



Nominees for Living Induction in 2025

Candidates	Title	Professional Affiliation	Nomination History
<u>Becker, Jonathan S.</u>	President	Anjar Co. LLC.	Carryover from 2023
<u>Bhasin, Dr. Zabina</u>	Co-Founder	In Kidz	Carryover from 2023
<u>Brody, Phyllis</u>	Founder	Creativity for Kids, a Faber-Castell brand	Carryover from 2023
<u>Clark, Maxine</u>	Founder & CEO	Build-A-Bear Workshop	Carryover from 2023
<u>DiMinico, Sharon</u>	Founder, Chair	Learning Express Toys	Carryover from 2023
<u>Engle, Jim</u>	Chairman	Little Kids, Inc.	Carryover from 2023
<u>Estes, Vern</u>	Founder	Estes Rockets	Carryover from 2023
<u>Fenwick, Alan</u>	CEO	Exquisite Gaming Limited (EXG Pro)	Carryover from 2023

<u>Gershowitz, Ed</u>	EVP/Chief Revenue Officer/President/General Manager	Snorble	Carryover from 2023
<u>Kessler, Brian</u>	Chairman	Kess, Maui Toys	Carryover from 2023
<u>Pillai, G.B.</u>	Founder and Chairman	Wild Republic	Carryover from 2023
<u>Price, Shirley</u>	President	Funrise	Carryover from 2023
<u>Schwartz, Barry</u>	President	Schwartz PR	Carryover from 2023
<u>Viraponsavan, Vitool</u>	Founder	Plan Toys	Carryover from 2023
<u>Wood, Michael</u>	Founder/COO	LeapFrog	Carryover from 2023

BECKER, JONATHAN S.

President, Anjar Co. LLC.

Nominated by: Patti Becker, CEO, Becker Associates LLC

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Jonathan Becker grew up in the Toy Industry and officially joined his father, James Becker at Anjar in 1987. Jonathan has negotiated, written contracts and licensed over 1500 toys we represent from inventors, entrepreneurs and manufacturers, and our licensees have sold more than \$2.5 Billion worth of our products.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

As President of Anjar, an award-winning IP licensing and new product development agency, Jonathan is considered a world-leading expert in Toy Industry IP. Anjar relied on to provide new products, international licensing and distribution for the biggest toy companies around the world.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Jonathan has been an active member of the Toy Association for 35+ years, as a Keynote Speaker at Industry Conferences, and Professor at FIT, the first Undergraduate Toy Program in the U.S., created and supported by the TIA. Jonathan developed the curriculum and has been teaching since 1988.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Although not a manufacturer per se, Jonathan works closely with manufacturers advising them on production and legal issues to in line with the highest global standards, including sustainability, educational value, labor concerns, and other ethical manufacturing considerations.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Supports several children's and mental health charities, including organizing and participating in American Foundation of Suicide Prevention Out of the Darkness Community Walk for the past 10 consecutive years. Other donations include awards from the Toy Industry for Philanthropy, a Legacy Scholarship at UPenn, JED Foundation, and other mental health organizations.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Jonathan has built his career and his life on his reputation for integrity and expertise, which is why some of the biggest, most iconic brands in the world (\$100m+) have trusted him with their licensing program. Jonathan is also a repeatedly sought after Expert Witness because he's so highly respected.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Jonathan represents the global toy industry to the highest ethical standards, and frequently promotes the toy industry, discussing legal issues, safety, sustainability, and legacy brands through podcasts, interviews, social media, publications, legal line columns in trade magazines, and links on our websites.

Additional Comments

Jonathan Becker, President of Anjar, is an IP Attorney, recognized as one the leading licensing attorneys in the Toy Business. Jonathan was born into the industry, and officially joined his Dad, Jim, at Anjar in 1987, after practicing

law for several years at the NYC office of Ladas & Parry, an international patent and trademark firm. Jonathan is an adjunct assistant professor in the Toy Design Department at the Fashion Institute of Technology (the first program in the world to offer a BFA in Toy Design), where he co-wrote the curriculum in 1988, and has taught Business Practices for over 35 years. Many FIT graduates have gone onto stellar careers in the toy industry, including several at Anjar where they've designed some best-selling products over the past three decades. Every graduate of the FIT Program has come through Jonny's classroom. Jonathan continues to be one of the top-rated faculty member, as rated by peers and students alike.

After 50+ years as leading new product licensors and licensing agents in the Toy Industry, it's been a record year for Anjar & Becker Associates who are now a full-service award-winning licensing agency in three additional industries: Apparel, Pet Toys and Publishing. Last year, we also created a new Media and Content Division and added a new focus on Sustainability.

Several big brands we licensed last year were developed and launched in entirely new business categories.

As the exclusive global licensing agent for all Wham-O legacy brands, including Frisbee, Hula Hoop, Slip 'n Slide, Hacky Sack, Super Ball, Boogie Board, Trac-Ball and Wham-O, across all categories, we're building a global licensing program, and have signed several major deals in categories ranging from pet toys to retro toys to apparel. 2023 will bring multiple Anniversary celebrations, including a numbered, limited-edition Frisbee, with an MSRP of \$27.99!

In one major deal, we licensed Wham-O Pet Toys to Jazwares, who established an entirely new Pet Division around these iconic brands, creating over 70 original products that launched March, 2023. In addition to Jazwares salesforce, several distributors will sell the line in the U.S., with new expansion plans in the UK and Canada. Wham-O Pet Toys will be showcased at five trade shows in 2023, including the Jazwares stand at the London Toy Fair and Nuremberg Toy Fair, the MidStates Toy Extravaganza and Rendezvous all in January 2023, Global Pet Expo in March, 2023, and SuperZoo in August 2023.

In another deal, we oversaw the launch of Retroversions of Classic Wham-O products, including Frisbee, Hacky Sack, SuperBall, and Slip 'n Slide, to Winning Moves. The brand is doing well at retail and a Retro Slip 'n Slide will be available at retail in 2023 for the first time.

We also licensed Wham-O Apparel to American Eagle Outfitters for t-shirts and Wham-O promotional products.

Bentex, a leading licensed apparel company, will market Wham-O kids t-shirts, kids playwear, and adult t-shirts.

We're also the exclusive worldwide licensing agent for OKTO Clay, which was on display at the 2023 Nuremberg Toy Fair! We love supporting this vertically-integrated Ukrainian company, founded and run by women. The 3D kidult products produce incredible wall hangings, so different from traditional Play-doh. The company was founded 6 years ago, and there are distribution partners in 15 countries. We have the rights for all OKTO Clay brands. They appeal to ages: 18 months -118 years, and to avoid interruption from the War, all banking and shipments are from Poland.

