006, the majority of toy companies had moved out of the Toy Center, effectively ending an era. Fortunately, former tenants found a new home at the Javits-based Toy Fair, which contributed significantly to the growth and importance of the event over the last decade.
While Toy Fair was held in February, the business of selling toys continued year-round. Production lead times grew longer, and retailers were eager to get products to market earlier to both generate year-round sales and test consumer demand prior to the highly competitive fourth quarter. To satisfy this emerging need, showrooms were opened in October to give retailers a “first look” at new items. This product review took place at the International Toy Center and the adjacent Toy Center North. It wasn’t an official trade show, but had certainly become an important part of the business cycle. However, after 200 Fifth Avenue and 1107 Broadway were sold in January 2005, the industry turned to the Association to help keep the informal show alive. Working with the new building owners, the Association organized the event that year with companies that were still in showrooms and took over vacant spaces to create temporary exhibits.

In 2006, the now-official show moved to the Javits Center in New York, and in 2007, the Fall Mass Market Toy Expo was moved to its new home in the Dallas Market Center. Now named Fall Toy Preview, the annual show is held in late September or early October and is the largest preview of the following year’s Q4 offerings for mass-market and other long-lead buyers. The effectiveness of this show has moved the industry closer to one of the Association’s original goals of creating a year-round selling season, both for the trade and for consumers. (Certainly the boom in summer movies and early-year introductions have helped this, too, as consumers find increased purchase occasions outside the holiday season.) Smaller companies have found Fall Toy Preview to be an
essential show, as it gives them access to buyers from major retailers with greater efficiency than ever, and buyers are able to see the scope of products available as they begin planning for the next year. Fall Toy Preview has become second only to the New York Toy Fair in its importance to the selling process.

**Educating an Industry**

Today, as it has throughout the past 113 years, Toy Fair continues to be a platform for product launches and sales, but it’s also a forum for sharing information. The current educational program at Toy Fair brings together industry leaders on a variety of topics, including licensing, toy design, global research, toy safety, and more. In addition, on-site sessions offer key insights for specialty retailers, highlight the latest industry research, and showcase new product developments and trends.

But it’s not just at Toy Fair that the Association aims to keep people informed and up-to-date. Throughout its history, the Association has been dedicated to providing information that would help manufacturers understand trends in the business, and be more efficient and effective.

In the early days of the Association, information was gathered through member surveys and questionnaires. Sales data, credit reports, percentages of imports, and more were tracked. In addition to data, in its earlier years the Association also took steps to educate the marketplace about selling and merchandising toys. With the passage of the Robinson Patman Act in 1936, which prevented unfair competition, and other market changes, the Association published its first merchandising guide in 1937—something that it would update every year. Subsequently, in 1949, the Association published its first “How to Sell Toys” guide, designed to encompass both trade and consumer concerns. The “Toy Industry Fact Book,” as it would be renamed in 1977, was published annually until the information moved online. Over the years, the Association built a comprehensive library of reference materials.

In 1995, the Association unveiled ToyNet, its first presence on the Internet. Of course, the online world of more than 20 years ago looked nothing like it does today, but for the first time it was possible to link toy associations around the world, and provide comprehensive information on a global basis. By today’s standards ToyNet may seem a little rudimentary, but ToyNet was nonetheless a leading innovation at a time when businesses were just starting to discover the Internet. Today, the Association’s website ([www.ToyAssociation.org](http://www.ToyAssociation.org)) is a robust and comprehensive resource for the industry and those who want to learn about the industry. For example, the Association sponsors educational webinars on trade issues, industry trends, consumer protection, and more, and shares commissioned research on the youth markets and economic indicators worldwide.
Creating Future Toy Designers

Many of the most well-known toy designers—Reuben Klamer, Marvin Glass, Beatrice Alexander, and many more—came to toy design and invention almost by accident. They didn’t set out to create a hot game or beautiful doll, but circumstances in their lives propelled them into entrepreneurship.

But toy design as a stand-alone discipline? That was practically unheard of. During the post-War years, many of the designers who found themselves working for toy companies were industrial designers whose careers could have taken them into automotive or appliance design. But a toy is not a sedan or a blender, and in the mid-1980s, the Association began to address the need and the opportunity to sponsor a college-level course in toy design. Of course, toy designers had to be adept at the basics of design and engineering, but they also needed to understand the unique challenges and opportunities of the children’s marketplace—from product development to marketing and much more.

After a fairly exhaustive review process, the Association found an ideal partner, virtually in its backyard. In 1989, the Association sponsored the first baccalaureate program in toy design at the Fashion Institute of Technology. The inaugural class matriculated with 18 students. Under the direction of Judy Ellis, the program has consistently grown and expanded, helping the next generation of toy designers understand their ultimate customers in ways no previous college course had.

As of 2015, the program was going strong: It had nearly 400 alumni working in major toy companies and had helped more than 3,500 toys come to market.

In 1997, Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles launched its own program. For all those parents who rolled their eyes when kids said they wanted to design toys for a living...well, it’s legit.
Rewarding the Industry

In 1960, the Association began discussions of a toy awards program. Modeled on the French system, it would honor the best in toys for a given year at an annual banquet. Banquets, of course, had been part of the Association’s celebrations for many years. The Washington’s Birthday dinners, which were huge, formal affairs for the membership in the 1920s, included headliners like Duke Ellington and his orchestra, and dinners at Toy Fair were an annual occurrence. But after a few mentions in the minutes, the concept of a toy awards program disappeared for almost 40 years.

In 2000, the Toy of the Year (TOTY) awards were launched as the kickoff to Toy Fair. Honoring the best toys of the previous year, the awards are voted on by the industry, consumers, media, and retailers. Intended to focus consumer attention on toys during Toy Fair and serve as an annual celebration of the industry and its products, the first TOTY awards were presented in 13 categories, including classic toy categories, retailers, licensed toys, and marketing campaigns. LeapFrog was the big winner that year, with its LeapPad taking the honors for Toy of the Year, Educational Toy of the Year, and the People’s Choice award (voted on by consumers). Over the years the awards have highlighted toys in many traditional categories, growing to recognize properties in 2005 and e-connected toys in 2013 as these emerged as major categories.

The TOTY Awards ceremony also serves to honor new inductees into the Toy Industry Hall of Fame (all of whom are featured in Appendix 1).
Worldwide Reach and Global Impact

As we’ve seen, the history of the toy industry throughout the 20th and into the 21st century has been one of increasing globalization. What once were concerns of isolated countries and economies had become interdependent, and in the early 1960s the Association began working alongside many international toy associations—an effort that continues today.

Various international toy associations began soliciting participation from the United States in the 1950s, but the time wasn’t right. There was still too much concern about product dumping, embargoes, and other trade issues. However, in 1962, the Association formed an alliance with the British toy association to create an exhibit of U.S.–made toys at the London toy show. This was so well received that later that year, a similar arrangement was made with the Frankfurt toy fair, and in 1965 an exhibit of U.S. toys appeared for the first time at the Nuremberg toy show. These joint ventures proved very effective for helping to expand the reach of U.S. toy manufacturers into these countries. Rapports with other toy associations followed, and by the end of the 1960s, many companies had established international divisions. These relationships were reciprocal, and exhibits at Toy Fair helped overseas companies enter the U.S. market.

One of the Association’s most significant moves in the increasing globalization of the industry came in 1975 with the formation of the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI), an association of 19 national toy trade associations from around the world. The U.S. Association took a leadership role in the organization’s creation.

By the time of ICTI’s formation, multi-national production, particularly in parts of China and the newly industrialized world, was a toy industry reality. At the same time, human rights and consumer organizations were concerned with ensuring that toys were produced in factories that provided safe and humane working conditions and did not exploit their workers. Concurrently, safety standards were evolving rapidly in the United States and Europe, and toy associations and toy companies worldwide had a vested interest in being part of the discussion.

In its early days, ICTI members recognized that a unified international toy safety standard would both protect consumers and facilitate free trade among participating nations. They collaborated on the development of an ICTI toy safety standard, which ultimately led to the development of a consensus safety standard under the auspices of the International Standards Organization (ISO). Today, the ISO standard, along with the ASTM International toy standard and the EU regional standard, form the basis for toy regulation around the world.
Over the next years, ICTI would become a resource for information from around the world on toy safety, advertising to children, and other subjects. It also focused on supporting children’s causes and promoting the value of play worldwide. Ten years after its founding, the organization expanded with more and more countries participating; ultimately, ICTI achieved non-voting status at ISO—a major accomplishment for ICTI.

In 1991, ICTI adopted a Code of Conduct that expressed dedication to protecting children’s safety and well-being through safe products and responsible marketing to children. It also stressed the importance of free toy trade worldwide. Four years later, the organization adopted its first Code of Business Practices, establishing standards for industry and labor practices, and subsequently became a United Nations Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the same class as labor unions and human rights groups. This was a huge step for the stature of the organization and the toy industry within the context of international business.

The toy industry didn’t stand still, of course, and ICTI constantly worked to stay on top of developments and their implications for manufacturing and safety. In 2004, the organization created the separate ICTI CARE Foundation. Central to the Foundation’s mission were the development and implementation of a global audit process that would allow for a single audit system and protocol approved by ICTI member countries. ICTI CARE (which stands for “Caring, Awareness, Responsible, Ethical”) is the industry’s ethical manufacturing program designed to ensure safe and humane working conditions for toy factory workers worldwide. The ICTI CARE process monitors factories’ compliance with the ICTI Code of Conduct, and provides education, training, and a consistent monitoring process for factories. The original efforts were focused on China, Hong Kong, and Macau, where approximately 80 percent of the world’s toys are manufactured, according to ICTI. The program has also expanded to cover other regions and territories as manufacturing has expanded globally.

Just past its 30th anniversary, today ICTI continues its work in environmental sustainability, training factory managers, and working to align the ICTI code with the many retailer codes currently in place around the world.

To most consumers, this is behind-the-scenes stuff, but for the industry it’s been critically important as these issues continue to develop. The ability to resolve disparate standards and provide a unified response to emerging issues facilitates the expansion of the industry and the emergence of new companies taking a chance on this often high-risk business.
Government Affairs

In the 1920s, a relationship with Washington meant having someone who would get on the train and call on members of Congress. It meant sending the president a telegram expressing the Association’s support on an issue—and getting one in return expressing thanks.

Nearly a century later, dealing with government affairs is a bit more sophisticated. However, the basic objectives remain unchanged: to educate lawmakers about the distinct issues of the toy industry. Previously, we discussed some of the issues that have arisen over the years, from grappling with local ordinances to ensuring product safety, and through it all the Association has been an effective lobbyist for the concerns and needs of the industry. In 2008, the Association set up permanent offices in Washington, D.C.

