



## NOMINATIONS FOR LIVING INDUCTION - 2027

| <b>Candidates</b>                           | <b>Title</b>                         | <b>Professional Affiliation</b> | <b>Nomination History</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b><i>Cartiglia, Joann</i></b>              | Owner/President                      | The Queens Treasures            | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Feige, Kevin</i></b>                  | President                            | Marvel Studios                  | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Handstein, Peter</i></b>              | President                            | Hape International              | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Killgallon II, Martin (Larry)</i></b> | Board of Directors, Former President | the Ohio Art Company            | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Neville, Tom</i></b>                  | VP, Sales                            | CONNETIX                        | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Rappaport, Mark</i></b>               | CEO & Owner                          | Marky Sparky Toys               | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Selevan, Jack and Russell</i></b>     | President and CEO                    | Ja-Ru Toys                      | Carryover from 2026       |
| <b><i>Woldenberg, Rick</i></b>              | Chairman & CEO                       | Learning Resources              | Carryover from 2026       |

**CARTIGLIA, JOANN**

Owner/President, The Queens Treasures

***Nominated by: Anthony Cartiglia, Manager, The Queens Treasures***

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

Joann has fought hard for child safety in toys. She has also fought hard for zero tariff's on toys

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Joann's products encourage learning and growth through play and imagination.

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

Actively working on toy safety and a voice for zero tariffs on toys.

**Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

Not only does Joann fight for toy safety but continues to educate herself on toy safety, she lives it through her efforts regarding her products.

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

Joann donates to locate charities as well as local schools.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

Joann does not cut corners or takes the easy way out, she stands behind the quality and safety of her products. As well as the importance of being part of the Toy Association.

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

Joann has been interviewed numerous times regarding zero tariffs on toys as well as the negative effect tariffs will have on small businesses in this Country.

**Additional Comments**

Joann will continue to work tirelessly for the benefit of children, small businesses, and the Toy Association for as long as she can.

**FEIGE, KEVIN**

President, Marvel Studios

***Nominated by: Rob Michaelis, VP of North America brand commercialization, hardlines and consumables, Disney Consumer Products***

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

As President of Marvel Studios, Kevin Feige has shaped the Marvel Cinematic Universe into a global powerhouse, generating billions in box office and licensing revenue, and inspiring a generation of storytelling, play, and fandom rooted in iconic characters and narratives embraced by kids and families worldwide.

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Feige is a pioneer of interconnected storytelling model in film, fueling toy demand through multi-phase franchise planning.

**Active involvement in the Committees or work of The Toy Association.****Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.****Charitable efforts benefiting children and/or children's causes.**

Kevin Feige, President of Marvel Studios, is known for his philanthropic efforts, particularly in supporting education and children's charities. He has established an endowed fund at the USC School of Cinematic Arts to foster success for cinema students. Additionally, he donated to his alma mater, Westfield High School, for the creation of a new television studio. Feige also participated in the Marvel: The Universe Unites campaign, which supported various children's charities like Make-A-Wish and Starlight Children's Foundation.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.****Promoting the public's awareness of the toy industry as a significant and responsible member of the business community.**

Feige's success in making Marvel heroes household names has elevated licensed toys as vital cultural and business assets

**HANDSTEIN, PETER**

President, Hape International, Inc.

***Nominated by: Freddie Jordan, Senior Marketing Manager, Hape***

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

Founded Hape Group in 1986, dedicating nearly four decades to the toy industry. He built it into a global leader with over 2,000 employees, earning prestigious recognitions like "Chinese Yunhe County's Wooden Toy Global Business Ambassador" for his pioneering contributions and sustained excellence.

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Spearheaded Hape's eco-innovative "Green Planet Explorers" category, making sustainability accessible and fun for children. Pioneered the industry's shift from oil-based to water-based paints through supplier collaboration, significantly advancing sustainable toy manufacturing processes globally under his leadership.