Jazwares launched Big Fat Yarn at Target, Walmart and Amazon in August, 2022. These activity craft kits are targeted to girls 6+. The super soft fabric creates pillows, purses, hair accessories and scarves in minutes! No tools or knitting needles are needed. There are more than 585 million impressions of BFY on social media! Multiple YouTube videos have gone viral! There are currently over 16.4 million views (as of 2/23). There were more than 7.7 million views on social media in the first six weeks of launch and there . This YouTube Short with Piper has over 8.1 million views (as of 2/23)! Watch the Plush Decor TV commercial with over 5 million views (as of 2/23)! This is our first experience with the HUGE potential of social media going viral and we're very excited about it. Big Fat Yarn is the winner of many awards, including the Good Housekeeping Award, and it has been featured in numerous Hot Holiday Lists for 2022 (see the Recent Press page of this website). Big Fat Yarn has also been featured on at least three morning talk shows - in Tampa, Houston and NY - including the #1 daytime talk show in

the U.S., The View! In 2023, you can find the Watermelon/Round Plush Decor Kit and BFY0010, the Squishmallows Fashion Accessory Kit in Target stores and BFY0026, the Squishmallows Cozy Accessory Kit to decorate your Squishmallows with scarves and hats on Amazon. Big Fat Yarn is continuing to expand in the U.S. and around the world into the UK and Europe in 2023.

Dan Dee and Animal Adventure, our Sophie la girafe licensee, and one of the world's largest plush companies, is marketing a beautiful, extensive line of 15 Sophie la girafe brand plush products available winter, 2022. The initial line features anti-bacterial plush, super soft everyday infant plush in three sizes, light-up feature plush, an activity mat, stroller toys, a big rocking horse, and a soft infant chair, as well as mobiles. Storage cubes, baby wedges, and seasonal products are planned in the future.

Rock 'n Roller Piano is one of Fat Brain Toys top sellers in the US and Canada. Fat Brain Toys was purchased by Tomy in late 2020, and in 2022, we signed a deal for Rock 'n Roller Piano to be sold globally by Tomy throughout the rest of the world.

Anjar is well-known for marketing many games that have sold more than a million pieces. The familiarity and proven success is highly desirable after the uncertainty the world faced from Covid. Several of these included: Go for Broke, Tumball, and Fireball Island.

Go for Broke continues in 2023, the 3rd year following a completely revised and updated relaunch in 2021, in eight European countries including the U.K., France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Benelux.

Several new licensees and distributors are launching Go for Broke in 2023 in the following countries: Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Romania and Cyprus. 2023 new launches include a license by AS Company (Greece, Romania and Cyprus), and a distribution deal through John Adams for Rocco for Crack! aka Go for Broke (Italy). Continuing licensees include John Adams (UK), Lansay (France), Hutter (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), Identity (Benelux). Go for Broke in Spain, Portugal, Latin America, and the U.S. are in discussions, as is Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Stay tuned for more details.

Our award-winning dexterity game Tumball, continues to be sold in dozens of countries through our licensee and long-time customer, MegaBleu. Distribution expanded into several new countries in 2021, including the U.K. through John Adams, and Kawada in Japan.

MegaBleu, is also currently developing the Shaker Game, a newly licensed, laugh-out-loud, family-fun action game for 2-4 players of all ages.

A new mass-market version of the classic game Fireball Island: Race to Adventure, and brand extensions including, The Curse of Vul-Kar and Wreck of the Crimson Cutlass were launched and distributed in the U.S. and Internationally by Goliath since 2021. Created as brand extensions to Fireball Island, originally licensed by Anjar in 1986, it appeals to a cult-like following. Fireball Island was the third highest grossing Kickstarter game campaign of all time, raising \$2.8 million.

The multi-award-winning Timber Tots, sold by Fat Brain Toys in the U.S. for the past four years, represents another brand deal we brokered. In 2022, we added several new distributors in European countries, including QElements (Poland), and Bebeluc (Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria). Timber Tots Treehouse was a 2020 Finalist for a TOTY Award in the Playset Category and the Winner of the ASTRA Best Toy Award. The Timber Tots Schoolhouse was introduced during the pandemic in 2021, so a slightly older child could 'play school' even if they didn't have in-person classes. Bathtub Bay encourages toddlers to take a bath. The brand continues to expand each year, with new winter-themed introductions in 2022 and additional products added to the line in 2023.

According to NPD in 2021, U.S. sales of Outdoor and Sports Toys rose to \$5.9 billion in retail sales, growing 29% in 2020 vs. 2019, and an additional 8% in 2021 vs. 2020. Games and Puzzles were the second fastest growth category since 2019, with a 33% increase in 2020 vs. 2019, and an additional 14% in 2021 vs. 2020, rising to \$3.3 billion in

sales in 2021. Infant / Toddler / Preschool Toys rose to \$3.7 billion in 2021, an increase of 9% in 2020 vs. previous year and 11% in 2021 over the previous year. Plush, while still a relatively small category overall (\$1.7 billion), rose 6.5% in 2020 and 30% in 2021, largely driven by Squishmallows. We're active in all four categories.

We added a new licensee, MJM Australia for Steve Kaufman Puzzles in 2021 and MJM Australia further extended the Steve Kaufman Puzzle line in 2022, following their big success during Covid. Steve Kaufman was a protégé and apprentice of Andy Warhol, and his Pop Art is in high demand, including new NFTs and two pictures hanging at the NY Stock Exchange.

TCG Toys added new selections for their 2021 and 2022 Steve Kaufman Puzzle line because they sold so well during the pandemic.

MJM Australia also renewed their license for the beautiful Anne Geddes Plush line in 2021. The pink Baby Fairy, Baby Bee, Baby Tiger, purple Baby Bunny, and the Baby Bear sold extraordinarily well in Toys R Us and Aldi in 2022 and we expect that to continue in 2023.

Jonathan was a pioneer exploring manufacturing and licensing in India and South America. Funskool fueled our continued expansion into India, launching Othello, Jigstars, an exciting party game in a new category called puzzle-games, Backlash, a simple checkers-like game, and Tapeigami (a line of proprietary tape, and innovative processes that create animals, vehicles and other themes). As a manufacturer and exporter, these Funskool games and crafts are now available globally for licensing and distribution to all other countries.

We represent many inventors, entrepreneurs, brands, and manufacturers, and we have some tooling available, as well as already manufactured games and crafts available for distribution deals. We also have sourcing in China and India. Our new Media Division offers content around the IP we own or represent, including some wonderful children's books that can be used for all types of media, including streaming, TV commercials, and YouTube videos.