Today, lobbying efforts cover five basic legislative topics: chemicals, environmental sustainability, international trade, marketing to children, and product safety. The Association staff works to educate Congress and a broad range of federal and state agencies about the issues that affect legislation—not merely advocating for the industry, but providing lawmakers with insights about the science and research behind its positions. The Association also actively educates its members about changes in policy, standards, regulations, and upcoming legislation through webinars and other communications. This helps to ensure that the Association remains informed about the needs and concerns of its members as well.

In 2013, the Association helped form the Congressional Toy Caucus, made up of members of Congress who support the positive economic impact of the toy industry. The Caucus works to advance discussions on topics ranging from toy safety and the value of play to the growth of small toy businesses, industry economics, and increasing free trade. The Association maintains regular contact with these policymakers to ensure that they have a greater understanding of the toy industry.

These efforts are not limited to Washington. The Association maintains a presence in Sacramento, the state capital of California. California is home to a large number of toy companies and plays an important role in shaping toy regulations and legislation that impact the entire U.S. toy industry.

The Association’s government affairs efforts are global as well. The Association works with a sister organization in Brussels, the Toy Industries of Europe (TIE), as well as other organizations around the world. The goal is to harmonize standards to facilitate international trade, which benefits the industry and consumers equally.
And, yes, you can still visit your elected officials. It may not be quite as simple as leaving a calling card, but the Association arranges meetings with lawmakers either in their districts or in Washington. It also organizes “fly-in” events in both Washington and California, during which members can meet with their representatives and become actively involved in the legislative process. This is an important two-way dialogue: Association members can have their concerns heard, and lawmakers can connect with companies that are creating jobs and contributing to their local communities. In that way, not much has changed from the early years of the Association, as it has sought to continually facilitate understanding and dialogue about the industry.
Philanthropy

Since its founding, the Association has been actively involved in philanthropic efforts, and providing toys for children in need has been one of its hallmarks. Throughout the early years, the Association and its members provided toys through churches and social organizations. As soldiers returned from World War I, individual manufacturers donated toys for their families. But as generous as many of the companies were in giving toys to their local charities, the first evidence of a coordinated philanthropic effort by the Association, in fact, had nothing to do with toys.

Evidently, the Association had acquired a painting called “Christmas Eve” by a popular artist named Harry Anderson (1906–1996). How it was acquired is not completely clear, but it appears that it was donated to the Association by one of its members. Anderson painted very much in the highly romanticized, Norman Rockwell vein, and his works were featured, as were Rockwell’s, in many magazines of the 1940s and 1950s. Anderson was also known for his religious paintings, and his work was highly prized in popular circles. Prints and calendars of Anderson’s work were also very popular, and he was nothing if not prolific. In 1946, the Association donated “Christmas Eve” to the Salvation Army, and created and sold prints of the painting to raise money for its toy efforts.

Subsequent efforts were far more direct and simplistic. Starting in 1947, toy samples that were left at the end of Toy Fair were collected by the Association and donated to the American Red Cross—a practice that continued for many years.

Starting in 1961, philanthropic efforts for the Association fell under the purview of the American Toy Institute, after it was established as a separate foundation. In addition to the research and education programs discussed previously, the Foundation raised more than $1 million for charitable causes, including providing toys for soldiers returning from service. In the late 1960s, Gabriel Industries’ Min Horowitz—the first female chairman of the Association—spearheaded a drive to supply toys for the families of veterans returning from Vietnam.
Association members were generous and responsive to the need of children who didn’t have toys, but donations, such as those described above, were largely on an ad hoc basis. Many of the toy companies had well-established nonprofit entities that provided toys and much more for children in need. So it would not be until 2000, with the re-launch of the Toy Industry Foundation (TIF), that the industry’s philanthropic efforts would be fully established. TIF is the philanthropic arm and official charity of the North American toy industry, and 98 percent of every dollar donated directly supports its programs.

Today, TIF runs three programs that have enabled the Foundation to serve more than 20 million children who are sick, impoverished, in military families, in foster care, and suffering from the aftermath of natural disasters.

As TIF’s signature program, The Toy Bank has provided more than $125 million worth of toys to more than 20 million children in need since 2003. This year-round program receives toy donations from manufacturers, retailers, and distributors, and in turn donates them to more than 1,000 children’s charities around the world.

Play Comforts is a collaborative effort between TIF and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America Military Services. It was the first-ever national toy distribution program that serves every branch of the U.S. military. Play Comforts is the toy industry’s way of thanking the military servicemen and servicewomen for the sacrifices they make for our country. To date, Play Comforts has served 1.8 million children on military bases around the globe.

In 2012, TIF built a program for foster children in partnership with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children. Since the creation of this program, the partnership has delivered toys to more than 250,000 children in the foster care system.

Every child needs play to develop fully and healthily. This essential human need transcends any family, economic, or other condition. Helping to provide that play experience to as many children as possible—especially those who might otherwise not have access to it—remains the mission of TIF, and one that its many participants can point to with pride as an integral part of the Association’s history.

The mission of TIF was stated as:

To unite the toy industry as a catalyst in bringing joy, happiness and comfort to children in need through the experience of toys and play.
Conclusion:
Looking to the Future

After looking back at the growth and development over the past century, it’s only natural to look ahead. Although no one has a Magic 8 Ball to be able to predict the future, the Association’s dedication to serving the industry will be a constant.

The business and regulatory climate of the toy industry will inevitably change, as it has in the past century. The steady progress toward a global toy market, which began after World War II, has now largely been achieved in developed countries. We can anticipate that this will only increase as foreign countries continue to develop and toy markets emerge and grow. For the toy industry, globalization has meant greater efficiency and the ability to provide better products at good prices to more of the world. Consider that even as recently as the late 1990s, toys were introduced first in the United States and then subsequently worldwide.

Now, the global launch of toys and entertainment properties is common. Supporting and promoting programs like ICTI CARE will allow the Association to continue to help ensure that this growth happens responsibly.

Toys, too, will change to reflect the larger evolving culture, but play patterns and their essential role in child development will remain immutable. As long as there are kids, play will be an essential part of their lives, helping them to discover who they are, practice for adulthood, and entertain themselves. At its essence, the Association’s function throughout the last 100 years has been to facilitate play and promote its benefits. Creating a positive environment for business growth and responding to an ever-changing market helps members provide the tools kids need to learn, grow, and have fun. These are still the key objectives of today’s Toy Industry Association, and are likely to remain unchanged for the next hundred years.
The toy industry remains unique in that it combines elements of so many other industries: commodities, novelties, entertainment—all of which toy companies must innovate around to produce creative, cutting-edge products for kids, who are unlike any other consumer. Fostering the childlike spirit of imagination and discovery will remain critically important for the toy trade.

The industry has long been driven by innovative, passionate visionaries who have not only shaped the toy business but countless childhoods as well. In a 1952 profile of A.C. Gilbert in The New Yorker, he was quoted as saying, “I love to see the wheels go ’round, love to see the people develop. It’s not for profits alone."

Of course, Gilbert and his fellow toymakers set the Association’s wheels in motion in 1916. A century later, those wheels continue to roll, building an industry, supporting children’s growth and development, and creating the kind of magic that only toys can conjure.
In 1985, the Association created its Hall of Fame to honor the men and women whose careers have had an important and lasting impact on the toy industry. For years, the Hall of Fame was showcased in the sky bridge between the Toy Building and The Toy Center North. The original display included large, engraved steel panels with brief biographies and photos of the inductees and spanned the entire bridge—a walk that virtually everyone in the industry took several times during Toy Fair. After the toy industry moved out of the building—and the bridge was removed—the Hall of Fame was looking for a home.

In 2015, it found that home at the Strong Museum in Rochester, New York, which houses the world’s largest and most comprehensive collection of historical materials related to play. The Association worked with the Strong Museum to create the Toy Halls of Fame exhibit, featuring inductees of both the Toy Industry Hall of Fame and National Toy Hall of Fame under one roof. A far cry from the steel panels, the Toy Industry Hall of Fame has been beautifully re-imagined with images of inductees etched into Lucite plaques and displayed on interactive screens. By placing the Toy Industry Hall of Fame alongside the National Toy Hall of Fame, museum-goers can learn about both the toys beloved by generations and the toy industry trailblazers who helped bring those toys to life.
Herman G. Fisher 1898–1975

**Inducted 1985**
**Company: Fisher-Price**

A guiding force in the realm of preschool playthings, Herman Fisher co-founded Fisher-Price in 1930, and served as president and chairman from then until 1969.

Launching a new venture under the cloud of the Great Depression was bold, but the decision paid off. The company’s first manufactured toys proved highly popular at the American International Toy Fair and quickly captured consumers’ attention.

Fisher was instrumental in transforming the enterprise into the world’s largest and most respected manufacturer of preschool toys. He followed a strict creed that all of his toys should have intrinsic play value, ingenuity, strong construction, good value for the money, and action features.

Fisher applied equally high standards to all of his endeavors, including his tenure as the president of Toy Manufacturers of America in 1938, at which time he led the campaign to establish the Association’s Statistical Committee.

Jerome M. Fryer 1918–1983

**Inducted 1985**
**Company: CBS Toys**

From sales representative to president of CBS Toys, a division of CBS Inc., Jerry Fryer’s career in the toy industry spanned a range of successful ventures. Fryer and his partner made the jump from sales to manufacturing by acquiring Samuel Gabriel Sons & Co. in 1950.

His considerable entrepreneurial skill and knowledge of toys were evident as he expanded Gabriel Industries into a major corporation, adding other established names, such as Child Guidance, Creative Playthings, Gilbert, Gym-Dandy, Hubley, Ideal, Kohner, and Wonder, into what would become CBS Toys.
A.C. Gilbert 1884–1961

Inducted 1985
Company: A.C. Gilbert Company

One of this country’s toy industry pioneers, A.C. Gilbert was a man of originality and vision. He held more than 150 patents, and some of the toys he created and manufactured through the A.C. Gilbert Company—like the perennially popular Erector construction sets—have been enjoyed by generation after generation of children.

The A.C. Gilbert Company, established in 1909, initially sold magician’s supplies; Gilbert was a magician himself. Over the years, the company would manufacture items ranging from microscopes to military aircraft used in World War II, but Gilbert’s toys, including Meccano construction sets, toy trains, chemistry sets, and most notably the Erector sets, left an indelible mark on the industry. Erector and Meccano have been consistently in production somewhere in the world since their introduction.

Gilbert was a strong leader and an early proponent of spreading toy sales more evenly throughout the year. It was largely due to his determined effort and skill as an organizer that the industry’s first trade association, Toy Manufacturers of America, was established in 1916. Gilbert served as the first president of the new organization.

Marvin Glass 1914–1974

Inducted 1985
Company: Marvin Glass and Associates

Considered to be one of the world’s foremost toy designers, Marvin Glass founded in 1941 the first, and what was to become the largest, toy design studio in the world — Marvin Glass and Associates, which churned out classics like Mr. Machine, Rock ‘Em Sock ‘Em Robots, Lite Brite, Mouse Trap, Operation, and Simon.