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

Under Peter's leadership, Hape International (Ningbo) Ltd. has been appointed Vice-Chairman of the China Toy & Juvenile Products Association (CTJPA) and supports CTJPA's initiatives. In May 2025, Hape successfully hosted the CTJPA President's Meeting. Furthermore, Hape supports CTJPA's B&U Care Project, donating over RMB 2 million in toys to children.

**Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

Peter Handstein is dedicated to demonstrably ethical manufacturing, ensuring fair labor, safe working conditions, and responsible and sustainable sourcing of materials. This unwavering commitment ensures the highest safety standards and quality in our toys, protects workers globally, and minimizes environmental impact.

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

Peter Handstein established the Hape Charity Fund and launched "We Care, We Share" charity project to provide material and financial support to children in need worldwide. Under his leadership, Hape Group has donated more than USD 4 million in toys and monetary aid as of July 2025.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

A recognized industry leader, Peter Handstein hosts Supplier Conferences that unite manufacturers to share best practices and drive sector advancement. His leadership has been repeatedly recognized by Children Baby Maternity Products Expo, which has named him "Person of the Year" in the maternity, baby and child industry on multiple occasions.

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

Peter Handstein elevates the toy industry's image as a vital and responsible business sector through active participation in international forums (such as the EMFD Conference), personal involvement in environmental initiatives (cleaning sandpit for children), and advocacy for child-friendly spaces (Hape Child-friendly Experiential Learning Centre).

## **Additional Comments**

Peter Handstein embodies Hape's "Love Play, Learn" slogan. As a dedicated "playvocator," his years of effort champion open-ended play, where children learn naturally through practice. Combined with his visionary leadership in sustainability, immense charity, and ethical manufacturing, he is an exemplary Hall of Fame nominee.

### **KILLGALLON II, MARTIN (LARRY)**

Board of Directors, Former President, the Ohio Art Company

#### ***Nominated by:***

***Bill Southard, Founder, CEO, Southard Communications, Inc.***

#### **Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

Martin (Larry) Killgallon II joined the Ohio Art Company in 1978, working alongside his brother Bill, a 2020 Hall of Fame inductee to grow The Ohio Art Company into one of the most successful and respected companies in the industry. As head of sales and marketing, Larry is recognized for selling more Etch A Sketches than any other person in the history of the toy industry.

#### **Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Etch A Sketch and Innovations -- introducing Pocket EAS, Travel EAS, Color EAS, Etch A Sketch Animator. Also successfully launched Magna Doodle, Betty Spaghetti Fashion Doll, Lil Sport Toy Line and Nanoblock

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

Larry was deeply involved in the international toy community as well as the global inventor world. For 35+ years he spearheaded product development working with inventors and successfully bringing them to market -- selling millions of product globally.

#### **Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

The Ohio Art Company under the stewardship of Larry and his brother Bill, led the way in ethical manufacturing practices and always meeting -- and exceeding industry standards. Ohio Art worked with the Toy Association to set some of those standards.

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

Larry has had a life-long commitment to life-long learning, serving on the board of trustees for the University of Virginia Business School. Together with his brother they founded the Killgallon Ohio Art Professorship in Business Administration at Darden. Larry has been a strong supporter of the Toys for Tots program throughout his illustrious career.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

Larry and the Ohio Art Company have always had an impeccable record of integrity and respect in the industry and responsible for bringing one of the all time iconic and classic toys to market -- Etch A Sketch.

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

Larry, together with his brother Bill, were avid supporters of the toy industry for three and a half decades, donating product, promoting not only their products but the toy industry in general and mentoring many of today's leaders in the toy industry.

Al has done many many media interviews during a long career and represented our beloved industry to the highest standards.