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BHASIN, DR. ZABINA

Founder, In KidZ

Nominated by: Kerry Miller, PR Coordinator, In KidZ

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

In KidZ is an Ed-tech-focused consumer product, a multi-media company with a focus on diversity and inclusivity; our mission is to educate and make change through play. In KidZ creates positive change through discovery and play through kid-focused products and content about people and traditions worldwide. Our games, activities, books, and media promote cultural fluency and a love of learning that embraces the diversity of all kinds. Learn more about In KidZ at www.inkidzco.com and follow In KidZ on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Just announced a partnership with Sesame Street

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

On the Toy Association Board

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Yes through being a DEI company that is of the utmost importance with our 3pl and manufacturing partners

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Yes including our Ukraine kit, which helps those in Ukraine during the war.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Yes

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Yes

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BRODY, PHYLLIS

Co-Founder, Creativity for Kids, a Faber-Castell Brand

Nominated by:

Michelle Seeber, Brand Manager, Creativity for Kids,

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Motivated by the restrictive approach to creativity within their childrens school system, Phyllis Brody and Co-Founder Evelyn Greenwald pioneered a new category in our industry in 1978, Creative Activities with the creation of their open-ended Creative Art Bag at Toy Fair under their original company name Creative Art Activities, Inc.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Creative Art Bags changed the trajectory of immersive crafting experiences for children. Renamed Creativity for Kids in 1980, Phyllis continued to lead the brand with an unwavering commitment to fostering childhood imagination. Pre-packing components into one kit provided a unique experience for the child but also immensely appreciated by moms.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Phyllis' longstanding support of the Toy Association included multiple TOTY submissions, support of the Genius of Play, interviews with Trends Media, and as a valued liaison between CFKs core specialty toy market customers until her retirement (2021). Phyllis mentored and encouraged colleagues within Faber-Castell to become involved in the industry.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

CFKs mission statement caught the attention of Count Anton von Faber-Castell, who then acquired it in 1999. Faber-Castell worldwide has long been known for its ecological and sustainable practices and social charter. This charter includes a ban on child labor, a guarantee of safe working conditions, and also equal opportunities.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Phyllis focused on special creative projects including collaborations with The Cleveland Institute of Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and spearheaded countless donations to The Salvation Armys Stuff the Bus program across Northeast Ohio, The Montclair Museum of Art, Cleveland Clinic Childrens Hospital, and Clevelands Children™s Museum.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Phyllis' impeccable reputation for fostering childhood imagination is widely respected and trusted throughout our industry. It has spread from designing product to her mentorship of countless retailers, sales reps, and employees that are now honored to continue her legacy of bringing creative experiences to a new generation of children.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Through Phyllis' patience and unwavering support of childrens creativity, those individuals fortunate enough to have been mentored by Phyllis continue to promote the Toy Industrys significance. Phyllis continues to share the importance of Creativity and the value of play in early childhood by frequently volunteering at local schools and childrens art museums.

Additional Comments

She was a leader ahead of her time, co-founding a start-up in the 1970s, creating an entirely new category for our industry, and successfully selling that concept to a respected, multi-century old company, all while battling the incredible challenges female entrepreneurs faced in the 1970s. Her legacy serves as an inspiration for all of us in this business.

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CLARK, MAXINE

Founder, CEO, Build-A-Bear Workshop

Nominated by:

Sharon Price John, President and Chief Executive Officer, Build-A-Bear Workshop

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

The experts said it was a fad, but the dynamic founder of Build-A-Bear Workshop, Maxine Clark, defied the skeptics, reinventing both the toy and retail industries in the process. Hailed as one of the most important changes in retail in the last century by Inc. Magazine, back in 1997, Build-A-Bear was a forerunner of recognizing the importance of elevating consumer experiences well before the term retail-tainment existed.

Today, the brand enjoys over 90% aided awareness and has sold more than 200 million furry friends. In fact, the sun never sets on this global company which has generated over \$5 Billion in cumulative revenue and will be

celebrating its 25th year in 2022. The Silver Anniversary marks an impressive milestone for this make-your-own plush company which is now beloved across multiple generations having facilitated countless heartfelt moments and memories for children and children at heart.

Part of Maxine's inspiration was based on her personal understanding of the comfort and importance of a teddy bear, from the memory of her own special childhood plush animal. Embracing that memory and encouraged by the young daughter of a friend, she was driven by a desire to create something where a child could make an emotional connection with a stuffed animal. This desire led to the famous and beloved Build-A-Bear process, where a furry friend is chosen, stuffed, dressed and named by their new owner. Importantly, this process also included adding a small satin heart to the plush animal during a signature "heart ceremony", bringing it to life through this unique bonding experience.

As Build-A-Bear has become an iconic brand, Maxine has also become an icon herself. She is a sought-after speaker with generous accolades and honors associated with entrepreneurship, education, retail, women's leadership and toys and it is well deserved.

However, her greatest pride and much of her recognition is linked to the philanthropic intent that she had for the company from the very beginning. It is clear that Maxine always had her heart in the right place, as she envisioned the company's core value of giving.

This led to the establishment of Build-A-Bear Foundation, where she still serves on the board in an emeritus position. Since its inception, the Foundation has donated more than \$18 million to deserving causes in support of its mission as well as over 300 thousand furry friends in the last five years alone, with the goal to add a little more heart to life to those in need. As impressive as that is, after retiring from her position as Chief Executive Bear, Maxine has continued to have a remarkable personal philanthropic impact through the Clark-Fox Family Foundation, where she currently serves as CEO.

Maxine Clark innately knew that a toy is much more than toy. She tirelessly nurtured and elevated that belief to create a global company with heart. Clearly, only a true visionary could have reimagined the classic teddy bear in a way that has had this much lasting positive impact.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

The creation of Build-A-Bear Workshop in itself was one of the most innovative developments in the toy and retail industry reinventing a classic toy like the teddy bear into an efficient and replicable do-it-yourself process that makes a heart-filled memory - both at the same time. The idea of putting equipment and hardware into a retail space such as industrial level equipment with a stuffing machine so that kids could actively participate in the production of a classic toy or putting in computer equipment that customers used themselves - was groundbreaking. The idea to have furry friends, as Build-A-Bear plush products are known, registered into a database as they were being given their name which included a Find-A-Bear program that could reunite lost furry friends with their owners if they were ever lost or separated, fueled a contactable marketing list of millions of connected consumers.

Under Maxine's leadership, innovation has defined Build-A-Bear's history in both products and marketing campaigns. Maxine was a pioneer in combining passion and relevance with products empowering consumers to have a voice through the merchandise they purchase. Lines featuring a cause animals, in which a portion of

proceeds was donated to charities, were created supporting animal welfare, children's literacy and health and wellness. Licensed relationships with popular entertainment properties, fashion brands and culturally relevant organizations were started and continue broadening appeal across ages, geographies and demographics.

Understanding that the hug of a teddy bear would lead to an emotional brand connection, Maxine started an outbound licensing program in order to expand the Build-A-Bear brand into other toy, consumer product and entertainment categories.