Marvin Glass and Associates operated under a unique business model, whereby its designs and inventions were patented and licensed to manufacturers, who would pay running royalties. Glass wielded such industry clout that his company logo was printed on every game his employees invented and licensed.

Glass paved the way for independent designers to gain new acceptance within the toy industry, and the profusion of successful toys he brought to the marketplace serves as testimony to his innovative genius.
Nathan Greenman 1916–1976

Inducted 1985
Company: Greenman Brothers, Inc.

Preeminent in the business of toy wholesaling, Nat Greenman devoted his entire adult life to the toy industry. With his two brothers, he joined his father’s enterprise as a teenager and went on to be a major force behind the growth of Greenman Brothers, Inc., one of the largest toy wholesalers in the United States.

As the company’s chief merchant during its years of greatest development, he met and influenced many of the top figures from across the toy industry. Greenman often shared his views as an unofficial voice of wholesalers, helping to shape toy distribution policy in the industry’s formative years. His formula of “strength through efficiency” also helped lay the groundwork for his own firm to evolve over time into a successful multifaceted operation.

Merrill L. Hassenfeld 1918-1979

Inducted 1985
Company: Hasbro

Under the leadership of Merrill Hassenfeld, then-president of Hassenfeld Brothers (now Hasbro), Mr. Potato Head, the first toy to be advertised on television, and G.I Joe, the industry’s first male action figure, were born.

Hassenfeld joined Hasbro in 1938 when the family business was still primarily producing school supplies. During World War II, he helped launch the company’s toy manufacturing arm with a line of doctor and nurse kits, and air raid warden’s sets. After the death of his father in 1943, Hassenfeld took the helm as president.
Louis Marx 1896–1982

Inducted 1985
Company: Louis Marx and Company

Louis Marx, nicknamed the “toy king of America,” owned Louis Marx and Company, the world’s largest toy manufacturing company in the 1950s and producer of iconic toys such as Rock ‘Em Sock ‘Em Robots and the Big Wheel tricycle, now in the National Toy Hall of Fame.

Marx enjoyed an auspicious start to his career. He graduated from high school at the age of 15, and by 20 was working as a plant manager for Ferdinand Strauss, a mechanical toy manufacturer. After serving two years in the army and another year as a salesman for a wooden toy manufacturer, for which he increased company sales tenfold, Marx and his brother David established Louis Marx and Company in 1919. Three years later, at age 26, Marx was a millionaire. In 1955 he appeared on the cover of Time.

Marx’s general philosophy was to offer quality toys at the lowest possible price, which solidified his products’ popularity with consumers. The company was especially known for its tin and plastic model cars; another of Marx’s epithets was “Henry Ford of the toy industry.” Louis Marx and Company was the first to mass-produce mechanical toys in the United States, and many of its early wind-ups are valuable collectors’ items today.

George S. Parker 1866–1952

Inducted 1986
Company: Parker Brothers

How different the world of games might be if George Parker had followed his youthful ambition to become a journalist.

But in the late 1800s he turned his attentions to the toy industry. Believing that instead of emphasizing morals, games could be played for mere enjoyment, Parker’s designs were a marked divergence from traditional parlor games. He designed his first card game at the age of 16, and established his first company in 1883. Five years later, his brother joined the business, and Parker Brothers was formed.

The company grew to be highly profitable in the early 1900s with its card games, jigsaw puzzles, and Ping Pong, for which it purchased the rights in the 1920s. While many languished during the Great Depression, Parker Brothers experienced its greatest hit: Monopoly, launched in 1935.

After Parker’s death in 1952, the company produced beloved favorites like Clue, Risk, and Sorry! and remained family-owned until 1968.
Charles S. Raizen 1892–1967
Inducted 1986
Company: Transogram Company

Around the turn of the century, Charles Raizen took a summer job with an embroidery pattern manufacturer. While there, he discovered a unique way of transferring images using friction, which eventually became more popular as a toy than an embroidery pattern. In 1917, Raizen bought out the business and became president of the newly named Transogram Company.

Raizen established one of the first toy designer think tanks, called the Toy Research Institute. He employed a child psychologist to aid in product testing and was the first to tout his products as “kid-tested” toys. The public’s fascination with the Dionne quintuplets in the early 1930s gave rise to one of Transogram’s best-remembered items: The Little Country Doctor and Nurse Kit, inspired by Dr. Daniel Defoe. A later introduction, Trik-Trac, was also an immediate best-seller.

An eloquent public speaker, Raizen served as president of the Toy Manufacturers’ Association in 1960.

Raymond P. Wagner 1932–1985
Inducted 1986
Company: Mattel

One of the industry’s most memorable figures, Ray Wagner was a rare blend of magnetism and talent, playing all his roles in the world of toys with brilliance and style. Major retail experience at Sears paved the way to his success at Mattel, for which he was president from 1973 to 1983. The sustained success of such lines as Barbie, See ‘N Say, and numerous others reveal his creative, marketing, and management skills, also broadly reflected in the many industry professionals whom he trained. Wagner served as chairman of Toy Manufacturers of America in 1980 and served as the Association’s spokesperson on important issues.
Joshua Lionel Cowen  1877–1965
Inducted 1987
Company: Lionel Corporation

The millions of children who have enjoyed Lionel trains have Joshua Cowen, co-founder of Lionel Corporation, to thank.

Cowen built his first toy train at the age of seven by attaching a small motor under a railroad flatcar model. However, his early career focused on producing flash lamps and fuses. It wasn’t until 1901 when Cowen sold his first electric train to a storeowner to use as a window display that the trains took off. After numerous customer requests to purchase the display, the storeowner returned the next day to order more trains. By the following year, Lionel was primarily a toy train manufacturer.

Cowen was well on his way to becoming the undisputed tycoon of the electric toy train industry. Lionel replicas, paralleling the growth and development of U.S. railroads, became the classic of toy trains and accessories, garnering admiration from model railroaders around the world for quality construction and authentic detailing. In 2006 Lionel’s electric train, together with the Easy Bake Oven, became the first electric toys to be inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame. Lionel remains the most enduring model train brand name in the country, and its products are cherished by collectors around the globe.

Walt Disney  1901–1966
Inducted 1987
Company: Walt Disney

Walt Disney was a pioneer, innovator, and folk hero of the 20th century. His worldwide popularity is based on the ideals that his name represents: imagination, optimism, and self-made success in the American tradition.

Together with his brother Roy he established Disney Brothers Studios in 1923, which over the decades grew from a small cartoon studio into the multi-billion-dollar entertainment powerhouse it is today. Licensed merchandising began in 1929 with Disney’s first character sensation, Mickey Mouse, who first appeared on children’s writing tablets, then on children’s handkerchiefs and in doll form. Merchandising continued for Disney’s feature productions: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, released in 1937, was the first-ever feature-length animated film, followed by Pinocchio (1940), Fantasia (1940), Dumbo (1941), Bambi (1942), Cinderella (1950), Alice in Wonderland (1951), Peter Pan (1953), Lady and the Tramp (1955), Sleeping Beauty (1959), and 101 Dalmatians (1961). In all, Disney produced more than 100 feature films.

Disney characters and the countless toys and children’s products they have inspired have become ingrained in American childhood, and have left a lasting mark on the toy industry at large.
Walter W. Armatys

Inducted 1988
Company: Toy Manufacturers of America

As executive director of Toy Manufacturers of America, Walter Armatys served the industry trade association with professionalism, honor, and meticulous attention to detail. He managed the Toy Fair in New York for many years, was instrumental in setting up the TMA safety and logistics seminars, and handled organization of the Toy Industry Hall of Fame. After retiring he continued as secretary of the International Council of Toy Industries. In 30 years of service to the Association and the industry he loved, he demonstrated how considerable the contributions of an individual can be.

Morey W. Kasch 1907–1972

Inducted 1988
Company: M. W. Kasch Company

Morey Kasch devoted nearly 40 years of his life to his toy business, which bears not only his name but also the unmistakable imprint of a true entrepreneur and innovator. Customer needs were always the highest priority at M.W. Kasch Company. Kasch designed special programs to meet specific requirements, including individualized product mix, customized promotions, and speedy delivery. Under his leadership, the company pioneered data processing and materials handling networks among wholesalers, and even shared its knowledge with competitors setting up their own inventory maintenance systems. A consummate wholesaler, Kasch added a rich and memorable chapter to the history of the toy industry.
James J. Shea, Sr. 1889–1977

**Inducted 1988**
**Company: Milton Bradley**

With a rare genius for solving complex problems, James Shea took the helm of the faltering Milton Bradley Company and navigated it through worldwide economic crises to a position of eminence among game makers.

Taking advantage of the advent of television, in 1959 Shea oversaw the release of Concentration, a memory game based on an NBC television show of the same name. Over the course of his 30-year tenure at the company, he also introduced such classic games as The Game of Life, Candy Land, Chutes & Ladders, and Twister.

Business was but one of his passions; Shea also was dedicated to civic and philanthropic activities, and served as an outstanding example of responsibility and humanity in the toy industry.

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Ole Kirk Christiansen 1891–1958

**Inducted 1989**
**Company: LEGO**

When the world monetary crisis reached Denmark in the 1930s, Ole Kirk Christiansen, a rural carpenter, struggled to make ends meet. Sensing an ever-present demand for children’s products, he began crafting wooden toys.

Those toys were the foundation on which LEGO was built. Christiansen established the company in 1934, naming his venture after the Danish words “leg godt,” meaning “play well.” Christiansen ran his factory using the motto “only the best is worthy,” and his toys soon earned a worldwide reputation for quality. In the 1940s the company began producing plastic toys, initiating a move toward the LEGO bricks that we know and love today.

An unshakable self-confidence grounded in religious faith helped sustain Christiansen through the early years, and his dedication to profound, simple principles is an inspiration to all.
Ruth Handler 1916–2002
Elliot Handler 1916–2011

Inducted 1989
Company: Mattel

In 1945 Elliot Handler and his business partner, Matt Matson, founded Mattel, named by combining “Matt” and “Elliot.” Their original product was not toys, however, but picture frames. When the dollhouses that Handler and Matson built from frame scraps began to sell better than the frames, Mattel became a dedicated toy manufacturer.

Elliot’s wife, Ruth, played an instrumental role in propelling the business to fame and fortune. After seeing their daughter, Barbara, pretend that her paper dolls were adults, in 1959 she created a three-dimensional doll with an adult body and named it Barbie, after her daughter. It took some convincing the Mattel executives, but after they ran TV ads for Barbie during Disney’s new Mickey Mouse Club television show, sales shot through the roof.

The introduction of Barbie proved that the Handlers truly had their finger on the pulse of American society, and while many other product lines that the Handlers developed are thriving today, Barbie is still Mattel’s biggest success. The business techniques that the Handlers refined have helped shape the modern toy industry.

