



Nominees for Induction in 2020

SUMMARY LIST

Candidates	Title	Professional Affiliation	Nominated by
<u>Chan, Thomas</u>	Founder/ CEO	Playmates Toys Inc	William Beebe, SVP of Sales, Playmates Toys Inc
<u>Killgallon, William C.</u>	Chairman of the Board	The Ohio Art Company	Bill Southard, President/CEO, Southard Communications
<u>Kislevitz, Harry (Deceased)</u>	Founder	Colorforms Corporation	Bob Moog, President and Co-Founder, University Games Corporation
<u>Murdough, Jr., Thomas G.</u>	Founder	Little Tikes/Step2/Simplay3	<p>MULTIPLE NOMINATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Isaac Larian, Founder & CEO, MGA Entertainment, Inc ▪ Steve Springer, Director of Sales, Toy State Marketing Inc ▪ Dotti Franks, Director, Marketing Communications, The Simplay3 Company
<u>Steiff, Margarete (Deceased)</u>	Founder and Creator	Steiff	Liza Grando, PR Representative, Steiff
<u>Tepper, Sidney (Deceased)</u>	Toy Inventor	Toy Design and Development	Jill Cadman

THOMAS CHAN

Founder & CEO, Playmates Toys Inc

Nominated by: William Beebe, SVP of Sales, Playmates Toys Inc

Mr. Thomas Chan and his father founded Playmates Toys in 1966. In 1970 he assumed responsibility for the sales and marketing activities of the Playmates group and created one of the industry's first, truly global distribution networks. Since 1979, he has overseen all aspects of Playmates Toys operations. In 1985, Thomas' decision to transform Playmates from an original design and manufacturing company to a branded, promotional toy development and marketing company set the stage for Playmates' long-term growth. Playmates' operating and financial success is attributable to his guiding management principles of creativity, flexibility and simplicity. Thomas spearheaded Playmates Toys' entry into the U.S. market as one of the first Hong Kong companies to establish a full service, U.S. subsidiary and it's listing as the first toy company on Hong Kong's Hang Seng stock exchange. He was appointed Chairman of the Playmates Group in 1997.

He led the company's efforts to launch one of the biggest phenomenon in the history of the toy industry – the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT)”. Playmates Toys funded the production of the original TMNT TV Mini-Series, which led to the single biggest year of sales (1990) ever achieved by an action figure line. In 2015, TMNT celebrated its 30th Anniversary and Playmates Toys along with licensor Nickelodeon continue to market a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toy line that ranks among the global leaders in the action figure category. Thomas' product and brand legacy includes industry and category leading success stories such as; – multiple iterations of TMNT, Star Trek, Simpsons and Space Jam action figures, Cricket, the Amazing line of interactive dolls, Waterbabies, Baby So Beautiful dolls, Nano Virtual Pets and many more.

His commitment to quality and excellence in the design, development and marketing of character driven product has inspired imaginative play for generations of children worldwide. He combines his love of fun, high quality product with a disciplined approach to risk management. Led by Thomas, Playmates was among industry leaders in the adoption of actionable point-of-sale data analysis – analysis that he pioneered, refined and continues to improve upon to this day.

While China, and Hong Kong before it, have long been considered the supply hub of the toy industry, Thomas' vision to compete on the world stage with a portfolio of innovative proprietary products and compelling licensed entertainment and character brands has fueled Playmates growth into one of the global toy industry's leading, marketing driven enterprises. He would be the first to admit that the dedication, loyalty and longevity of the Playmates management team lies at the heart of the Playmates' success story. This team driven approach to the business speaks volumes about Thomas' inspirational leadership.

As a true industry disruptor, innovator, product professional and inspirational leader – Thomas Chan's accomplishments make him a worthy candidate for inclusion in the Toy Industry Hall of Fame.