**Additional Comments**

Larry, together with his brother Bill, were responsible for growing the Ohio Art Company into one of the most successful, highly respected companies in the toy industry -- an image that still carries forth today. They have mentored many and their caring stewardship of the company and compassion for the industry, make him ideal for entry alongside his brother into the Toy Industry Hall of Fame

**NEVILLE, TOM**

VP Sales, CONNETIX

***Nominated by: Liza Gresko, PR Coordinator, CONNETIX***

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

After finishing college, Tom had an opportunity to work for Lego to run a territory in South Texas, which ignited his passion and love for the industry. As a role that offered extensive travel that massively appealed to him, from travelling to Billund in Denmark to attending his first New York Toy Fair, and breaking barriers in the international market in Hong Kong, they were such defining moments in his early career. Fast-forward to today, he's covered a few million airmiles all across Asia, Latin America, South America, Europe and North America which he's incredibly grateful for and why he's thrilled to be a part of the global CONNETIX team. Travelling has always been about building relationships, finding out how companies can best service and deliver products to each of those countries, and that's exactly what he's all about at CONNETIX. He works to leverage the brand's strengths and knowledge of diverse international markets to build strong, long-term partnerships that ultimately create valuable opportunities for the brand.

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Tom is the Vice President in Sales for CONNETIX across North America, Latin America and South Africa, where his role focuses on driving sales growth and building the brand across local teams. He's been fortunate to have worked in the toy industry since 1988, and has enjoyed his time immensely in all those years. He started his career with Lego, one of the largest construction and toy companies in the world, and now he's with CONNETIX, a new company on the scene that's making big waves in the 80+ countries the brand is available. Having had a lot of experience across all areas of the industry, from sales to marketing, operations, inventor relations, manufacturing (you name it!), as well as being an active committee member of the Toy Industry Association and the Toy Foundation, Tom has always enjoyed the strong sense of community and opportunities to collaborate with some really incredible people.

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

Tom is part of the Toy Association Membership Committee, is Co-Chairman and a founding member of the Toy Bank Committee, and is a Board member of the YMCA of Greater Houston.

**Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

Tom has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to ethical manufacturing throughout his career in the toy industry. As a leader at CONNETIX, he ensures that all production partners meet high standards for worker safety, fair labor practices, and environmental responsibility. Tom's dedication to transparency, sustainability and long-term ethical partnerships has helped position CONNETIX as a trusted and principled brand in the global toy market.

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

As founding member of the Toy Bank Committee, Tom connected with industry colleagues to obtain donations of toys, activities and learning aids to distribute to children in need across the world, including military families, women's shelters, etc.. Committee exceeded over \$100MM in collection / distribution during tenure.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

Tom is widely respected across the toy industry for his impeccable integrity and unwavering professionalism. Known for leading with honesty, transparency, and fairness, Tom has built a reputation as a trusted partner, collaborator and advocate for doing what's right, whether in manufacturing, business negotiations or industry leadership. His consistent respect for colleagues, customers and global partners has earned him lasting relationships and a legacy of credibility that few can match.

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

Tom actively promotes the toy industry as a meaningful and responsible contributor to the global business community. Through media engagement and industry collaboration, Tom highlights the educational, developmental and social impact of toys while advocating for ethical manufacturing and sustainable practices. At CONNETIX, he leads with purpose, showcasing how play can be both joyful and value-driven. His efforts help reinforce the industry's positive influence on families, education, and responsible business leadership worldwide.

**RAPPAPORT, MARK**

CEO & Owner, Marky Sparky Toys

***Nominated by: Ethan Rappaport, President, Marky Sparky Toys***

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

Mark has spent over 40 years inventing toys that shaped a generation's childhood. The new bow and many nerf products besides, the vortex power bat, the California chariot. He's spent the past 30 years pushing children's archery toys and other categories in his own company, Marky Sparky Toys.

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

A huge handful of Nerf products, including the original Nerf bow and the hornet, the vortex power bat, the vortex football, the California Chariot, Doinkit Darts (the first magnetic dartboard and still the best), the Faux Bow, the Bad Rap Javelin.

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

NA

**Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

3 years ago, Mark made the decision to eliminate all single use plastics from packaging, including plastic box windows, handles, and zip ties.