The appeal of Build-A-Bear led Oprah Winfrey to recreate a workshop space on the stage of her televised talk show so that she could personally demonstrate the fun of making a bear for a friend (in this case, Quincy Jones) as she recorded a custom message on the highly innovative record your voice sound chip that is put inside the finished product. And of course, the idea to bring the furry friend to life made the process into a mission with purpose when Maxine created the now iconic satin red heart that goes into every furry friend sold at Build-A-Bear that's over 200 million times and counting.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Build-A-Bear Workshop is a member of The Toy Association and is currently represented by President and CEO Sharon Price John who is a member at large of The Toy Association Board of Directors. In addition, CFO Voin Todorovic is a member of The Toy Foundation Board of Trustees. Given Maxine's deep roots within the industry and career before turning her passion to toys and teddy bears, she focused her active involvement within the retail real estate industry. Accordingly, Maxine was a member of the board of trustees for the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) including serving as an educator through ICSC University.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

From the first order for merchandise in 1997, with just a single store - strict attention has been made in order for Build-A-Bear products to represent high standards for quality and safety. Maxine set up processes to certify factories and pass toy safety tests complying with all standards required by all countries with stores that sell Build-A-Bear products. High-quality materials and stuffing products were chosen. Suppliers were required to be compliant with the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI), CARE (Caring, Awareness, Responsible, Ethical) certification, or comparable designation. These programs promote ethical manufacturing, from fair labor treatment to employee health and safety, in the toy industry worldwide. The commitment to quality and ethical manufacturing has resulted in less than 0.5% of products recalled from the thousands of styles that have been created in Build-A-Bear's history. And it has paid off with consumers. Over 80% of US consumers surveyed agree that Build-A-Bear is a high-quality brand and one that they can trust.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Maxine Clark gives tirelessly to numerous charities with both her time and financial support. Soon after Build-A-Bear Workshop was started, Maxine established Build-A-Bear Foundation infusing a sense of volunteerism and giving back into the company's culture. In fact, one of Build-A-Bear's corporate core values is GIVE. Maxine also developed a program called Huggable Heroes that celebrated young people that gave back to their communities with innovative charitable programs. Maxine and her husband, Bob Fox, launched a \$10 million pediatric cardiac intensive care unit with a sizable multi-million dollar personal gift to St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Maxine is a recent past member of the national Board of Trustees of Teach For America and is on the local St. Louis regional board, an Emeritus member of the Board of Trustees of Washington University in St. Louis, The Board of Directors and Executive Committee of Barnes Jewish Hospital and its Goldfarb School of Nursing, the Board of Directors of Beyond Housing, the national Board of PBS where she is the newly elected Vice Chair of the Board, and the local Nine Network of Public Media Board of Directors. She is also a board member of Parents As Teachers, New America and a member of the Committee of 200 from which she received the 2006 Luminary Award for Entrepreneurial Achievement.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Maxine Clark, founder of Build-A-Bear Workshop, is widely admired and respected by leaders across multiple businesses and industries. She has received numerous awards and recognition as a testament to the tremendous impact she has had throughout her career.

Maxine was named one of the Wonder Women of Toys by Playthings magazine and Women in Toys in 2005 and was also one of the National Finalists in Retail for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2004. In 2005, the National Association of Small Business Investment Companies made Build-A-Bear Workshop Portfolio Company of the Year; it was named one of the International Council of Shopping Centers Hottest Retailers of 2004 and the Retail Innovator of the Year for 2001 by The National Retail Federation. In 2006, Maxine was inducted into the Junior Achievement National Business Hall of Fame; in 2008, she was named one of The 25 Most Influential People in Retailing by Chain Store Age. In 2017 Maxine was named to the Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame and in 2019 was given the Missourian Award for her outstanding public service to Missouri. Build-A-Bear Workshop has also been named to the FORTUNE Best Companies to Work For list for ten consecutive years as well as named to Forbes 2021 list of the best mid-size employers. Maxine is a graduate of the University of Georgia and holds an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Saint Louis University and A Doctor of Humane Letters in Education from the University of Missouri St. Louis and an Honorary Associates degree from St. Louis Community College. In 2006, she published her first book The Bear Necessities of Business: Building a Company with Heart. In addition to her seat on the Build-A-Bear Workshop Board, Maxine is a member of the Board of Directors of Footlocker, Inc. and privately held Big Dot of Happiness.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Over 10 billion media impressions in 2020. And in 2019. The level of coverage that the company experiences today was made possible by Maxine's vision and understanding that the public is interested in the story behind the company. In fact, a story published in a local St. Louis paper before the first store was even opened about Maxine's new concept, led to the first angel investor that would help fund the early expansion of the company. As a company that has products that are in the toy category, Maxine was the entrepreneur, business expert and passionate personality that promoted the public's awareness that a product and a store could be more and could actively contribute to making the communities where we operate better because we operate there.

Additional Comments

Maxine Clark started a one-of-a-kind toy company that became a beloved consumer brand that continues to positively impact the lives of millions of consumers. Maxine created an idea that was so big that it has withstood tests such as a global recession, retail apocalypse and most recently a pandemic. She created a corporate culture

that remains committed to giving back as well as delivering a personal and unique experience for every guest that crosses the threshold of a store or clicks through their phone or computer to a digital site. Maxine is the visionary that believed that a toy company could have and fulfill a bigger mission not just sell toys, but actually add a little more heart to life. As the company that Maxine started in 1997 crosses into 25 years in 2022, what could be a more befitting recognition than being elected into The Toy Industry Hall of Fame?

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DIMINICO, SHARON

Founder, Chair, Learning Express Toys

Nominated by:

Meghan Thompson, Marketing Director, Learning Express Toys

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Sharon DiMinico opened the first Learning Express Toy store in 1987 as a fundraiser for the Groton Nursery School to provide resources to the children and supplement the school's revenue. Six months later, DiMinico opened a second store in Needham and later licensed the company's first franchise, in Andover, Mass. Today, Learning Express is the nation's leading franchisor of specialty toy stores with over 90 locations.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Under Sharon's leadership the company developed many key innovations and product discoveries:

- Easter Bunny Buffet Marketing Program
- Children's Birthday Box Gift Registry
- Special product exclusives
- First to market with Rainbow Loom phenomenon
- Skill Builders program (educating customers on enhanced skill development with toys)

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Sharon participated in the TOTY Awards for many years and worked directly with the TIA to develop play campaigns. She was also a member of the credit collective to help vendors collect any outstanding balances from stores.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Toy safety is of paramount importance to Sharon and she requires all Learning Express franchisees to comply with US Toy Safety Standards.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Sharon opened the flagship Learning Express as a fundraiser for the Groton Community School. During the holidays, LE has partnered with Toys For Tots and other charities to bring toys to kids in need. At the conclusion of every annual convention, she organizes the donation of products showcased at every LE show to a local children's charity.

An impeccable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

You will be hard-pressed to find someone more honest and giving than Sharon, which has earned her the respect of everyone in the industry. She has spent time with every vendor, small or big, to learn about their product, provide constructive feedback and give praise..

