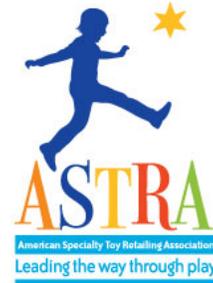


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AARONS TO RECEIVE ASTRA TOP HONOR

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE RECOGNIZED AT ASTRA'S MARKETPLACE & ACADEMY IN DENVER, CO

Chicago, Illinois (May 23, 2016)— The American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) announced today that specialty toy retailer and industry leader Steven Aarons, owner of the Barstons Child's Play toy stores in the Washington, DC area, will be honored at Marketplace & Academy with ASTRA's coveted Lifetime Achievement Award.

A veteran of over thirty years in the toy industry, Aarons was a driving force behind several ASTRA initiatives that positioned the specialty side for the industry for increased visibility among consumers—including the Best Toys for Kids awards program and Neighborhood Toy Store Day. He also provided leadership to the trade through supporting growth of ASTRA's Marketplace & Academy and encouraging ASTRA's efforts on sales tax fairness and toy safety issues.

"Honoring Steven Aarons with the Lifetime Achievement Award is our way of saying 'thank you'," said Kimberly Mosley, President of ASTRA. "He has done much to grow and strengthen the specialty toy industry, and his impact will be felt for years to come."

Aarons chaired the ASTRA Board of Directors from 2010-2011. "I have always admired Steven's ability to think through an issue and offer an intelligent response in a most positive manner," noted Michael S. Levins of innovativeKids. "He embodies the greatest sense of community and caring that is at the heart of ASTRA."

"Steven Aarons' dedication to the specialty toy industry goes deep. He researches products, constantly provides feedback to manufacturers, assists vendors with anything they need to make their products successful, and guides retailers with graciousness and kindness," said Christine Osborne of Wonder Works. Jeff Pinsker of Pressman Toy Company added, "Steven is one of the smartest retailers I've ever met. He's a great source of informed opinions—one of a small group of retailers I've called when I wanted to collect information on products, promotions, and trends."

ASTRA will present Aarons with the Lifetime Achievement Award at its annual Awards Breakfast and Business Meeting, which will be held Monday, June 6, 2016 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado. The event begins at 8 AM Mountain time.

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About the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA)

Founded in 1992, the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) is an international not-for-profit trade organization that serves more than 1,800 independent retailers, manufacturers and sales representatives in the specialty toy industry. ASTRA is a community of dedicated professionals committed to providing children with healthy, quality play materials that have high play value and are designed with a focus on what the child can do, rather than what the toy can do. ASTRA members are leaders who, through their businesses, make a positive impact on the economy and culture of the communities they serve. For more information, visit www.astratoy.org.

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