Benjamin F. Michtom 1901–1980

Inducted 1989
Company: Ideal Toy and Novelty Company

One of the most talented toy promoters the industry has ever seen, Ben Michtom propelled the Ideal Toy and Novelty Company, started by his father after inventing the teddy bear, to the forefront of the industry.

One of the first to make use of licensed products, Michtom inspired the rage for the Shirley Temple doll beginning in 1936. Upon perfecting the celebrity formula, he saw to the success of many other personality dolls, including Deanna Durbin, Fanny Brice, Charlie McCarthy, and Judy Garland. The Toni doll—whose fashions were designed by a dozen Paris couturiers and documented in imaginative advertising—also became a huge sensation, as well as a textbook example of a product within a product.

A board member of Toy Manufacturers of America and chairman of the Publicity Committee, Michtom also headed the Doll Association and Stuffed Toy Association for many years. Tireless in his efforts to promote the toy industry, he will be remembered for his trademark enthusiasm and originality.
Charles Lazarus  Born 1923

Inducted 1990
Company: Toys"R"Us

Toys"R"Us founder Charles Lazarus gambled on a new store layout and shopping experience, and revolutionized how playthings are sold in the United States and abroad.

Lazarus first opened a children’s furniture store in 1948 and soon added toys to his inventory, noting that they were a faster-moving consumer item than furniture. Instead of resigning his store to seasonal toy sales, as was the standard market cycle, he expanded his offerings to entice parents and children year-round. Inspired by the emergence of “self-service” supermarkets, in the late 1950s Lazarus restructured his store to echo a grocery store format, allowing customers to wheel carts down aisles and select whatever appealed to them from the shelves. Shortly after, he opened his first toys-only store, naming it Toys"R"Us.

Known for selling brand-name products for less in a one-stop shopping environment, Toys"R"Us became a smash hit with customers and endures today as a household name.

Edward P. Parker  1912–1974

Inducted 1990
Company: Parker Brothers

When Atlantic City threatened to change the names of its Baltic and Mediterranean Avenues in the 1970s, Edward Parker sprang to eloquent defense of his company’s best-selling Monopoly game, which features squares named after real estate at the seashore resort.

As chairman of Parker Brothers, vice president of General Mills, and director and president of Toy Manufacturers of America, he brought to the toy industry vast management and production experience, a commitment to quality, and a love of the games business. Devoted to his family and the Massachusetts community where he lived and worked, Parker will be remembered for his willingness to serve his neighbors, his country, and his industry.

Inducted 1991
Company: Fisher-Price

While at the helm of Fisher-Price, Henry Coords is credited with enhancing the company’s reputation for quality and play value, and establishing the business as an international leader in the toy industry.

Coords led the company for 14 years and oversaw a marked increase in factory construction and employee hiring to keep pace with Fisher-Price’s soaring sales. In 1966 the business brought in $25 million in sales. By 1980, revenue had reached $300 million.

As president of Toy Manufacturers of America, Coords championed the industry’s product safety standard emulated by countries around the world. In 1981 he was appointed executive vice president of corporate relations for the National Alliance of Business, a nonprofit group that works to provide jobs and training for the poor.

Stephen D. Hassenfeld 1942–1989

Inducted 1991
Company: Hasbro

Stephen Hassenfeld devoted his life to the firm founded by his family, building Hasbro into the largest toy manufacturer in the world. With vision, dedication, and a gift for managing the talents of others, he expanded the company’s broad product spectrum through astute acquisitions and bolstered new toy lines with unrivaled marketing expertise.

Hassenfeld took control of Hasbro after the death of his father in 1980. In an eight-year time span, Hassenfeld increased Hasbro’s profitability from $102.3 million to $1.3 billion. Forbes rated Hasbro number one in a thousand-corporation survey of increased value during the first half of the 20th century. Hassenfeld also oversaw the acquisition of Milton Bradley in 1984.

A passionate believer in giving back to the community, in 1983 Hassenfeld established the Hasbro Children’s Foundation and Hasbro Charitable Trust, helping to improve children’s quality of life for generations to come.
Jim Henson 1936–1990

Inducted 1992
Company: The Jim Henson Company

Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, not only revolutionized televised puppetry but created a cast of characters that continue to touch the lives of children around the world.

Early in his career, Henson began experimenting with new puppetry techniques. At a time when most puppets were carved out of wood, Henson began crafting his characters from flexible, fabric-covered foam rubber to give his puppets a greater range of expression. While most marionettes’ arms were controlled by string, Henson used rods to increase his puppets’ mobility, and coordinated their mouth movements with the dialogue to further imbue his characters with life-like qualities.

Kermit the Frog, performed by Henson, made his first appearance in 1954 in a televised puppet show called Sam and Friends, which Henson created as a high school freshman. In 1969 he was asked to join Sesame Street, where the beloved characters of Grover, Oscar the Grouch, Cookie Monster, Bert and Ernie, and Big Bird came to life. In 1976 The Muppet Show aired, introducing Miss Piggy, Gonzo the Great, and Fozzie Bear.

Henson was not only a visionary puppeteer but also an Oscar-nominated film director and an Emmy Award-winning television producer.

Bernard Loomis 1923–2006

Inducted 1992
Company: Mattel, General Mills, Hasbro, Bernard Loomis, Inc.

Bernard Loomis was a toy developer and marketer, known for his work promoting Chatty Cathy, Barbie, Hot Wheels, Strawberry Shortcake, Care Bears, and Star Wars. During his notable career, Loomis worked for the toy industry giants: Mattel, General Mills, and Hasbro. Each business became the world’s largest toy company during Loomis’s tenure.

He brought to market an incomparable portfolio of blockbuster toy hits. While at Mattel, in 1968 he became the first to develop a TV cartoon based on a toy line: Hot Wheels. At General Mills, Loomis helped develop The Six Million Dollar Man, Play-Doh, and Baby Alive, and had the foresight to pursue licensing for a Star Wars toy line. He marketed an “early bird” Star Wars set by selling empty boxes at Christmas with the promise that customers would be the first to receive the toys once production was complete. An extraordinary marketer, he proved that breaking rules was often the best rule of all.

Loomis worked at Hasbro from 1984 until 1988, at which time he founded his own development firm, Bernard Loomis, Inc. Among his products was the girls’ toy line Quints.
Aaron Locker 1927–2013
Inducted 1993
Company: Toy Manufacturers of America

Over the course of four decades, Aaron Locker became the heart and soul of Toy Manufacturers of America and the institutional memory of its board of directors. As general counsel to TMA, his name became synonymous with product safety as he guided the association through the maze of government regulation. His forceful and articulate advocacy of members’ interests helped to establish the American toy industry’s leadership role worldwide.

Albert Steiner 1895–1977
Inducted 1993
Company: Kenner Products Company

“Home-grown ideas” summarized the philosophy of product development at Kenner Products Company, founded in 1947 by entrepreneur Albert Steiner and his brothers, Philip and Joseph.

Kenner Products, originally established as a soap, flavoring, and extract business, went on to develop some of history’s most beloved toys. The company joined the toy industry after Steiner observed a child dipping a wand into a solution to produce bubbles. The Bubble-Matic Gun was launched within the company’s first year. Kenner continued to great success. The products developed under Steiner’s leadership include a lengthy list of best-sellers, from Play-Doh to Baby Alive, The Six Million Dollar Man, and Star Wars licensed products. The business was also renowned for its toy versions of adult activities, including the Girder and Panel Building set, Give A Show Projector, and Easy Bake Oven.

Steiner will be remembered for his keen analytic mind, his relentless optimism, and, most of all, the many ingenious toys that bear his imprimatur.
Alan G. Hassenfeld  Born 1948

Inducted 1994
Company: Hasbro

With a firm commitment to corporate social responsibility, Alan Hassenfeld has led the successful family business he grew up in to new heights.

Hassenfeld officially began his career at Hasbro in 1970, and proceeded to work his way up the ranks of the business established by his grandfather in 1923. As former chairman and CEO of Hasbro, Hassenfeld has diversified the company’s portfolio of companies and expanded international operations while initiating a singular brand of corporate activism designed to improve the lives of children. He is co-chair of the Hasbro Children’s Hospital Advisory Council, has served as chairman of Families First, and has led joint efforts by corporate executives and elected officials to end childhood hunger.

His vision and enthusiastic support of industry, community, and charitable causes has set a standard of leadership for generations to come.

John W. Amerman  Born 1932

Inducted 1995
Company: Mattel

John Amerman was named CEO of Mattel in 1987, and proceeded to engineer a comprehensive program that turned the struggling company around in one year.

Amerman cut costs, reorganized management, and focused on internal product development, strategic acquisitions, and international expansion. Under his leadership, Mattel attained record financial performance and went on to become the world’s largest toy maker.

Thanks to Amerman’s emphasis on building core products, sales from the Barbie and Hot Wheels brands more than tripled during his tenure. In honor of Barbie’s 30th anniversary in 1989, the doll made the cover of Smithsonian Magazine, and brand sales increased to almost half of the company’s $1.85 billion sales over the subsequent five years. Amerman also oversaw the exclusive licensing rights for several Disney movie character products, including Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh, and the Disney Princesses. In 1993, Amerman spearheaded the major acquisition of Fisher-Price. He retired in 1997, leaving a legacy of strengthening Mattel’s position as a worldwide toy industry leader.
Richard E. Grey  Born 1934

Inducted 1996
Company: Tyco

Richard Grey joined his father’s sales and marketing firm in 1958, when its client Tyco was a small maker of model trains. Grey would go on to oversee the transformation of Tyco into a multi-million-dollar business.

Named president of Tyco in 1973 and chairman in 1991, he led the company’s growth through product development, acquisitions, and aggressive marketing, increasing sales from $20 million in 1973 to more than $800 million in 1997, when he retired. In 1992 Tyco became the third largest U.S. toymaker with a broad range of toys, including radio control cars, activity toys, games, Matchbox cars, and preschool toys.

Grey was a board member of Toy Manufacturers of America from 1979 to 1985, and served as chairman of TMA from 1982 to 1983.

Thomas J. Kalinske  Born 1944

Inducted 1997
Company: Mattel, Universal Matchbox, Sega, Leapfrog

Since entering the toy industry in 1972, Thomas Kalinske has helped build many successful brands and companies.

Kalinske has served as president and/or CEO of several major toy companies, including Mattel from 1985 to 1987, Universal Matchbox Group from 1987 to 1990, Sega of America from 1990 to 1996, and Leapfrog Enterprises from 1997 to 2006. At Mattel, Kalinske oversaw the transformation of Barbie and Hot Wheels into major international brands, as well as Mattel’s foray into the preschool toy market. He successfully restructured Universal Matchbox and rebuilt the Matchbox brand while at the company’s helm, and during his tenure at Sega, Kalinske was instrumental in instituting an industry-wide video game rating system. He also established the Sega Foundation, which supports children’s health and education organizations.