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Learning Express has helped to educate customers and communities about the benefits of toys and screen-free play through the Skill Builders Program, Genius of Play initiative and many other education campaigns. Our store owners are very responsible, charitable members of their local communities as well.

Additional comments

Sharon has devoted most of her career to the toy industry, building an empire of neighborhood toy stores throughout the US. She has helped hundreds of people realize their dreams of small business ownership and brought play to the children in so many communities. She recently retired from the CEO role in June 2022, but remains as the Founder and Chair of Learning Express and is still involved in many aspects of the company today.

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ENGLE, JIM

Chairman, Little Kids, Inc.

Nominated by: Jason Engle + Jim Gunderson, President, Little Kids, Inc.

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Hasbro - Sr Product Manager - introduced Transformer and then went on to be the Marketing director on Playskool Baby, Started Little Kids Inc and has led it to #1 Bubble Manufacture, Served on numerous TIA committees including exec committee

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

The initial Sr. Product Manager for Transformers when Transformers was introduced

Introduced No-Spill Bubble Tumbler turning category upside down

Started and built Little Kids into the #1 Bubble Company in the USA

Active involvement in the committees or work of the toy association.

Exec Committee of TIA, Treasury of TIA, Trade Show Committee

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Ethical manufacturing has always been a "thing" at Little Kids and at the forefront of product decisions and production. Little Kids has had for over 25 years its own internal checklist of ethical manufacturing.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Hasbro Children's Hospital, Toy Industry Foundation, HandiKids, Button Hole, Boston Children's Hospital, Bridge Center, Children Health Care of Atlanta, and many more

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

This is probably one area that hands down is his strength and what he is known for. Jim has built Little Kids into a world class company based on integrity and respect - would put Jim against anyone in this category.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Jim is a huge cheerleader and advocate for the industry. Always willing to talk to a local politician to help better the industry cause and encourages all young industry members to get involved

Additional Comments

When I first entered the toy industry, I would not share Jim was my father, however I quickly learned that was soon to be my biggest strength. Jim is one of the most well known and well respected individuals in the industry. He built Little Kids the right way, by hard work, teaching those around him and always doing things the right way. A true leader that has done so much to better each person he has worked with and taught over the years. Although I am submitting his name as a nominee, I have had many within the industry that believe he is well deserving of this award. Today, and every day, I am proud to call Jim Engle, my dad.

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ESTES, VERN

Founder, Estes Rockets

Nominated by:

Mallory Langford, President, Estes Industries LLC

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Vern Estes has spent 65 years in the model rocketry. In 1958, Vern founded Estes Rockets. He created the first engine machine powered by hydraulics and compressed air in 1959. In 1960 Vern contributed to the Model Rocket Safety Code. Vern is still introducing children and adults to Model Rocketry.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

In 1958 Vern created the first engine machine powered by hydraulics and compressed air. This significantly changed the model rocket industry. He designed The Astron Scout in 1960, this rocket was able to shift the center of gravity using only the engine, moving away from weights attached to rocket fins.

Active involvement in the committees or work of the toy association.

NA

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Estes Rockets prioritize the safety of their customers by adhering to strict quality standards and using the highest quality materials. They strive to minimize their environmental impact by using sustainable materials when possible. Additionally, they prioritize fair labor practices and ensure that their workers are treated with respect and dignity.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Vern Estes was and still is heavily focused on supporting children. The Boy Scouts of America and Vern worked so closely, they built a building in Pueblo, CO with Vern. Today Estes serves 500,000 students annually through free educational content and model rocketry experiences.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Vern Estes is a pillar in the Model Rocket industry. At 93 years old, Vern is an active member of the Estes Board, attends NAR events, and is being honored by NAR at its annual rocketry meet in 2025. Various Astronauts and Engineers still share how Vern impacted their lives.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Vern and Estes Rockets involvement in various educational and outreach programs have helped to foster a love of science and engineering among people and have shown how science based toys can shape a person's future career, further cementing the toy industry's place as an important and innovative field.

Additional Comments

Vern Estes is a pillar in the model rocket and toy industry. He has dedicated his life to bringing Science to the hands of children while inspiring their future endeavors.

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FENWICK, ALAN

CEO, Exquisite Gaming Limited (EXG Pro)

Nominated by:

Maria Arroja Ferreira, Marketing Executive, Exquisite Gaming Limited (EXG Pro)

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Over 4 years at Warner Brothers, over 6 at Turner, as well as being co-founder and CEO of Exquisite Gaming Limited (EXG Pro)

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Created a brand-new category at retail in the form of figural collectible device holders.

Active involvement in the committees or work of the toy association.

Yes. Member of The Toy Association Committee.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Due diligence in terms of sourcing production, has taken a lead in the industry regarding sustainable packaging solutions.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Regular donations to charities including, Light Fund, as well as participation in the Disney charity auction, and supporting on the Who Cares Wins Appeal (2020), amongst others.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Licensing international mentor and having established long-lasting relationships, some of which chose to follow him into his independent venture, Exquisite Gaming Limited.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Regularly attends and interacts with both new and well-established companies within the industry, offering support and friendship whenever possible.

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GERSHOWITZ, ED

EVP/Chief Revenue Officer/President/General Manager, Snorble

Nominated by:

Jordan Gershowitz, Head Writer, Mattel

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Ed has a career in the toy industry spanning 40+ years where he has worked for famed companies such as Hasbro, Mattel, and TYCO overseeing iconic brands such Transformers, Hot Wheels, Barbie, and more. Currently, Gershowitz now leads as the SVP/Chief Revenue Officer of the interactive, award-winning Snorble.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

An impressive salesman, marketer, and product innovator, Gershowitz has reached the heights of the toy industry serving as General Manager and President where has led and overseen the growth, sales, and global expansion for various companies like Carrera of America and Hornby.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Gershowitz has been a long time member of the Toy Association and has served on several committees including one focusing on safe advertising geared towards children.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Gershowitz has worked alongside the ICTI Ethical Toy Program to ensure that all companies he represents and works to adhere to the ICTI's code to maintaining proper procedures, safety standards, and responsible sourcing for all products.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Gershowitz is involved in multiple charitable efforts, donating toys each year to various charities including Toys For Tots and the Arielle Anacker Cancer Foundation, which has been assisting needy children with cancer for the last 12 years.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Yes

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Ed represents the Toy Industry by yearly toy fairs (domestic and international), attending and/or speaking at various conferences and educational classes, and more.

Additional comments

As someone who has worked in the toy industry for their entire career and has been a longtime member of the Toy Association, I cannot think of a better person to bestow this honor. My dad is a hardworking, kind, and amazing person who has demonstrated to me the skills of what it means to be a leader. His knowledge and experience has helped shape my career as I have had the opportunity to write television for famed companies such as Disney, Nickelodeon, Netflix, and more while writing for iconic characters such as Tom & Jerry, Snoopy, Thomas the Tank Engine, Sesame Street, and many more.