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

Mark is extremely active in his community. He has donated thousands of "big jack" bats and balls to the Miracle League, a baseball league for kids and adults with disabilities. Marky Sparky has also created children's archery experiences at events such as Curebound, a cancer research fundraising event held annually at Petco Park, as well as the State Beach Classic, a surf competition tribute to Banning Capps.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

Mark has always had an unimpeachable record of integrity and respect. His reps, customers, and peers can attest that his handshake binds him tighter than any contract.

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

Mark takes any chance he can to educate those around him, both publicly and privately, about the toy industry. He has been featured on multiple podcasts, including the toy industry unboxed, and has spoken at ASTRA marketplace as a presenter.

**Additional Comments**

Mark is one of few successful inventor/owners left in the toy business, and is a shining example of what the toy industry can be. Mark built his company from the ground up on the back of his hard work, innovative inventions, and consistent business decisions. For 30 years he has run a successful business creating toy after toy that stop people in their tracks at trade shows and toy stores alike, every one of those toys originating from his own invention.

**SELEVAN, JACK AND RUSSELL**

President & CEO, JA-RU Toys

*Nominated by: Steve Strachota, COO, JA-RU Toys*

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

For nearly five decades, Jack and Russell Selevan have shaped the global toy industry through innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership. As co-founders and builders of JA-RU, Inc., they transformed a family-run business into one of the largest and most respected impulse toy manufacturers in the world. Together, they are credited with patented toys, pioneering merchandising strategies, and creating joyful, accessible play experiences for children worldwide.

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Building on their father's legacy, Russell and Jack Selevan expanded Ja Ru's product innovation and IP strategy into new categories and global markets. They helped patent several novel designs and inventions, emphasizing safety, interactivity, and marketability. Including: Self-inflating noise-maker Woopie Cushion. Design patent for a toy water gun. A compact, ergonomic water toy design, optimized for impulse buyers. Glow-in-the-dark wrist toy. Elastic-tethered toy ball that glows and can be worn merging sensory and physical play.

These patents and many more are a testament to their commitment to fun, affordability, and design efficiency. Their products have sold in the hundreds of millions, distributed across more than 50 countries and carried by nearly every major retailer in North America.

They also oversaw Ja Ru's vertical integration in overseas manufacturing, ensuring products met or exceeded ASTM F963, EN71, and CCC compliance standards. Their leadership enabled Ja Ru to release hundreds of new SKUs annually while maintaining strict quality control.

While the Clip Strip® was not their invention, Jack and Russell were instrumental in popularizing its use in the toy industry, turning it into a retail mainstay for high-turn, high-margin products. JA-RU's planogram strategies and compact packaging formats set a new standard for how small-footprint toys are displayed at checkouts and endcaps, creating new revenue streams for retailers while giving kids instant access to joy.

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

Ja Ru has been a proud member of The Toy Association since 1983, demonstrating its longstanding commitment to industry standards and community contribution. Jack and Russell have both been extremely supportive of the Toy Association for over 42 years.

Russell served on the Toy Safety Standards Committee, influencing toy safety guidelines and compliance best practices. Their advocacy for strict safety standards and manufacturing integrity has earned JA-RU top safety ratings and long-term trust from buyers. Russell continues to champion the safety of toys and works extensively with industry experts and retailers to improve the quality and play worthiness of everything sold.

**Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

Jack and Russell's leadership in ethical sourcing has led Ja-Ru to become a model for responsible toy production. The company's factory partners undergo annual audits to ensure compliance with labor laws, environmental practices, and material sourcing regulations. Their stewardship has earned Ja-Ru recognition for exemplary compliance with global safety certifications, including EN71 (Europe), ASTM F963 (USA), and CCC (China).