[Return to top](#)

WILLIAM C. KILLGALLON

Chairman of the Board, The Ohio Art Company

Nominated By: Bill Southard, President/CEO, Southard Communications

Over his almost 5 decade career in the toy industry, Bill Killgallon has been a tireless advocate for toy manufacturers and consumers. Bill joined the Ohio Art Company in 1969 and served as President and CEO from 1978 until his retirement in 2016, capping a 47 year run. He has passionately, yet conservatively led the company through good times and bad, always believing that building mutually respectful and beneficial relationships between product development, marketing, manufacturing, sales and retailers will ensure a great experience for the end consumer – children.

During his tenure, Bill oversaw the development and marketing of hundreds of toys. The company's most famous brand, Etch a Sketch, enjoyed a renaissance under his leadership, extending to multiple SKU's, including travel size, pocket size, mini and many other brand extensions that maintained the integrity of the brand while ensuring its long-term viability with each new generation. Because of his stewardship, Etch a Sketch continues to be one of the most iconic toy brands ever. Today Bill serves as Chairman of the Board.

In addition to Etch a Sketch, Bill spearheaded many other successful products and the company developed both internally and with the help of talented toy inventors, products that focused on "making creativity fun" for kids of all ages and backgrounds.

Bill's commitment to quality and safety was second to none, as the company always manufactured a safe and enjoyable toy for kids. To ensure products met the exacting and ever-changing toy safety standards, he consistently held the manufacturing team and engineers to the highest standards, instituting an internal program that bundled all retailer requirements, focused on the most stringent, and using as the basis for all toys. This approach soon become the industry standard.

(Consider the contributions he made from Greg Staley, former President of the U.S. and International Divisions of Toys 'R' Us and CEO of KB Toys)

"I have known Bill since 1989 and he is a man of high character with the utmost integrity. Bill was a fabulous business partner with Toys "R" Us and KB Toys. As a gentleman, he respected honest competition and was a strong advocate for business policies and conduct that was beneficial to the entire toy industry. Former colleagues Roger Goddu, Bob Weinberg and Ernie Speranza share my belief that Bill is one of the genuine 'class acts' ... always trustworthy, reliable and sincere. He has an outstanding reputation deserving to be included in the HOF".

Bill was respected by industry peers, employees, and retailers. He always gave back to the toy industry, serving two terms on the TMA Board from 1982-1984 and again from 1998-2000.

Bill also gives back to his community and serves as a Presbyterian Elder; a member of the Masonic Organization; a former director of Columbia Ventures; and a Hillsdale College Trustee. He is a former director of State Troopers of Ohio; former YWCA Trustee as well as former Finance Chairman of the YWCA Building Committee. He is a former Chairman and Trustee of The Buckeye Institute; and a member of the Dean's Advisory Council, Fisher College of Business, the Ohio State University.

HARRY KISLEVITZ (DECEASED)

Founder, Colorforms Corporation

Nominated by: Bob Moog, President and Co-Founder, University Games Corporation

COLORFORMS began in 1951 when Harry and Patricia Kislevitz, two art students, were experimenting with a flexible vinyl material as a low-cost alternative to paint. They discovered that the vinyl stuck to the semi-gloss paint in their bathroom! ... **COLORFORMS was born.** Harry Kislevitz was a one of a kind entrepreneur and the driving force in marketing Colorforms in the 1950s and 1960s. He was one of the first to understand the power of licensing and of brand building. The Colorforms logo is one of the most iconic in the toy industry and Harry was behind the Paul Rand design. Harry was an innovative marketer in an era before digital marketing. He developed one of the first licensed-based toy companies. Early Colorforms licenses like Micky Mouse, Holly Hobbie and Popeye in the 1950s proved that licensing works. A true pioneer.! Harry also understood STEAM/STEM learning in an era where toys and education were in very different pots. Colorforms products taught the alphabet, counting, art, spatial learning in ways that had never been done before.

Harry also contributed heavily to the toy industry (His 5 sons have all had careers in the industry) and was a big supporter with his time, product and contributions.

The lasting impression of Colorforms on American culture from Harry and Pat's invention ranks alongside the Slinky and Barbie as iconic 1950s toys and earns him a spot in the Hall Of Fame.

THOMAS G. MURDOUGH, JR.

