

William W. Rowley, Chairman and Founder of Healthnetwork Foundation, to Receive Prestigious 2026 Horatio Alger Award

Horatio Alger Association names 11 honorees to 2026 membership class, recognizing resilience, determination, and achievement

WASHINGTON, January 27, 2026—The [Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc.](#), a nonprofit that honors leaders who have overcome adversity and supports young people in furthering their education, today announced that William W. Rowley, Chairman and Founder of Healthnetwork Foundation, will receive the prestigious Horatio Alger Award and become a lifetime member of the organization. Rowley joins 10 other exceptional corporate, civic, and cultural leaders from across the country in the 2026 class of honorees. For the last 79 years, the Horatio Alger Award has recognized esteemed individuals who have achieved remarkable success despite significant challenges, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to higher education and philanthropy.

Rowley was raised in an Amish community in Middlefield, Ohio. Although his family was not Amish, 40% of his classmates were, and he embraced the simple, rural lifestyle. In ninth grade, his father was transferred to a larger town and Rowley had to adapt to a new and more competitive environment. He pursued higher education at Miami University in Ohio, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science.

After college, Rowley joined his father's business, Mercury Plastics, Inc., and became the driving force behind its rapid growth. Rowley eventually bought the company and later sold it after 46 years of leadership. During that time, he graduated from the Harvard Business School's Owner/President Management program and was named Northeast Ohio Entrepreneur of the Year. Rowley has also been involved with the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) for decades.

In 1991, Rowley created the nonprofit Healthnetwork Foundation (first known as the Inventory of Skills Foundation), which helps business leaders quickly connect with top hospitals and physicians for world-class care, while channeling their generosity back into medical research and recognizing exceptional clinicians. In more than 30 years as founder and chairman, Rowley has grown the organization to more than 8,000 members and has built strong ties to every top hospital and doctor in order to help an average of 20 families a day.

"Growing up in a small farming town taught me early on how important community is, and that lesson has stayed with me throughout my life. I hope my legacy reflects a deep commitment to helping those in need and recognizing the incredible work of our doctors—that's the footprint of the Healthnetwork Foundation," said **William W. Rowley**. "As a member of the Horatio Alger Association, I'm excited to mentor and empower the

next generation as they forge their own paths to success. There's nothing more rewarding than opening doors for others, and I'm truly honored to be part of this organization's mission."

Rowley has dedicated decades to philanthropy and service. He has received YPO's highest honor, the Hickok Distinguished Service Award, and the Steve D. Bullock Humanitarian Award for his contributions to the Greater Cleveland community. Rowley also serves on the boards of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Strang Corporation, Steere Industries, and Molded Fiber Glass Company.

"Bill Rowley's life and career are a testament to resilience, dedication, and generosity," said **James F. Dicke II, Chairman and CEO of Crown Equipment Corporation and Chairman of the Horatio Alger Association**, who nominated Rowley for the Award.

"I've had the privilege of knowing him personally, and his commitment to helping others and giving back to the community is truly inspiring. The Association is proud to welcome him as a member, where his story and leadership will continue to inspire young people to pursue their dreams."

Rowley and the member class of 2026 will be formally inducted into the Association during the 79th Horatio Alger Award Induction Ceremonies in Washington, D.C., in April. The annual ceremonies coincide with the Horatio Alger National Scholars Conference, which gives more than 100 students the unique opportunity to explore the nation's capital and to meet and learn from Association Members.

For more information about the Horatio Alger Association and its 2026 membership class, please visit www.horatioalger.org and follow the organization on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

About the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans:

Founded in 1947, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc. upholds the belief that hard work, honesty, and determination enable individuals to overcome adversity and achieve success. The Association honors exceptional leaders who exemplify this spirit by presenting them with the Horatio Alger Award and inducting them as lifetime members. Through the support of its members and friends, the Association helps promising students to pursue their dreams through higher education. In 2026, the Association has budgeted to award \$19 million in need-based scholarships to up to 1,800 students across the United States and Canada, along with academic, personal, and professional support services. Over the past 41 years, the Association has awarded more than \$275 million in scholarships to more than 38,000 deserving students. For more information, visit www.horatioalger.org.

THE HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION OF
DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS PROUDLY PRESENTS THE

2026 HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENTS

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, the Horatio Alger Association continues to induct outstanding new Members who confirm the enduring power of the American Dream.



MARIA S. BARTIROMO

THADDEUS MICHAEL
BULLARD

RICHARD REED CHILDRESS

EILEEN M. COLLINS

PETER CRAIG FARRELL

CORDIA HARRINGTON



IMRAN KHAN

BYRON ROTH

WILLIAM W. ROWLEY

ROBERT E. SEGERT

DOUGLAS S. WITCHER

Promoting and Ensuring the American Dream for Future Generations

MARIA S. BARTIROMO
*Anchor and Global Markets Editor
FOX Business Network*

THADDEUS MICHAEL BULLARD
*President
Bullard Family Foundation*

RICHARD REED CHILDRESS
*CEO
Richard Childress Racing*

EILEEN M. COLLINS
*Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
Former Space Shuttle Commander
NASA
Author and Speaker*

PETER CRAIG FARRELL
*Founder, Chairman Emeritus
and Board Member
ResMed, Inc.*

CORDIA HARRINGTON
*Founder and Co-Chair
Crown Bakeries*

IMRAN KHAN
*Founder and
Chief Investment Officer
Proem Advisors*

BYRON ROTH
*Executive Chairman
Roth Capital Partners*

WILLIAM W. ROWLEY
*Chairman and Founder
Healthnetwork Foundation*

ROBERT E. SEGERT
*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
athenahealth*

DOUGLAS S. WITCHER
*Chairman of the Board
Smart Choice*

Founded in 1947, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., fulfills its mission of honoring the achievements of outstanding individuals who have succeeded in spite of adversity and of encouraging young people to pursue their dreams through higher education. Each year the Association welcomes new lifelong Members to its ranks through the presentation of the Horatio Alger Award. In 2026, the Association looks forward to honoring and inducting eleven distinguished leaders. Horatio Alger Members serve as role models and fund undergraduate, career & technical education, and graduate need-based scholarships and services for young people across the United States and Canada.

SALUTING HORATIO ALGER MEMBERS WHO HAVE AWARDED NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MORE THAN FOUR DECADES.

\$275 MILLION
in Scholarships (1984–2025)

38,000
Scholars & Alumni in the United States and Canada



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