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

Through the Selevan Family Foundation and championing charity work through Ja-Ru employees, Jack and Russell have made significant philanthropic contributions to causes benefiting children, health care, and education. They are a major supporter of Wolfson Children's Hospital, Nemours Children's Health, and UNF's College of Education. Ja-Ru has been a long-time participant in the Jacksonville Children's Christmas initiative, donating tens of thousands of toys annually to underprivileged families. Ja-Ru is also an active supporter of Jacksonville's Dreams Come True, raising money and providing the opportunity for children with life threatening illnesses to spend a day in a toy company where they can explore their creative side by making toys and just be a kid.

They have also helped promote the Toy Association's philanthropic initiatives, encouraging manufacturers and distributors to donate through programs like the Toy Bank. Their leadership underscores the value of giving back through play, influencing his peers to see trade shows as moments of impact not just commerce.

**An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

Jack and Russell are widely admired for their humility, integrity, and fair leadership style. Colleagues across the industry commend their ability to build meaningful relationships, mentor rising professionals, and make principled decisions even in high-pressure environments. They are known for living the quote, We're in the business of bringing joy to everything we do should reflect that.

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

**Additional Comments**

**WOLDENBERG, RICK**

Chairman & CEO, Learning Resources

***Nominated by:***

***Bella Li, Sr. Product Manager, Educational Insights***

***Maria Gonzalez, Office Manager, Educational Insights***

***Christing Wooler, Senior Copywriter, Educational Insights***

***Talia Chase, Marketing Coordinator, Educational Insights***

***Zella Roth, Product Manager, Educational Insights***

***Lisa Guili, VP & General Manager, Educational Insights***

***Alyssa Weiss, Sr. Marketing Manager, Retail, Educational Insights***

***Laina Hoff, Associate Brand Manager, Educational Insights***

***AnnMarie Kampiano, Senior Creative Director, Learning Resources, Educational Insights***

***Emma Bednarski, Senior HR Generalist, Educational Insights***

***Jaime Dominguez, Senior Production Artist, Educational Insights***

***Ping Hao, CEO, Brand3P Incorporated***

***Mary Jo Reutter, President, You-Betcha Interactive***

***Grace Newman-Lapinski, Product Manager, Educational Insights***

***Clair Frederick, President, MERRYMAKERS, INC.***

***Hannah Nguyen, Junior Graphic Designer, Educational Insights***

***Amy Opheim, Propreitor, C3 Marketing***

***Peggy Brown, Owner, Peggy Brown Creative***

***Kim Vandenbroucke, President, Brainy Chick, Inc***

***Jack Degnan, Game Designer, Jack Degnan Games***

***Barbara Plain, Retired, VP Product Development, Learning Resources***  
***Richard Derr, President, Kidspoint, dba Learning Express***

**Long experience and record of accomplishment in the industry.**

As the CEO of Learning Resources, a fourth-generation, family-owned, and mission-driven company that has been positively impacting children's lives for over 100 years, Rick has not only led his own company to success but also championed the values of other family-owned businesses, creating a lasting impact on the entire industry

Rick is a leader with impeccable values. His track record is long and successful.

**Innovative product, marketing introductions or significant process improvements.**

Under Rick's innovation, the company's warehouse boasts a 99.2% on-time shipping rate with a capacity of 40,000 orders per day made feasible by cutting-edge engineering and technology. The family of companies has produced internationally acclaimed toys, including TikTok-viral Kanoodle, nostalgic Pretend & Play Calculator Cash Register, and beloved Numberblocks-licensed products.

Learning Resources has produced many long-lasting products that make life better for kids.

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

Concerned with not only his own employees, but also inventors, vendors, and children who use his products, Rick embodies the values of the association. He testified before Congress to champion common sense adjustments to the CPSIA and recently took a stand against tariffs, defending the entire industry

**Demonstrated commitment to ethical manufacturing practices.**

Rick prioritizes healthy relationships with vendors, especially small businesses or family-owned factories. His team evaluates partners on a strict criterion, including how their workers are treated, sustainability efforts, and ethical practices.

A loyal partner, Rick prioritizes healthy relationships with vendors, especially small businesses or family-owned factories. His team evaluates partners on a strict criterion, including how their workers are treated, sustainability efforts, and ethical practices. His commitment to ethical manufacturing has never wavered, even in the face of growing costs.