Founder, Little Tikes/Step2/Simplay3

Nominated by:

- *Isaac Larian, Founder & CEO, MGA Entertainment, Inc*
- *Steve Springer, Director of Sales, Toy State Marketing Inc*
- *Dotti Franks, Director, Marketing Communications, The Simplay3 Company*

Tom Murdough has enjoyed a career spanning more than 50 years launching three highly successful American toy companies. He founded Little Tikes (1970), and Step2 (1991), both of which today enjoy worldwide recognition and distribution. His latest venture, Simplay3 (2016) is on the same path of success. Iconic products like the Little Tikes Cozy Coupe as well as Step2's enduring categories like "Lifestyle" kitchens and "Naturally Playful" outdoor products are just a few of the successful launches under Murdough's leadership.

When he founded Little Tikes in the 70's, the belief in the children's products industry was that demand only existed during the Christmas season and yearly, manufacturers would shut down during the off-peak season. In 1978, answering the need to keep machines running and employees working, Little Tikes launched a new product line that would turn the industry upside down. The introduction of the covered "Turtle Sandbox" was an immediate success and remains in the line today! Afterwards, the Spring-Summer product line included a picnic table, play slide and pool that continue as company hallmarks.

Murdough has always been a risk taker, an idea engine and an out-of-the-box thinker – the very definition of the word entrepreneur. When starting his first company, Murdough brought the rarely used process of rotational molding to the toy industry. At a time when the whole industry was going to injection molding (automation), Murdough opted to go the other way. Soon after immersing himself in the process and admiring its flexibility, Murdough was introducing products so creative they earned him the reputation as "the godfather of rotational molding" and his company as the world's largest rotational molder.

Conventional wisdom suggested that the rotomolding process is labor intensive and therefore costly, but he recognized an advantage of low cost entry and speed in producing new product which is critically important. So, he addressed the labor drawback by attracting motivated, capable people and executing a management philosophy to treat people right by compensating them, communicating with them regularly and giving them the freedom and responsibility to get the job done right. These two key principles - Process and People plus an entrepreneurial leap of faith has resulted in a battery of innovative, high quality children's products while at all three companies.

Other examples of Murdough's out-of-the-box thinking occurred in the 70's when he broke new ground by molding an 800 consumer service number right into each product and then staffed a large consumer service department to assist the company's customers. In addition, Murdough was one of the first employers to offer onsite childcare for employee's children which also enabled the company's engineers and designers to gain valuable insight into the product development process.

Lastly, his Do It Right business philosophy has extended not only to the entire toy industry, but the communities in which his plants and offices are located. He has served on the Toy Association Board as well as several NE Ohio boards among which are Akron Children's Hospital, and Cleveland's University Hospital.

[Return to top](#)

MARGARETE STEIFF (DECEASED)

Founder & Creator, Steiff

Nominated by: Liza Grando, PR Representative, Steiff

Imagine how uninviting our world would be without plush toys. Thanks to Margarete Steiff, that unthinkable possibility will never become a reality. Nearly 140 years ago, this remarkable woman invented the world's first "stuffed animal" — changing the world of play, and the world in general — forever.

Born in 1847 in Giengen an der Brenz, Germany, Margarete was stricken with polio at 18 months old. She would spend the rest of her life in a wheelchair. In the 1850's, Margarete's parents arranged for her to take sewing lessons along with her sisters. Her mother and father felt these lessons were vitally important, since Margarete

might never marry and would have to support herself. Even though polio had left her permanently paralyzed, she learned to use her one good arm to operate a sewing machine.

By 1879, she was skilled enough to have begun making and selling clothing under her own brand name. In the process, she had founded a company which would eventually become a global operation.

While thumbing through a fashion magazine of the era, this now-accomplished seamstress noticed a pattern for a small elephant pincushion. She decided to make a few of these gifts for friends and family members. Before long, the children of Giengen had adopted and repurposed the pincushions as the world's first soft toys. An entirely new kind of plaything had been born, replacing the wooden and tin toys and hard bisque dolls of the era. Demand blossomed, and soon the Steiff zoo of pretend play animals included a huge array of creatures from the wilds of many lands.