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KESSLER, BRIAN
Chairman, Kess, Maui Toys

Nominated by:

Alex Kessler, CEO, Kess Toys

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Founder of Maui Toys, and SBL Capital, And Chairman of SBL Ventures. Brian Kessler founded Maui Toys in 1988, and has been a driving force in the Outdoor play and JR Sports category for over 35 years.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Rock N Roll Top, Wave Hoop, Electro Light, Skyball, Mega Fun Noodle, Sky Bouncer, Double Dutch Jumprope, Maui Toys, Jakks Pacific, Kess, SBL ventures

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

TIA member for 35 years.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Pioneer in keeping US based manufacturing in hoop business. Reducing carbon emissions significantly over millions of product life cycles.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Yes

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Yes

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Yes

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PILLAI, G.B.

Founder and Chairman, Wild Republic

Nominated by:

Kristin Kovesdy,, Director of Marketing, Wild Republic

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

In the mid-1970s, Mr. GB Pillai started a plush business for the sole purpose of connecting children, who had seen an animal in a zoo or aquarium, with that animal by providing a lasting memory, a plush replica. In 1979 K&M International was incorporated and Wild Republic, now a global plush and toy brand, was born.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

With over 200 SKUs of plush made 100% from recycled water bottles, first to market recycled plastic plush eye, and category disruptors like huggers, Monsterkins, and Message from the Planet, Wild Republic has lead the industry in innovative product while putting sustainability in the forefront in product and process.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Has been an active member of The Toy Association for over 35 years!

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Our factories are socially audited for fair practices for all employees. We perpetually fund a girls home in India as well as a home for retired milk cows, and another for rescued street dogs. We partner with Audubon to save wild spaces and ASPCA helping dogs find loving forever homes and so much more! It is our mission to help people, planet, and animals.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Mr. Pillai's mission from the creation of the company has been to connect children with animals. He continues to drive this mission today by plush animal donations to children's hospitals around the globe and other worthy locations, we accomplish this goal while bringing smiles to children in need.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

During the pandemic, we were equipped with product and displays that would work outside. Working with our locations, we sent the displays at no charge so zoos with limited capacity and closed shops could still have retail opportunities. At Mr. Pillai's direction we also fast-tracked animal related masks focusing on zoos who were depending on every dollar in profits to continue their missions.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Mr. Pillai remains dedicated to being a shining example of a global company specializing in animal and nature related toys that in process and products are focused on being the leader in sustainability.

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PRICE, SHIRLEY
President, Funrise

Nominated by:

Arnie Rubin, Retired CEO, Funrise

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Shirley has been in the toy industry for more than 35 years and president of Funrise for the last 8 to 10 years

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Shirley was involved in the introduction multiple Funrise brands including the launch of Gazillion Bubbles and unique Tonka off road racing program marketing Tonka to dads

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Shirley served on multiple committees over many years and served on the executive committee of the association

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Shirley has always been active in confirming that suppliers abide by ethical standards

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Shirley was an organizer for the Funrise ride to Children's Hospital of Los Angeles for many years that arranged for truck loads of toys being donated to the sickest of kids and their siblings

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Shirley has an impeccable reputation among her peers and in the industry

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Shirley has always been a most responsible member of the toy industry

Additional Comments

I worked side by side with Shirley Price for over 30 years and don't know a finer person than her. She always has had the best interests of the industry as a top priority.

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SCHWARTZ, BARRY

President, Schwartz PR

Nominated by:

Christopher Byrne, President, Byrne Communications, Inc./The Toy Guy®

Elaine Wellman, Former Employee/Owner, Schwartz PR/Elaine Wellman Worldwide

Mark Kulkis, CEO, Chop Stop Inc.

Heidi Faske, Former Account Executive, Schwartz Public Relations Associates

Jerry Kapner, President, Kapner Group

Rita O'Brien, VP, HR Communications, Medidata Solutions

Kevin and Laurie Lane, Owners, Founders, Create-A-Castle

Linda D'Isa, Media Director, Freeman PR

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Barry revolutionized PR in the toy industry. For more than 50 years, he has defined the practice.

I started working with Barry in 1989. Prior to that he introduced Lego to America, and the majority of his clients were in the toy industry. Working with Will Shortz who went onto the NYT crossword puzzle, handling Pressman Toys for a long time, Toy Biz, Galoob, and many many other toy companies. He was instrumental in establishing Othello in the United States, making it one of the most popular games of its era. He created hits of games like Pressman's Gooey Louie, the home version of Jeopardy!, Wheel of Fortune, and many, many more. Barry was tireless in his efforts, and he loved it. He still does. He represented Create-A-Castle, which took the 2020 TOTY for Best Outdoor Toy. And he worked with Jerry Fryer, Jim Pressman, and Jim Becker—all of whom have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. Basically, he's a legend although.

Barry has worked in the business for 60+ years and had tons of accomplishments, including introducing Othello to the US.

Barry Schwartz has been at the forefront of toy industry public relations since the early 1960's. His accomplishments include the introduction of Lego, Hello Kitty, Rubik's Cube, Othello, and Laser Tag, all of which generated millions of units sold. He also represented three current Hall of Fame members, Jerry Fryer, Jim Becker, and Jim Pressman.

Barry has been at the forefront of innovatively promoting the Toy Industry, Toy Companies, and Individual entrepreneurs for longer than I've even known him (45 years).

For more than 50 years, Barry has been a force in Public Relations for the toy industry, always at the forefront of the practice, and one of the most creative people I have ever known. I credit him with giving me my start in the PR industry nearly 30 years ago. Under his direction, we worked on promoting and highlighting some of the industry's biggest brands, products for companies including Pressman, Galoob, Hasbro, Corgi, and many, many more. Listen to Richard and Chris Byrne talk to Barry Schwartz of Schwartz PR about his incredible career. From his start as a kid in vaudeville, Barry moved into PR (another kind of showbiz, he notes) and was the creative and PR force behind many hits of the mid-20th Century. From introducing LEGO and the Othello game to the United States, to launching Hello Kitty in America to the recent TOTY winner Create-A-Castle, Barry shares stories of how this happened and how the world of PR has evolved over nearly half a century. This is must-listen industry history, direct from someone who lived it and created it. hits: <https://globaltoynews.com/2022/05/03/toy-industry-history-barry-schwartz-on-50-years-of-making-hits/>

Barry has an unbelievable track record of bringing hits to market such as Lego, Rubik's Cube, Hello Kitty, Othello, Goopy Louie, Wham-O Frisbee, Laser Tag, Create A Castle and too many others to list!

For more than 60 years, Barry has been a powerhouse in PR for the toy industry, always at the forefront of the practice, and one of the most creative people I know. I had the honor of working with him for over 2 decades when we worked on such diverse brands as CBS Toys, Pressman, Cardinal, Galoob, Toy Biz and so many more Barry was tireless in his efforts, and he loved it. He still does as he's still active in the industry!