His team evaluates partners on a strict criterion, including how their workers are treated, sustainability efforts, and ethical practices. His commitment to ethical manufacturing has never wavered, even in the face of growing costs.

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

From local charities to global donations, Rick's goal is to make educational toys accessible to all children

### **An unimpeachable record of integrity and respect in the industry.**

Rick has voiced to his employees that he values doing things the right way. This has been corroborated by the support he's received recently from others in the industry as he legally battles the tariffs. This support, from not only peers but consumers, illustrates the respect he has garnered.

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

Rick is no stranger to the public eye; he's spearheaded media campaigns, acting as a representative of the industry to the public. Positivity and self-discovery through play is the underscore of his life's work. At 77 years young, he continues to play a pivotal role as a vital contributor to childhood development and joy.

### **Additional Comments**

Rick is acutely aware of the impact of his decisions and how they reach far outside of his office walls. He works hard and carefully makes decisions to protect employees and their families, agencies and vendors that the company works with, inventors that supply future best-selling products, and the families that are affected by his products

Forward-thinking: Never one to fall behind in the industry, Rick champions cutting-edge technology and innovation. From harnessing non-traditional marketing efforts through TikTok and social media to staffing the warehouse with state-of-the-art equipment, Rick is one step ahead of the trend at all times.

Rick genuinely cares about helping kids grow. He's passionate about creating high-quality, reliable, affordable, and educational toys and games that play a lasting role in kids' lives and self-confidence. He cares about his employees and how his actions impact those around him. He encourages innovation and forward-thinking, leading his company and those around him into the future. He's made a lasting impact on the industry as a whole and deserves to be recognized for his efforts.

Rick's lifelong dedication to making toys that truly matter makes him an outstanding candidate for the Toy Hall of Fame. For him, toys have never been just about fun, they are a way for children to learn, grow, and explore the world around them. Throughout his career, Rick has worked to create high-quality, educational products that inspire curiosity, encourage problem-solving, and help kids build important life skills, all while keeping play joyful and engaging. Parents and teachers alike trust Rick's vision, knowing that the toys he champions are designed with care, safety, and a deep understanding of how children learn best. His products don't just entertain; they help children gain confidence, creativity, and collaboration skills that will benefit them for years to come.

Rick's leadership goes beyond the toys themselves. He understands that every decision he makes has a ripple effect on many people: employees and their families, inventors whose ideas bring new products to life, vendors and agencies who support the work, and, of course, the families who ultimately bring the toys into their homes. He takes this responsibility seriously, always considering the bigger picture and making choices with integrity and compassion. By supporting inventors and partners, Rick not only strengthens his own company but also helps sustain the broader toy community, ensuring that creativity and innovation continue to thrive.

Rick is also a forward-thinking leader who keeps his company at the cutting edge of the industry. Instead of waiting for trends to arrive, he spots them early and acts quickly. He has embraced new ways to connect with families, such as using TikTok and other social media platforms to reach parents and kids in fresh and authentic ways. He has also invested in state-of-the-art warehouse technology to make operations smoother, faster, and more reliable. This combination of creative marketing and smart innovation keeps his company ahead of the curve and sets new standards for the industry.

What makes Rick truly special is the way he combines heart with vision. He never loses sight of the children who are at the center of it all, while also supporting the many people who help bring toys into their hands. His dedication to kids, his respect for the bigger picture, and his forward-looking leadership have made a lasting impact on the toy world. For these reasons, Rick is a deserving and inspiring candidate for the Toy Hall of Fame.

In nearly 32 years of working with Rick Woldenberg, I've seen him champion children, families, and play-based, hands-on learning with vision, integrity, and heart. His leadership and commitment to innovation have shaped our company and made a lasting, positive impact on the toy industry.