Still active in the toy industry, Kalinske is a respected consumer electronics veteran and entrepreneur. He served on the board of directors of Toy Manufacturers of America for 12 years.
**Howard Moore  Born 1930**

**Inducted 1997**  
**Company: Toys“R”Us, Moore’s Toy Stores, Toy Barn Stores, Toy Town USA**

A legendary merchandiser, Howard Moore has had a major influence on the way toy companies develop and market their products.

He joined Toys“R”Us in 1984 as executive vice president and general merchandise manager, and through his focus on strategic line planning, product selection, and merchandising helped the company to flourish. Between 1984 and 1990, when Moore retired, sales increased from $480 million to $4.8 billion. He sat on the Toys“R”Us board of directors from 1984 until 2000.

In addition to his notable contributions at Toys“R”Us, Moore is honored for his entrepreneurship. He founded Moore’s Toy Stores, Toy Barn Stores, and Toy Town USA, which was eventually purchased by Lionel Corporation. He also established Howard Moore Associates, a consulting firm specializing in marketing, product licensing, packaging, and merchandising.

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**Sy Ziv  1925–2011**

**Inducted 1997**  
**Company: Toys“R”Us**

Through his assistance with the concept development of Toys“R”Us, Sy Ziv had a major impact on the toy chain’s domestic and international growth. In his 26-year career at Toys“R”Us, he made contributions to nearly every facet of the toy business. His guidance helped small companies stay in business and many manufacturers to achieve personal and corporate success.

A Fellow of Brandeis University, Ziv served on the institution’s President’s Council and received the university’s 1980 Community Service Award.
Jeffrey Breslow  Born 1943
Howard Morrison  Born 1932
Rouben Terzian  Born 1939

Inducted 1998
Company: Marvin Glass and Associates

In 1967 Jeffrey Breslow, Howard Morrison, and Rouben Terzian joined the legendary Marvin Glass and Associates, which marked the start of a 31-year collaboration that has led to the creation and design of some of the industry’s most successful toy and game products.

In 1988 the three established Breslow Morrison Terzian and Associates to continue their tradition of excellence. Their best selling products include: The Animal, Ants in the Pants, Guesstures, Brain Warp, California Roller Baby, Real Talking Bubba, Masterpiece, My Size Barbie, Casey Cartwheel, Jennie Gymnast, Hot Wheels Criss Cross Crash, and many more.

Russell L. Wenkstern  1912–2000

Inducted 1998
Company: Tonka Toys

As president and CEO of Tonka Toys from 1961 to 1977, Russ Wenkstern brought the company, which in 1952 had one small factory in a schoolhouse, to worldwide prominence by 1974. He turned Tonka into the largest volume manufacturer of vehicles of any type in the world, and insisted that Tonka trucks be the safest and most durable toys of their time, a tradition that continues today.

Wenkstern helped develop what became one of the nation’s most popular toys: the Tonka dump truck, which alone brought in $15 million in sales. Under his guidance, Tonka became one of the first U.S. toy manufacturers to expand internationally, yet remained a company where employee loyalty was the hallmark of its success.
Michael Goldstein  Born 1941

Inducted 1999
Company: Toys”R”Us

Michael Goldstein had a long and notable career with Toys”R”Us. Between 1983 and 2001 he served as CFO, then CEO, and finally chairman.

As the leader of Toys”R”Us, Goldstein brought to the company innovative merchandising ideas, guiding its rise to the world’s largest retailer of children’s products. His unique marketing style and personal approach to business forged many partnerships with toy companies, large and small.

Throughout Goldstein’s career, children in need have always been his top priority, and through his selfless charitable work with various children’s causes, he has helped make a difference in the lives of many.

Beatrice Alexander Behrman  1895–1990

Inducted 2000
Company: Madame Alexander Doll Company

Best known as Madame Alexander, this American legend brought her dreams to life as the premier American doll maker of the 20th century.

Behrman grew up in an apartment above her father’s doll hospital, and at the age of 28 began her own doll company. A leader in the industry, Behrman developed highly innovative products. In the 1930s she introduced the first dolls based on licensed characters; in the 1940s she unveiled the first dolls to have eyes that opened and closed; in 1947, using new technology, she oversaw the creation of the first dolls made of hard plastic; and in 1955, her company introduced Cissy, the first full-figured, high-heeled fashion doll, four years before the creation of Barbie.

Behrman is recognized worldwide as an entrepreneur who revolutionized doll manufacturing in this country, and continues to serve as an inspiration for all those who follow in her path.
Fred Ertl, Jr.  Born 1930

**Inducted 2000**  
**Company: Ertl Company**

Recognizing fantasy and play as core elements of a successful toy company, Fred Ertl, Jr. masterfully combined these with farm replicas to grow the renowned Ertl Company, started by his father in 1945.

Ertl joined the company, then headquartered in the basement of his family’s Iowa home, at the young age of 15, and began taking on active management at 18 years old. His uncanny business savvy contributed to the company’s early success in licensing and international market expansion. Ertl Company is best known for its die-cast metal alloy scale models of farm equipment and vehicles, and today they are highly sought-after collectible items.

Ertl’s leadership in toy safety helped generate an industry-wide shift, resulting in the development of the first toy safety standard. He also created the Toy Manufacturers of America Safety Standards Committee, and is recognized for his commitment to protecting children throughout the world.

Betty M. James  1918–2008

**Inducted 2001**  
**Company: James Industries**

Leadership, foresight, and business acumen enabled Betty James to take a struggling company in 1945 and produce what would become one of the country’s classic toys: the Slinky.

It was James who gave her husband’s 1943 invention its now world-recognized name, and it was James who took the corporate reins after her husband left James Industries to move to Bolivia. During her more than 50 years as president and CEO, she developed unique brand extensions of the Slinky toy, as well as expanded the company to include a variety of traditional children’s playthings.

Hailed as one of the original leaders among women business owners, James combined a profound business savvy, sharp instinct for quality manufacturing, and true heart. Her commitment and perseverance have allowed children around the world the opportunity to relish the ingenuity and pure fun of a Slinky. In her lifetime, 300 million Slinkys, including the rainbow-hued plastic models and Slinky Dogs, were sold.
David A. Miller  Born 1932  

Inducted 2002  
Company: Eden Toys, Toy Manufacturers of America

David Miller’s 12 years as president of the Toy Industry Association and eight years as chairman of the International Council of Toy Industries resulted in fundamental changes in the way TIA members conduct business.

Miller’s career in the toy industry began in 1967 when he and his brother Richard founded Eden Toys. Together, they built the company into a leading manufacturer of infants’ and preschool stuffed toys for the department store and specialty market. The company won worldwide recognition with its licensed products: Beatrix Potter’s Peter Rabbit and Paddington Bear.

In 1990 Miller became president of the Toy Manufacturers of America, which became TIA. As president, he pioneered national and international efforts to curry favor for accepting China into the World Trade Organization and granting it permanent Most Favored Nation status in the United States. He was a vocal and effective advocate of NAFTA and zero tariffs for toys, and the hands-on programs he established became the template for safety and ethical manufacturing standards in the United States and around the world. He also played an important role in the development and success of the Fashion Institute of Technology’s Toy Design Program.

Eddy Goldfarb  Born 1921  

Inducted 2003  
Company: Eddy Goldfarb and Associates

Over his long and illustrious career in the toy industry, Eddy Goldfarb, a toy inventor extraordinaire, has proven himself prolific. He has put close to 800 items on the market in a variety of toy categories, and has received nearly 300 patents. Some of his most successful toys include Yakkity Yak Teeth, Busy Biddy, Merry-Go-Sip, Shark Attack, Arcade Basketball, Quiz Way, Kerplunk, Baby Beans, and LEGO Creator Game.

Goldfarb’s childhood dream of inventing toys intensified while on active duty in the U.S. Navy shortly after WWII began. He had volunteered for submarine duty and spent the war at sea in the Pacific. In his own words, “In that kind of environment, I relied even more on my imagination and spent whatever spare time there was inventing and planning for the future.” Goldfarb went on to enjoy a successful career as an independent toy inventor and game designer. His creativity and innovation are matched only by his kind spirit, for which he is known throughout the toy industry.
Antonio Pasin  1896–1990

**Inducted 2003**  
**Company: Radio Flyer**

An ambitious, penniless young boy from Italy, Antonio Pasin, like his grandfather and father, was an old-world wood craftsman. His dream was to own his own business in the Land of Opportunity.

By 1917 Pasin was handcrafting wooden wagons in a rented, one-room Chicago shop by night, and selling them by day out of a battered suitcase. He named his first wagon, the Liberty Coaster, after the Statue of Liberty. By 1930 Pasin had adopted the mass production technologies of the auto industry to create the first affordable steel wagon, earning him the nickname “Little Ford.” Inspired by the invention of the radio and the wonder of flight, Pasin named his company Radio Flyer.

Pasin’s Little Red Wagons have hauled more cargo than any other child-powered vehicle in American history and have become American icons. Radio Flyer is still a family-owned and operated business, and Pasin’s passion for craftsmanship continues to inspire the design and quality of Radio Flyer toys.

Milton Bradley  1836–1911

**Inducted 2004**  
**Company: Milton Bradley**

When you think of classic toys you played with as a child, there’s a good chance that one of them was a game from the Milton Bradley Company.

Milton Bradley, a draftsman and lithographer by trade, is credited by many for launching the North American board game industry. He founded the Milton Bradley Company when he first produced his own invention in 1860: The Checkered Game of Life. Bradley also invented the one-armed paper cutter, and was an early promoter of establishing kindergartens in American schools.

After his death, the business Bradley began continued to flourish and produced such classics as The Game of Life, Chutes and Ladders, Candy Land, and Twister, to name a few. Today, the Milton Bradley Company is part of Hasbro Games, the largest manufacturer of games and puzzles in the world.
George Ditomassi  Born 1934

**Inducted 2004**
**Company: Milton Bradley/Hasbro**

Throughout his four-decade-long career at Milton Bradley and its parent company Hasbro, George Ditomassi demonstrated his commitment to bringing what have become household brands to worldwide prominence.

Ditomassi joined the Milton Bradley Company as a production trainee in 1960 and became president in 1985. In 1990 he was named board chairman of the Milton Bradley Company and COO of Hasbro’s games and international operations. He was then named president of Hasbro International in 1997.

Ditomassi has received numerous awards for his contributions to national and local children’s charities, and has served as chairman of numerous nonprofits, including the Greater Springfield Mentoring Partnership, the Child Welfare League of America, the Western Massachusetts Children’s Miracle Network, and the corporate fundraising campaign to bring a Ronald McDonald House to Springfield, Massachusetts. Ditomassi served as board chairman of the Toy Industry Association in 1990 in addition to two terms as a member of the Association’s Board of Directors.

Neil B. Friedman  Born 1947

**Inducted 2004**
**Company: Lionel, Hasbro, Gerber, MCA/Universal, Tyco, Fisher-Price, Mattel**

Neil Friedman is honored for both his major successes in children’s entertainment and his tireless dedication to helping shape the toy industry.