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

LEGO (intro to the U.S.), Gabriel, ERECTOR Set, Goopy Louie, Pressman, Toy Biz, Othello. Barry made these hits and many many more.

Lego, Othello, Jeopardy!, Wheel of Fortune, Marvel licensed toys with Toy Biz, and all his clients' toy introductions.

Othello, Hello Kitty, tons of others

Barry's PR/marketing expertise helped to propel these previously-listed products and more to number positions in their categories. His news-junky mantra led him to explore every possible media and marketing opportunity for his client's products, leading them to market prominence. All of this was done before social media!

Othello national tournament; Wheel of Fortune/Jeopardy events on behalf of Pressman Toy; introduction of Create-a-Castle to the mainstream industry

In 1960, Barry introduced LEGO to the United States through the Samsonite luggage company, and that was just one of many, many hits he created over the years. He worked with Gabriel, CBS Toys, Pressman, Toy Biz, Lewis Galoob Toys, and many, many more.

Barry literally propelled Create A Castle into the marketplace with introductions to major league hitters such as Chris Byrne The Toy Guy who was at TTPM for our first reveal and then piggy backed us on a national segment of Live With Kelly & Ryan by way of Chris Byrne!

Among many other accomplishments in 1960, Barry introduced LEGO to the United States through the Samsonite luggage company, and that was just one of many hits he created over the years. AND He was instrumental in establishing Othello in the United States, making it one of the most popular games of its era.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Not directly. However, Barry has consistently helped his clients in their work with the Toy Association.

I'm sure he must have during his 60 years publicizing toys & games!

As noted above, Barry represented three current members of the Toy Association Hall of Fame, Jerry Fryer, Jim Becker, and Jim Pressman.

Since he launched his company in 1961, Barry has been a staunch supporter of the Toy Association, the leader of today's dynamic and innovative toy and play industry. He has participated in numerous events and fundraisers across the decades and his entire career has been based on promoting the fruits of the labors of toy manufacturers here and abroad.

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Barry has been actively involved with the Marine Corps Toys of Tots program.

This does not apply, as Barry was not involved at the manufacturing level.

Beyond all this, however, Barry was a committed teacher who led by example, and the people who learned toys and PR from him are keenly aware that their successes have a lot to do with Barry's patience, inspiration, and understanding of the media as it's changed.

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Actively worked with various charities through his clients for decades.

Barry has been actively involved with the Marine Corps Toys of Tots program.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Barry has been widely respected by clients and media alike. He has defined media integrity and been a creative genius on behalf of his clients.

Barry was a committed teacher who led by example, and the people like me, who learned the toy business and PR from him, are keenly aware that their successes have a lot to do with Barry's patience, inspiration, and understanding of the media as it's changed. He loves the business and the people in the industry and has worked tirelessly supported for decades and decades. And even after all these years, he does this work with a joyful heart and spirit of a kid in a toy shop.

Barry's longevity in the toy industry is a testament to his integrity and respect. He has over 60 years of dedicated toy industry service. During that time he has mentored many professionals who are now productive toy industry experts. Barry always puts his clients in the spotlight.

Barry was/is my go-to guy in the world of juvenile product PR. There is no one I trust more in that field. I know others feel the same.

Never one to seek out the spotlight (well, not at least since his early days as a vaudeville performer), Barry prides himself on his professionalism and creativity and is a trusted advisor to many in the industry. Whether you were a seasoned pro or just starting out with a fresh idea, people sought Barry out for his expert advice - knowing they could trust him with their toy "babies".

Barry is a deeply respected, man of integrity and widely revered throughout the industry for his knowledge, expertise and connections. He brings a childlike wonder, honesty and excitement to every project he's engaged with. Now it's time the spotlight found him. As committed as he was to staying in the background and letting his clients and their toys get the attention and the glory, I believe it's high time that his contributions be recognized in the way only induction into the Toy Hall of Fame can accomplish.

Barry served as my mentor for over a decade and taught me everything I know about the toy business and PR. No job was too big or too small - but it had to be fun. And the client was always #1. Unassuming, intelligent and

beyond polite, his vast knowledge of the toy industry, media contacts and marketing, combined with his wit, old world style and charm won over many a client and made him a winner.

I will forever be grateful for the chance Barry took on me as a young professional starting out in the PR business in NYC. My first client at Schwartz PR required me take a handwriting analysis test and did my astrological chart to ensure that we were a match, and Barry was nonplussed about the whole affair. Just another day on the job at Schwartz. And I loved it too. Whether we were sampling dolls at Toys R Us' in the tri state area, or jumping in front of media as costumed characters representing our clients at Toy Fair every February in New York City, it was always an adventure with Barry Schwartz.

I love this man dearly and he is a legend. I hope you will agree and appoint him to the Toy Hall of Fame. He is truly worthy of this recognition, following his 60+ years dedicated to representing the toy industry and its players - many of whom started out as clients and became lifelong friends.

The respect for Barry in the industry is second to none. There is nobody that we mention his name to that does not know who he is and what he has brought to the toy world! He has a long history of being able to identify winning products almost instantly!

Barry was a committed teacher who led by example, and the people who learned toys and PR from him are keenly aware that their successes have a lot to do with Barry's patience, inspiration, and understanding of the media as it's changed.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Barry has devoted his career to raising the visibility of the toy industry in all media, and has stayed on top of the changes in media. He has trained many professionals...and he's still at it.

Certainly all the volumes of publicity Barry and his company have generated for his clients drastically increased awareness.

Barry has placed toys and their manufacturers in a positive way in the public's awareness, reinforcing them as contributors to the wellbeing of children and adults alike. He has emphasized that play, in all of its forms, is an integral part of our lives, bringing children and families together.

Again, over 45 years of committed public relations activity, promoting many of the most successful products and firms in the industry. Some might argue that Barry "invented" the modern discipline.

His philosophy is simple, but effective. Promoting public awareness of the toy industry through Public Relations programs must make a significant contribution to the achievement of marketing and business goals. Everything Barry undertakes is ROI oriented. Whether he implements a media campaign or a special event, the primary objective is to build awareness and drive sales.

Creativity is central to the way he works. He constantly applies dynamic, innovative thinking to clients' businesses, developing groundbreaking and attention-getting programs consistent with the client's image.

If you are looking for product promotion or special events in the industry - there is only one name that comes up time after time: Barry Schwartz. Respected. Legendary. A significant member of the toy community, someone who has made a difference, and just an all-around great guy.

Barry is deeply entrenched in the Toy community. From having connections with Chris Byrne, The Beckers of Anjar to Matt Nuccio! Essentially, anyone who's anyone in the industry knows Barry and all speak very highly of him and his accomplishments and his ability to promote affiliated product lines!

Additional Comments

As someone who has been behind the scenes of many successes, Barry is uniquely deserving of joining the clients he helped earn their spots: Jerry Fryer, Jim Pressman, Jim Becker--and many more who have yet to join this group.