Rick has been extremely supportive of my team's mission to drive social commerce. We were the first toy brand in the US to launch on TikTok shop in beta mode, and he believed in us being a first mover. This has paid off multiple times over with halo effects across our retailers and is an example of his letting our company lead and innovate in this space.

Recently, I have been most proud of his efforts and bravery to challenge the unfair and illegal tariff restrictions. His pro-activeness on this issue that something that will benefit not only the entire toy industry, but will have ripple effects throughout the economy in other sectors as well.

Rick's commitment to the kids we make our toys for is felt through every project we take on, every meeting we hold, and behind every product we make. Making quality, educational toys that help kids grow through play is our mission, and it's always top of Rick's mind, which trickles down into everything we do.

Rick is dedicated to creating quality, educational toys that help kids grow through play, supporting parents and educators alike. He makes thoughtful decisions that protect employees, partners, inventors, and the families his products impact. Always forward-thinking, Rick embraces innovation—leveraging social media, cutting-edge marketing, and advanced technology to keep the company ahead of the curve.

Rick is committed to creating high-quality toys for that help children grow through play, and he is a trusted partner for both parents and educators.

Never one to fall behind in the industry, Rick champions cutting-edge technology and innovation. From harnessing non-traditional marketing efforts through TikTok and social media to staffing the warehouse with state-of-the-art equipment, Rick is one step ahead of the trend at all times.

Rick is acutely aware of the impact of his decisions and how they reach far outside of his office walls. He works hard and carefully makes decisions to protect employees and their families, agencies and vendors that the company works with, inventors that supply future best-selling products, and the families that are affected by his products.

Rick's leadership has been critical to the development and nurturing of childhood education- he teaches the children of the next generation about how to think, learn from each other, take care of one's own mental health, and much much more. His team is nothing short of exceptional and inspirational. His company holds numerous industry awards, but Rick always has his eye on the future generation and what we can do as an industry to help our kids and grandkids thrive by connecting across generations through toys and play. Thank you Rick. It would be an honor to see you selected into the Hall of Fame!!

Rick is a inspirational leader who takes the time to listen to others, considers the big picture and remains committed to his company, the industry and most importantly the children and families it serves.

Rick has a clear commitment to making toys that instill a love of learning in kids of all ages. He is dedicated to enriching kids lives through play and building brands that parents and educators can count on.

Rick took the helm in the initial pushback against the tariffs, speaking to the media, testifying in Congress, laying out a clear and concise case to the public (who didn't seem to understand as they were getting incorrect messages from other sources!) Learning Resources is an exemplary company and this is a clear reflection of his leadership. He's definitely THE MAN OF THE HOUR, an ACKNOWLEDGED INDUSTRY HERO.

Rick's commitment to the craft is evident in the way he prioritizes creating quality and educational toys. He ensures a safe and motivating work environment in the midst of an ever-changing atmosphere. Rick keeps himself personally informed of every potential risk within the industry, and pivots his plan to be prepared for whatever is to come. As an employee of Rick for only one year, I can already see the many different ways he jumps through hoops to bring fourth his best self everyday, not only for those who work beside him or for him, but for kids to harbor a love for learning that they'll take with them into adulthood.

Over the decades that I've worked with Rick, I've seen up close how his leadership, innovation, and deep commitment to play-based learning have shaped his company, influenced the toy industry, and enriched the lives of children and families around the world.

It's hard to find a more stand-up man. The Toy Industry is lucky to have Rick Woldenberg.

Rick leads with both heart and purpose. He advocates fiercely for the toy industry, stands by his employees and partners, and never loses sight of the children his products serve. His integrity, compassion, and long-term vision exemplify the kind of leader we should celebrate in the Toy Industry Hall of Fame.

As his neighbor and customer in Lake Zurich, IL. I can attest to the importance of Learning Resources to our area and to the toy industry. His children (Stephen and Elana) exhibit the same traits and his latest stance on tariffs was more vocal and hard actions than any other company in our industry. We should all be thankful and grateful for his tenacity.