Friedman began his career at Lionel, where he rose through the ranks to become executive vice president and COO. He went on to work for Hasbro, Gerber, MCA/Universal, and Tyco Preschool, at which he had great success marketing Tickle Me Elmo. After Tyco was acquired by Mattel, Friedman became president of Fisher-Price Brands, which he established as a significant force in character branded toys. He was named president of Mattel Brands after Mattel and Fisher-Price Brands merged, and served as president of U.S. business for Toys “R” Us from 2011 to 2012. He is currently CEO of Alex Brands.

Friedman has served as chairman of TIA and the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers’ Association (LIMA), and in 2007 was inducted into the LIMA Hall of Fame. He has also served as board director for the Harlem nonprofit Northside Center for Child Development, and currently sits on the board of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In 2002 Friedman received the Mamie Award, an honor that celebrates human service. Friedman also received the 2001 U.S.–China Foundation for International Exchanges’ Marco Polo Award, which recognizes visionary corporate friends of China and is the highest honor given to a foreign business leader.
Reuben B. Klamer  Born 1922

Inducted 2005
Company: Reuben Klamer & Associates

Reuben Klamer is a toy inventor and designer with more than 200 products to his credit. His gift for anticipating trends and developing consumer “must-haves” has resulted in products that have been marketed by industry leaders in more than 60 countries on six continents.

Klamer is perhaps best known as the originator of The Game of Life, which in 1981 became part of the permanent Archives of Family Life at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and is second in popularity only to Monopoly. His other major toy credits are the Fisher-Price 1-2-3 Roller Skates, the Art Linkletter Hoop, Gaylord the Walking Dog, Moon Rocks, Dolly Darlings, Erector Constructor Sets, Busy Blocks, Zoo-It-Yourself, and no-glue “snap-together” hobby kits. Klamer also pioneered the worldwide use of an unbreakable plastic called polyethylene in toys.

He founded Reuben Klamer & Associates in Beverly Hills in the 1960s, which he renamed Reuben Klamer Toylab® upon his relocation to La Jolla, California, in 1983.

Lionel Weintraub  1920–1994

Inducted 2005
Company: Ideal Toy Corporation

Lionel Weintraub had the ability to find great talent and great products, resulting in some of the industry’s most memorable hits. He started his four-decade career in the toy industry in 1941, and became president of Ideal Toy Corporation in 1962.

Weintraub was a pioneer in the industry. He was one of the first to make injection-molded toys, and, recognizing the genius of independent toy inventors, was among the first customers of Marvin Glass and Eddie Goldfarb. Ideal Toy Corporation’s Mr. Machine was one of the industry’s first toys to be advertised on television.

Weintraub was also instrumental in the introduction of the first 3-D games. His first was Mousetrap!, followed by Toss Across, Rebound, Kerplunk, and the Magic 8 Ball. Many of these games are still best sellers today.

In 1980 Weintraub and his Ideal team had the courage to launch a puzzle that they thought no one could complete: Rubik’s Cube. The world-wide success of the Rubik’s Cube led to the sale of Ideal Toy to CBS Inc. in 1982. Weintraub left the toy business with a legacy for developing great product and the reputation of serving as a teacher for some of the toy industry’s best talent.
In 1885 cousins Edwin Binney and C. Harold Smith founded Binney & Smith, which would go on to introduce the first box of Crayola crayons and become one of the most iconic brands in American history.

Innovators with a passion for color, Binney and Smith started out making red oxide pigments that coated many barns in the United States, as well as carbon black, a revolutionary black pigment that became the main ingredient in automobile tires. In 1900 they bought a gristmill in Easton, Pennsylvania, and produced school supplies, including slate pencils and dustless blackboard chalk.

In 1903 Binney & Smith came out with the first box of eight Crayola crayons, responding to teachers’ need for safe and affordable wax crayons for their students. Binney’s wife, Alice, a former school teacher, coined the name Crayola, which means “oily chalk.” The box sold for a nickel and included eight colors. In 1996 Mister Rogers helped Binney & Smith mold its 100 billionth Crayola crayon, and in 2003 the company celebrated the Crayola centennial.

With his devotion to timeless storytelling and cutting-edge innovation, George Lucas has created some of the most successful and beloved motion pictures of all time. Lucas’s third film was Star Wars (1977), which broke all box-office records, set new standards for sophistication in film visuals and sound, and garnered eight Academy Awards.

Star Wars was the first entertainment franchise that brought together film, licensing, and merchandising. Not only did Star Wars completely reshape the pop-culture landscape, it revolutionized the toy industry. Star Wars action figures established the 3¾-inch scale, which allowed kids to re-create the dynamic scenes of the movies, and spawned a community of passionate toy collectors—kids and adults alike. Star Wars set the industry “standard” on which most major movie toy lines are based today.

Lucas is chairman of the board of the George Lucas Educational Foundation, serves on the board of the Film Foundation, and is a member of the USC School of Cinema-Television Advisory Board. He is a recipient of some of the entertainment industry’s highest honors, including the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Film Institute.
Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen  Born 1947

Inducted 2008  
Company: LEGO

Born in 1947 in a small town in Denmark’s Jutland peninsula, Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen was destined to change the way children play.

The grandson of LEGO founder Ole Kirk Christiansen and today’s principal shareholder of the family-owned LEGO Group, Kristiansen’s passion for the LEGO play experience and brand started from a young age. After school he would often stop by the model shop to sit alongside master builders as they created new models. He was a skilled, imaginative builder, often inspiring and testing new model concepts and their building instructions.

Kristiansen’s pioneering ways have transformed the LEGO brand over the years. He introduced the idea of grouping models into themes to sharpen brand identity, and led the introduction of the first LEGO figures in 1974. He supported the creation of LEGO TECHNIC, advanced models for skilled builders in 1977, and pioneered the first play theme, LEGO Space, in 1979. In 1988 he endorsed a partnership with the MIT Media Lab, which led to the creation of the LEGO MINDSTORMS consumer robotics platform. He launched LEGO.com in 1996 and opened the door to licensing with the company’s first constructible entertainment property (Star Wars) in 1999.

Joan Ganz Cooney  Born 1929

Inducted 2009  
Company: Sesame Workshop

Joan Ganz Cooney helped to pioneer the concept that entertaining, enriching television could measurably enhance the lives of millions of youngsters—a concept that spawned Sesame Street, now one of the single greatest informal educators of young children in the world.

In 1968 Cooney co-founded the Children’s Television Workshop (renamed Sesame Workshop in June 2000) and together with Lloyd Morrisett launched the preschool educational series Sesame Street. She is currently chairman of the Executive Committee of Sesame Workshop’s Board.

Sesame Street, which began as an experiment, was the first preschool program to integrate education and entertainment as well as feature a multicultural cast. It has been broadcast daily since 1969 on PBS’s more than 300 stations and has been seen by millions of children in more than 140 foreign countries.
Jack Pressman 1900–1959

Inducted 2009
Company: Pressman Toy Company

Jack Pressman grew up working in his father’s variety store in Harlem selling school supplies, candy, sporting goods, and toys, which sparked his interest in the toy industry.

In 1922, Pressman founded Pressman Toy with partner Max Eibitz. In the early years, Pressman’s line consisted of all sorts of crafts, games and activities: everything from metal “Bolb Ball” (similar to Skillball) to children’s clothes pins to a toy Zellophone (similar to a xylophone), and much more.

The company’s first hit was Chinese Checkers, which it acquired the rights to in 1928. Early sets were made of wood or metal, with glass marbles.

As early as 1937, Pressman began seeing the value of licensing popular characters and matching them with new or existing products. Snow White crayon sets, Snow White cutout dolls (1938), and Little Orphan Annie bubble pipes (1937) are some early examples. He was also one of the pioneers of using injection molding machines to produce plastic parts.

Pressman was known as a man of impeccable taste and worldly knowledge. He was an astute businessman, loyal, honest, caring, and sharp. He was also a great teacher, having mentored many legendary toy professionals, among them the late Fred Kroll, inventor of Hungry Hippos.

John Lasseter Born 1957

Inducted 2010
Company: Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios

John Lasseter is a two-time Academy Award®-winning director. He oversees all films and associated projects from Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios, which have had an indelible impact on the licensed toy market and have spawned some of today’s most beloved characters.

Lasseter directed the groundbreaking and critically acclaimed films Toy Story, A Bug’s Life, and Toy Story 2, among others, and executive produced Monsters, Inc., Finding Nemo, and The Incredibles. He received a Special Achievement Oscar® in 1995 for his inspired leadership of the Toy Story team. His work on Toy Story also resulted in an Academy Award® nomination for Best Original Screenplay, the first time an animated feature had been recognized in that category. Finding Nemo (2003) became the highest-grossing animated feature of all time and won the Oscar® for Best Animated Feature Film. The Incredibles (2004) was recognized with a record-breaking 16 Annie Award nominations for its groundbreaking animation and several Best Of awards by The Wall Street Journal, American Film Institute, National Board of Review, and many others.

In 2004 Lasseter was honored with the Outstanding Contribution to Cinematic Imagery Award by the Art Directors Guild and an honorary degree from the American Film Institute. He received the 2008 Winsor McCay Award from ASIFA-Hollywood for career achievement and contribution to the art of animation.
Sam Walton  1918–1992

Inducted 2010
Company: Walmart, Sam’s Club

In 1962 Sam Walton founded Walmart, which by 1998 had become the largest toy retailer in the country and the largest general retailer in the world.

Walton was raised in Missouri, where he worked in his father’s store while attending school. Afterward, he trained with J.C. Penney Co. and in 1945 opened the first of several Ben Franklin five-and-dime franchises in Arkansas. He opened his first Walmart store in Rogers, Arkansas, in 1962, offering a wide selection of discount merchandise. Whereas other discount store chains were usually situated in or near large cities, Walton based his stores in small towns where there was little competition from established chains. Using this strategy, his company expanded to 800 stores by 1985. In 1983 he opened the first Sam’s Wholesale Club.

Walton stepped down as chief executive officer of Walmart in 1988 but remained chairman until his death, at which time more than 1,700 stores existed. In 1992 Walton received a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom for his pioneering efforts, and in 1998 he was named by Time as one of the top 100 most influential people of the 20th century.

Donald Duncan, Sr.  1892–1971

Inducted 2011
Company: Duncan Yo-Yo Company

The yo-yo, which many believe can be traced back to 500 BC, found new life in the United States in 1928 when Donald Duncan, Sr., saw Filipino native Pedro Flores’s yo-yo store and factory in Santa Barbara, California.

In 1930 Duncan purchased Flores’s production facilities and hired him to run yo-yo promotions. The Duncan Yo-Yo Company became the number-one producer of yo-yos for the next 35 years, in that span claiming 85 percent of the entire U.S. yo-yo market. In 1932 he filed for and was assigned a trademark for the word “yo-yo.”