Barry deserves this honor and as he's in his 90's, now is the time to induct him into the Hall of Fame. I truly hope you will consider it.

For those of us who have worked in toy industry PR, Barry has been an ongoing source of inspiration. His creativity and groundbreaking ideas are the reason that we have many of these toys (list above) in our lives. He always finds a way to make the impossible possible.

More recently, and of even higher profile was his work with Pressman Toy on Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy. I was the licensor of those properties at the time and his creativity, commitment and tireless work were essential to the success of that program.

I continue to lean on Barry for expert advice and perspective. Always a gentleman, always focused, and pretty much always right. Barry Schwartz should be recognized by the industry for what he has innovated and what he continues to contribute.

Without a doubt, Barry belongs in the Hall of Fame for the above mentioned accomplishments. His years of devotion and dedication to bringing winning products to market are surreal and his time to shine brightly has come! Someone who sits in the background making the gears turn for the bigger picture must have their genius ideas brought to the forefront. Two prime examples of his genius ideas are outlined below with regards to Rubik's cube and Lego!

Rubik's Cube:

When it became clear that demonstrating the cube in less than 10 minutes was critical to its ability to attract retailers' interest (even Erno Rubik took over 10 minutes to solve it), Barry opted to contact math teams/clubs at some universities, figuring such students would more likely be able to do so. As such (and this, long before email and social media made such contact easier), he phoned and wrote CARNEGIE MELLON, NYU, STANFORD and others, introducing them to the cube and challenging them to try to beat the 10-minute mark. Of course, also offered to send them cubes. Within three weeks, he began to get feedback (lots of word of mouth also spread in the student world), and many students were solving the cube in under 5 minutes. That's when he knew he had a potential winning product which, in turn, led to "speed" tournaments at several retailers throughout the country. And since such displays of speed are visual, that further led to TV coverage, plus books being written about how to solve the cube. And he knew they had finally "arrived" when SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN ran a cover feature in March 1981. On another somewhat related note, they were doing publicity for the OHELLO game at the same time, and Erno became a huge fan of the game, to the point where he came to some of the tournaments as an observer (he was never good enough as an OHELLO player to compete). Indeed, Barry even has a photo of him with the U. S. Champion at the International OHELLO TOURNAMENT in Brussels

Lego:

Media response to LEGO at the very beginning was only lukewarm, so Barry and team knew it was necessary to come up with a dramatic use of the incredible bricks known as Lego. Also knowing that LEGO was already popular with some prominent architects (Eero Saarinen among them) as a useful tool in building project models, he called Prof. William Breger of the Pratt Institute Dept. of Architectural Design (an absolutely "cold call" with no introduction). Happily, he was already aware of LEGO and architects, so Barry asked if Prof. William Breger would consider running a project with his students, building something with LEGO. He loved the idea and they then sent him thousands of bricks; three weeks later, he called to invite Barry to see his students' creation "the LEGO CITY OF THE FUTURE. It was a table-mounted room size fantastic "city" and he immediately knew it had TV potential. Took pix and sent them to a producer friend at the TODAY SHOW and two weeks later, it was disassembled for shipment to NBC, then reassembled (all nervous moments) resulting in a 9-minute segment. From that point on, the media loved LEGO. Even better, Barry subsequently got a call from Norman

Mailer (one of his literary heroes), who had seen the TODAY segment and wanted to build his own LEGO creation in his Brooklyn townhouse. That, in turn, led to yet another fantastic LEGO "city" and another TODAY SHOW segment.

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VIRAPONSAVAN, VITTOOL

Founder, Plan Toys

Nominated by:

Rudy Valenta, VP of Americas, Plan Toy

Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.

Vitool can be considered the father of sustainable toy manufacturing. Since founding PlanToys in 1981, we never cut down a tree to make any of our products. We have always looked to use by products and source sustainably to make our toys to be able to teach children through PLAY. All of our products are made in his hometown of Trang, Thailand. We have only used rubberwood that we sources as a byproduct of the rubber and latex industry that would have been burned otherwise. Since them, we have created new materials like PlanWood to repurpose the sawdust into a new building material. PlanToys was the first toy manufacturer to create flatpack dollhouses that customers could assemble at home - this is something that you see most manufacturers do today when manufacturing dollhouses

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

PlanWood, Flatpack dollhouses for at home assembly, Sustainable Manufacturing.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

NA

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

Yes, we are a completely transparent company and own our own manufacturing facility. All of our employees go home at the end of the day to their family and we are ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001, and SA8000 certified

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

We have created the Forest of Play in Thailand. It is a play space for families and children to play. Think Disney land but focused on play and child development

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Yes. There is to much to list but his drive to do what is right and not cut corners to teach kids through play about environment and to manufacturer sustainably when know one knew what sustainability even was in 1981.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Yes, the Forest of Play and Mom Made project.

Additional Comments

PlanToys Sustainability report to be carbon neutral by 2025

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WOOD, MICHAEL

Founder & COO, LeapFrog

Nominated by:***John Ptachick, Sr. VP of Sales & Operations, Trefl USA*****Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

Revolutionized the ELA Category from Pre-Computers to new devices (Phonics Desk, LeapPad, LeapPad Software, Learning Plush, Leapster, Leapster Software) that taught kids in a fun meaningful way. Within 10 years the company was a \$450 million dollar in revenue.

Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.

Mike Wood was the founder and guiding light at Leapfrog. In 1993 he worked with a leading professor of phonics @ Stanford University, to create the original Phonics Desk which was a ground breaking item in the ELA aisle. Mike then developed The Phonics Bus, Leap's Learning Plush and Twist and Shout Learning Toys. Leapfrog brought fun to learning, in 1999 Mike spearheaded the introduction of the LeapPad and LeapPad Software which was a TOTY winner in 1999 brought learning to the forefront of the Toy Industry. Mike continued to push for innovative learning products with the introduction of the My First LeapPad and in 2003 with the introduction of Leapster & Leapster Software developing a TOTY winning Learning Toy that merged handheld game play with learning. By 2003 Leapfrog dominate the learning category and was a major player within the global Toy Industry.

Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.

Involved in varies charities, involved in learning out reach programs with kids focused on reading and math

Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.

LeapFrog culture was doing the best for society, focused on fair labor practices

Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.

Worked vary closely with Charities for kids, was very passionate about kids in underprivileged situations and giving them an opportunity to learn and grow.

An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.

Mike was above reproach, a leader in the industry, respected by industry leaders and retailers alike.

Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.

Has donated time and finances to kids. Donated funds to kids burn centers, has a passion to help children in disadvantaged socially economic situations with time an financial resources.

Additional Comments

Mike Wood was truly a pioneer, I've been in the industry for 37 years. Started my career at Lego. He truly was the smartest most passionate person I've every worked with, he was one of a kind, really wanted to make a differences in children's daily lives.

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