By 1893, Margarete Steiff's company began to focus exclusively on toys and shifted away from the clothing business. The growing entity gained its biggest boost in 1897, when her gifted nephew Richard Steiff joined the firm. Richard, of course, would go on to invent the Teddy bear in 1902 — positioning the company for many decades of success with his ground-breaking innovation.

By 1907, Margarete Steiff GmbH was producing more than 1 million Teddy bears a year. And the company's presence had expanded far beyond the boundaries of the little village in southern Germany, where it all started.

Today, the Steiff assortment of more than 800 different bears and other animals is available on every continent. These superior quality toys can be found in the world's most prestigious department stores, specialty shops, and resort locations.

Margarete Steiff is a legendary figure within the toy industry, and it is hard to imagine a more fitting honoree for the Toy Hall of Fame. She became one of the world's earliest CEOs, despite her gender and disability. Even in 2019, her long-stated philosophy is still the company's guiding principle: "Only the best is good enough for our children." Because of this commitment to quality — along with her vision, courage, and determination — the world is a softer, cuddlier place for millions of "Button in Ear" fans of all ages.

[Return to top](#)

SIDNEY TEPPER (DECEASED)

Toy Inventor, Toy Design and Development

Nominated by: Jill Cadman, Daughter

Sidney Tepper was an important figure in the toy industry for 40 years. With a bachelor's and master's degree in Engineering, he began his career in the toy business in 1960 at Topper Toys. Topper was a major toy manufacturer based in Elizabeth, NJ in the 1950s through the early 1970s.

Mr. Tepper began at Topper as Chief Engineer and rapidly advanced to Vice President of Engineering and then to Senior Vice President. He was responsible for design, development, and manufacturing of Topper's extensive line. Many of the toys were extremely complex mechanical and electro-mechanical products that required innovative engineering approaches. Some of the most well-known Topper toys were:

- Johnny Lightning cars, Johnny Eagle guns, Johnny Astro space toys, etc.

- Suzy Homemaker ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, etc.
- Dawn dolls, clothing, and accessories

After Topper closed, Mr. Tepper embarked upon a successful 30-year career inventing toys and juvenile safety products. Not only did he invent new products, he also built working models and engineered the products for production. He held many patents for original designs that he licensed to a wide range of companies, including:

- Hasbro
- Sesame Street
- Ideal
- Tyco
- Kenner
- Child Guidance
- Kid Power
- Lasco
- Evenflo
- Century
- Playskol
- Sanitoy

Mr. Tepper's inventions included:

- Pop-up Pinball
- Zap Zap Racetrack
- Snoopy's Pound-a-Ball
- Mickey Mouse Bubble Barge
- Bump Um Game
- Perfect Potty Seat
- Parkomatic
- The Pelican
- Fold & Travel Infant Carrier
- Snow White's Talking Magic Mirror
- Magic Mirror Phonograph
- Baby Bounce Up
- Seamore the Seahorse tub safety toy
- Shopping Cart Carrier
- Rocking Shopping Car Seat
- Dental Care Timer
- Time-Out Teacher
- Tubbers
- Flip Cars
- Easy Passer and Easy Kicker footballs
- Catch-a-Wink crib mobile

Many of these items were promoted and advertised on national TV and became immensely popular in both the US and internationally. Children who grew up in the 1980s and 1990s knew these toys.

Mr. Tepper had a long record of accomplishment in the industry. He knew every aspect of the toy business from hands-on experience, including invention, design, development, model making, patents, sales, engineering, mold and tool production, manufacturing, etc. He was part of an elite group of independent inventors who made outstanding contributions to the industry by consistently developing innovative products.

I remember my father working out of a shop in the basement of our home, frequently going downstairs in the middle of the night when inspiration struck. His passion, dedication, and contributions to the toy industry spanned four decades. Whether as an executive at a toy manufacturer or a successful inventor, he was well known and respected by colleagues at all levels in the industry. I hope he will be recognized and honored by the Toy Association for the important role he played.

[Return to top](#)