Duncan’s early success in promoting yo-yos was due, in large part, to his mastery of publicity. Duncan convinced William Randolph Hearst, the biggest newspaper magnate of the early 20th century, to use yo-yo contests to stimulate his circulation. A single promotion in Philadelphia sold three million yo-yos in 30 days, and in 1932 the first-ever World Yo-Yo Competition was held in London, England. In honor of Duncan’s birthday, June 6th has been deemed National Yo-Yo Day.
Al Verrecchia  Born 1943  

**Inducted 2011**  
**Company: Hasbro**

Al Verrecchia is known for his industry leadership and his role in harnessing success at Hasbro. He began his toy industry career in 1965 as an accountant at Hasbro, and rose through the ranks to become CEO in 2003. While at the helm, Verrecchia was one of the prime architects of a strategy to leverage the company’s portfolio of brands in categories beyond traditional toys and games.

Prior to his tenure as CEO, Verrecchia held a range of executive positions, including CFO, president of manufacturing services, and executive vice president of global operations, among other key roles. In 2008 he became chairman of Hasbro’s Board of Directors.

Verrecchia has also assumed many leadership roles in the industry. He has served on the TIA Board of Directors, was chair of both the Finance Committee and the Budget Committee, and served as a member of the Investment Committee and the Audit Committee. While on the board, Verrecchia helped manage the overwhelming changes taking place with the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act. He worked closely with TIA staff and board members to ensure that the industry’s safety record and self-assessments were brought to the government’s attention.

Arnir Rubin  Born 1947  

**Inducted 2012**  
**Company: Funrise Toy Corporation**

Arnir Rubin has been in the toy industry for more than 45 years, starting out initially as a bubble mixer at Chemical Sundries. In 1969 he co-founded Imperial Toy Company and in 1987 he formed Funrise Toy Corporation, best known for its Tonka Lights and Sounds emergency vehicles with working sirens and lights, which it has manufactured under license from Hasbro since 1999. Funrise also produces the popular Gazillion® Bubbles line, which has become the number-one bubble brand in the country and has many popular licenses.

Rubin is the past chairman of the Toy Industry Foundation (TIF) and Toy Industry Association. In 2009 he was named to the Toy Safety Certification Program’s Oversight Council and was elected president of the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI). Rubin is a member of the ICTI Care Board of Governance.

In addition to his support of TIF, Rubin has served on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Braille Institute, and was chairman of the Board of Directors for the Institute for Families of Blind Children. He organized the Toy Run for Kids benefiting Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles, which raised donations of more than $100,000 annually.
Frederick August Otto Schwarz 1836–1911

Inducted 2012
Company: FAO Schwarz

In 2012 FAO Schwarz celebrated its 150th anniversary. Since its inception in 1862, the brand has been guided by the principles of its founder, Frederick August Otto Schwarz.

Schwarz’s career, which spanned nearly 50 years, was filled with innovation. He believed in offering unique, high-quality items, making FAO Schwarz the first toy store in the United States to import toys from European cities, introducing new specialty items, such as the Steiff teddy bear and the perambulator (now, the baby carriage) as part of the store’s assortment. Beyond offering best-in-class merchandise, Schwarz found unique ways to engage shoppers. Desiring to bring the wonder of his store to customers around the country, in 1876 he began mailing catalogs, creating one of the first mail order businesses in the United States. Schwarz was also one of the first retailers to bring Santa Claus into his store.

His vision to establish a magical toy emporium has made his namesake store beloved in the toy industry, creating memories for generations of kids worldwide.

Russell Berrie 1933–2002

Inducted 2013
Company: Russ Berrie & Company

Russ Berrie was chief executive and chairman of Russ Berrie & Company, which he started in a rented garage in 1963. Berrie built a small empire on stuffed animals and other toys—from his initial launch of Fuzzy-Wuzzies found in novelty shops and card stores, to its immediate follow-up with the Bupkis family and the SilliSculpt lines. In the 1990s the company’s Troll doll line sparked a decade of Troll-mania.

Under Berrie’s leadership, Russ Berrie & Company had become one of the world’s largest gift companies by the start of the 21st century, with more than 1,500 employees and $300 million in annual sales revenues. He formed a sales organization that set the industry standard for customer service, and assembled a creative team known for innovative materials, attention to detail, and the ability to capture and express human sentiment.

As a private individual, through The Russell Berrie Foundation and through corporate donations, Berrie supported organizations and fostered initiatives that expressed his values, passions, and vision. His support of philanthropic organizations earned him numerous awards and public recognition. *Fortune*, in its February 6, 1998 issue, honored Berrie as one of the 40 most generous Americans. Berrie also served on the TIA Board of Directors.
Judy Ellis

Inducted 2013
Company: Fashion Institute of Technology

Judy Ellis is the founder and chair of the nation’s first baccalaureate program in Toy Design, which she launched at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in 1989. The program emphasizes an ethical design approach and commitment to community.

The FIT program boasts close to 350 alumni who are working in leading toy design, manufacturing, and inventor groups throughout the United States and across the globe. An estimated 3,500 products—including Hasbro’s Transformers Mega Powerbots, Littlest Pet Shop Round & Round Pet Town Playset, and the licensed idea that was developed by Spin Master®, LTD into the 2009 Toy of the Year, Bakugan—have been designed by FIT toy design alumni.

Ellis has received two SUNY Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Excellence in Faculty Service and an award from the national Women In Toys organization for outstanding contribution to the industry. She has been invited to speak about children and design at events including The Yale University Inter-Disciplinary Bio-ethics program, the International Toy Research Association World Toy Congress, and The Smithsonian Institute Museum of American History Invention and Play exhibition, among others.

Jill Barad  Born 1951

Inducted 2014
Company: Mattel

Jill Barad joined Mattel in 1981 as an employee in the company’s novelty section. Shortly thereafter she began to rise through the ranks and was promoted to director of the Barbie brand, which she grew to nearly $2 billion worldwide at that time.

Known for her talent in spotting great products and marketing campaigns, Barad rapidly climbed the Mattel corporate ladder, holding the positions of executive vice president of marketing and product development, then president and chief operating officer. She was finally appointed chairman and chief executive officer, becoming one of four women to hold the helm of a Fortune 500 company in the late 1990s. Through mergers, acquisitions, and the use of high-level marketing skills, Barad ushered in a period of growth and prosperity for Mattel. The American Girl business, which she acquired in 1998, has grown to be one of the major brands of Mattel and within the industry.

Barad is also known for her philanthropic leadership. During her tenure, Mattel committed $25 million to name one of the country’s pre-eminent children’s hospitals, today known as Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA.
Horst Brandstätter 1933–2015

Inducted 2014
Company: PLAYMOBIL/geobra Brandstätter GmbH & Co. KG

Horst Brandstätter is the sole owner and president of geobra Brandstätter GmbH & Co. KG and head of Brandstätter Holding, based in Bavaria, Germany. Brandstätter is better known as the manufacturer of PLAYMOBIL toys. The Franconian entrepreneur, great-grandson of the company’s founder, Andreas Brandstätter, joined the family enterprise in 1952 and dedicated 63 years to the toy industry.

As a young, forward-thinking manager, Brandstätter modernized production facilities and transitioned production material for the toy assortment from tin to plastics. In 1958, the company experienced a huge sales success by first introducing the U.S. “hula hoop” trend into the European market. That year, Brandstätter also made one of his most important managing decisions and hired Hans Beck as his first model maker.

In the early 1970s Brandstätter asked Beck to think of a new play system, believing that a completely new play idea with vehicles and figures would offer more play value for children and also make it more difficult for competitors to copy his products. In 1974, Brandstätter introduced the 2¾ inch PLAYMOBIL figurine during the Nuremberg Toy Fair. The new concept of creative role play won over kids and parents, and changed children’s rooms worldwide.

Today, the company employs more than 3,700 people, and 2.6 billion PLAYMOBIL figures have been manufactured since 1974. The worldwide PLAYMOBIL turnover reached a record level of 531 million euro in 2012. An export share of 70% clearly speaks for the international focus, which is supported by 12 PLAYMOBIL subsidiaries around the world.
Jack Friedman 1939–2010

Inducted 2014
Company: JAKKS Pacific

Jack Friedman was a pioneer in the toy, licensing, and video game industries who made his mark over his 50-year career with some of the most iconic playthings of our time. Friedman co-founded JAKKS Pacific in January 1995 and served as its chairman and chief executive officer through March 31, 2010. Thanks in large part to his keen leadership, JAKKS has grown into a top-five U.S. publicly traded, diversified toy company.

Prior to founding JAKKS, Friedman led LJN Toys, guiding the company into licensed products based on TV shows—a new frontier for toy companies in the 1970s. At LJN, he launched toys for the movie E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, as well as dolls based on Michael Jackson and Brooke Shields. After the sale of LJN to MCA in 1985, Friedman went on to form video game company THQ, Inc. in 1989 and served as its CEO until 1995.

Under Friedman’s leadership, JAKKS Pacific grew its portfolio to more than 80% licensed products, including Cabbage Patch Kids, Hello Kitty, Pokémon, Care Bears, Barney, Sesame Street, Smurfs, Atari, Star Wars, Marvel characters, Disney Princess, Disney Fairies, Toy Story, Cars, Club Penguin, Pirates of the Caribbean, SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, Blue’s Clues, SLIME!, and more. Friedman also worked to diversify JAKKS’ portfolio, which now includes action figures, electronics, dolls, dress-up, role play, Halloween costumes, kids’ furniture, vehicles, plush, seasonal products, infant/preschool toys, ride-on vehicles, wagons, inflatable environments, and many more.

Friedman was also a generous philanthropist and supporter of the JAKKS Cares program, which has benefited organizations such as The Toy Industry Foundation, Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times, Special Olympics, Feed the Children, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Marine Toys for Tots, and more. JAKKS Cares has donated more than $50 million worth of toys and school supplies to children around the world, with a goal of helping under-privileged children Smile, Play and Succeed.
Arthur “Spud” Melin 1925–2002
Richard Knerr 1926–2008

Inducted 2014
Company: Wham-O Toy

Arthur “Spud” Melin and Richard Knerr were inventors, pioneers, risk takers, game changers, and “the gurus of blockbuster fads.” The two lifelong friends started Wham-O in 1948 in South Pasadena, California, and ran the company together for more than 30 years. At a time when most of the industry was east of the Mississippi, Melin and Knerr helped to pioneer a move to the west. Their first products were novelty items made in the garage of Knerr’s parents and sold via mail order in the Wall Street Journal. Their company was named after the sound produced by their first product, a slingshot.

Over the next three decades they introduced some of the most iconic toys of the 20th century, including the Frisbee, Limbo Stick, Silly String, Super Ball, Slip n’ Slide, and the Hacky Sack, among others. They were always open to original and often strange ideas, and experimented with toys themselves. In 1958, they promoted the Hula Hoop on Southern California playgrounds where they would do demonstrations and give away hoops to get the children to learn and play. Their perseverance turned the toy hoops into the greatest fad the country had ever seen: 25 million were sold in four months!

Melin and Knerr were fun first, business second. They were each in the vanguard of TV advertising, plastic manufacturing, and promotional tie-ins. More importantly, their toys have stood the test of time. Toys like the Hula Hoop and Frisbee continue to not only delight children but also appeal to new audiences nearly 60 years later.
Leslie Berger 1919–2014

Inducted 2015
Company: Cardinal Industries, Inc.

Born in Hungary in 1919, Leslie Berger lived in his native country until the outset of World War II, at which time his parents sent him to the United States to escape Nazi oppression and achieve the “American Dream.” He arrived in New York City at the age of 19 with just $7 in his pocket and lived in a walk-up apartment with several other Hungarian immigrants. Shortly after his move, Berger’s entire family was killed in the Holocaust.

Within five years of his arrival, Berger founded Cardinal Industries in a small Brooklyn loft. The company’s first games, created with a single drill press, included mah-jongg sets, dominoes, poker chip racks, and Hula-Hoops. Berger had a hands-on role in all aspects of the growing business, including manufacturing, sales, and deliveries. Always on the forefront, he was licensing before it was fashionable, securing the license to General Hospital from ABC in the early 1980s. At that time he also realized that Asia was increasingly important to the toy industry and became involved with factories there, while always maintaining a U.S. factory.

In 1963, Cardinal Industries became a member of Toy Manufacturers of America (TMA), now called the Toy Industry Association. Berger was actively involved in the Association leadership, serving on the TMA board for many years.

Berger was one of a small group of people that helped create the modern-day toy industry. He has been called a pioneer and a toy industry icon. The toy industry welcomes innovators and entrepreneurs, and he came to this country focused on being both in an industry that he loved.

Today, Cardinal Industries is one of the oldest privately owned toy businesses in the United States. Under the direction of Berger’s son and daughter, Joel and Bonnie, and his grandson, Justin, the third-generation company globally distributes a wide array of classic and licensed board games and puzzles, working with Disney, Hasbro, Mattel, Nickelodeon, Sanrio, NBC, Warner Brothers, Sesame Street, and many others. TIA recognized Cardinal Industries’ 70th anniversary at the 2014 Toy of the Year (TOTY) Awards.
Pat Feely  Born 1946

Inducted 2015
Company: Radica Games Ltd.

During his 37 years in the toy and game business, Pat Feely has been one of the toy industry’s most dedicated volunteer leaders and successful businessmen. He led the creation and growth of the Toy Industry Foundation (TIF) as chairman for eight years. As a business leader, he engineered the turnaround and expansion of two leading companies in the toy industry: Tonka and Radica Games.

Feely has been a passionate member of the TIF Board of Trustees since its founding in 2000, serving as chairman from 2000 to 2004, and again from 2010 through the end of 2014. During his eight years as TIF chairman, he oversaw the creation and growth of the Foundation, which has donated more than $100 million worth of toys to children in need, and encouraged goodwill toward the industry. Feely has also been an intrepid fundraiser for the Foundation, having served as a yearly member—and, several times, chairman—of the Fundraising Committee.

Feely’s service to the industry has also included two years as chairman of TIA and six years as an advisor to the TIA Board of Directors. As TIA chairman he was involved in the formation of the TOTY Awards as well as the ICTI Code, and demonstrated leadership by guiding his factory at Radica in China to become one of the first ICTI–certified factories. Feely also worked to diversify the TIA Board to include a wider spectrum of smaller TIA members so all voices could be heard.

An industry executive for many years, Feely led the turnaround of two troubled publicly traded toy companies: Tonka and Radica. During his nine-year tenure as President and CEO of Radica, the company tripled in size to become number two in the electronic games category and a diversified innovation leader in toy technology, before being sold to Mattel in 2006. Under his leadership, Radica pioneered force feedback (Bass Fishin’); spoken voice recognition (Girl Tech Password Journal); plug and play TV games (PlayTV); and artificial intelligence with TOTY winner 20Q.

As toy division president at Tonka, Feely and his team quadrupled Tonka’s size to number six in the industry in 1986 (prior to the acquisition of Kenner-Parker) by diversifying the company through the launch of GoBots, Pound Puppies, and Sega’s Video Game System. While at Tonka, Feely led the rebirth of a dying iconic truck product line, taking market share from 18% back to a dominant leadership position of more than 40% through creative marketing, retail promotion, and product innovation.

Retired since 2007, Feely has continued to serve the toy industry through his involvement in TIF and as a consultant and board member for several toy industry companies. He mentors startups as a member of the Pasadena Angels, and has served on the boards of Sprig Toys and Playrific.
Robert A. Iger  Born 1951
Inducted 2016
Company: The Walt Disney Company

Robert A. Iger is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Walt Disney Company. As Chairman and CEO, Iger is the steward of the world’s largest media company and some of the most respected and beloved brands around the globe. Iger has built on Disney’s rich history of unforgettable storytelling with the acquisition of Pixar (2006), Marvel (2009), and Lucasfilm (2012), three of the entertainment industry’s greatest storytelling companies.

Under his guidance, Disney has continued to maintain its position as resource for outstanding play. In addition to the expansion of the Disney Princess line and the debut of movies and TV shows that have inspired a broad range of imaginative play in diverse toy categories, he oversaw the development of two breakthrough innovations: the Disney Infinity video game system and, in 2015, Disney Playmation, a unique and immersive play experience that seamlessly marries classic, active play with popular storylines and characters.

Iger officially joined the Disney senior management team in 1996 as Chairman of the Disney-owned ABC Group, and in 1999 was given the additional responsibility of President, Walt Disney International. In that role, Iger expanded and coordinated Disney’s presence outside of the United States, establishing the blueprint for the company’s international growth today.

Iger has been named one of Fortune’s “25 Most Powerful People in Business” (2006, 2007); one of the “Top Gun CEOs” by Forbes (2009); one of the “Best CEOs” by Institutional Investor (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011); MarketWatch CEO of the Year (2006); and “CEO of the Year” by Chief Executive Magazine (2014).
## TIA Chairmen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1916-1917</td>
<td>Alfred C. Gilbert</td>
<td>The A.C. Gilbert Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918-1920</td>
<td>Harry C. Ives</td>
<td>The Ives Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Charles E. Graham</td>
<td>Charles E. Graham &amp; Co.</td>
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<td>1922-1923</td>
<td>Leo Schlesinger</td>
<td>Leo Schlesinger &amp; Co., Inc.</td>
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<td>1923-1924</td>
<td>George A. Fox</td>
<td>Milton Bradley Company</td>
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<td>1925-1926</td>
<td>A.F. Schoenhut</td>
<td>The A. Schoenhut Company</td>
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<td>1927</td>
<td>Harrie C. White</td>
<td>H.C. White Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>T.S. Dowst</td>
<td>Dowst Manufacturing Co.</td>
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<td>1933-1934</td>
<td>W.C. Lehman</td>
<td>The Lehman Co. of America, Inc.</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>W.A. Coventry</td>
<td>Grey Iron Casting Co.</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Herman G. Fisher</td>
<td>Fisher-Price Toys, Inc.</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>C.L. Kingsbury</td>
<td>The Kingsbury Mfg. Co.</td>
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<td>1940-1941</td>
<td>H.E. Luhrs</td>
<td>The Beistle Company</td>
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<td>1942-1943</td>
<td>T.W. Smith, Jr.</td>
<td>The Sun Rubber Company</td>
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<td>1944-1945</td>
<td>Carl Hedstrom, Jr.</td>
<td>Hedstrom-Union Company</td>
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<td>1946-1947</td>
<td>L.M. MacDonald</td>
<td>The Ohio Art Company</td>
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<td>1948-1949</td>
<td>Kenneth P. Fallon</td>
<td>The A.C. Gilbert Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Arthur Raphael</td>
<td>The Lionel Corporation</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>William A. Wenner</td>
<td>All Metal Products Company</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>Norman G. Wintemantel</td>
<td>Junior Toy Corporation</td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>Robert B.M. Barton</td>
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<td>1955</td>
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<td>Halsam Products Company</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>Gilbert G. Southwisk</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>Abraham Swedline</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Robert W. Muesel</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>Edward P. Parker</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>Saul Robbins</td>
<td>Remco Industries, Inc.</td>
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<td>Alfred C. Gilbert, Jr.</td>
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<td>L. John Swedlin</td>
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<td>W. R. Collette</td>
<td>Oak Rubber Company</td>
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<td>1966-1967</td>
<td>Min Horowitz</td>
<td>Gabriel Industries</td>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>William R. McCain</td>
<td>Kusan, Inc.</td>
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<td>1969</td>
<td>Lionel Weintraub</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>Fred Ertl, Jr.</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>Walter L. Ross</td>
<td>Mattel, Inc.</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>Henry R. Coords</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>Merlin H. Birk</td>
<td>Aluminum Specialty Company</td>
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<td>David A. Miller</td>
<td>Eden Toys</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>C. William Crain</td>
<td>Questor Education Products</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>John M. Sullivan</td>
<td>LEGO Systems, Inc</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Raymond P. Wagner</td>
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<td>Bernard Loomis</td>
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<td>1982</td>
<td>Richard E. Grey</td>
<td>Tyco Industries, Inc.</td>
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<td>Arnold C. Greenberg</td>
<td>Coleco Industries, Inc.</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>Stephen G. Shank</td>
<td>Tonka Corporation</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Alan G. Hassenfeld</td>
<td>Hasbro, Inc.</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Robert Cooper</td>
<td>Ben Cooper, Inc.</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>Thomas J. Kalinske</td>
<td>Universal Matchbox Group</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Jack Stoneman</td>
<td>Revell/Monogram</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>George Ditomassi</td>
<td>Milton Bradley/Hasbro, Inc.</td>
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<td>Years</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>John W. Amerman</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Barry J. Alperin</td>
<td>Hasbro, Inc.</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Gary Baughman</td>
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<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Patrick Feely</td>
<td>Radica Games Ltd.</td>
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<td>2002-2004</td>
<td>Neil B. Friedman</td>
<td>Mattel, Inc.</td>
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<td>2004-2006</td>
<td>Arnold Rubin</td>
<td>Funrise Corporation</td>
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<td>2008-2010</td>
<td>Al Verrecchia</td>
<td>Hasbro, Inc.</td>
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<td>2010-2012</td>
<td>Bryan Stockton</td>
<td>Mattel, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2014</td>
<td>Soren Torp Laursen</td>
<td>LEGO Systems</td>
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</table>
Credits
Written by Christopher Byrne, a 30-year toy industry veteran. Currently he is Content Director and partner in the review site TTPM.com. This is his fifth book on toys and the toy industry. Previously, he wrote Toys: Celebrating 100 Years of the Power of Play, published by the Toy Industry Association in 2003.
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