



FROM THE PAGES OF *LEADERS & LUMINARIES* E-MAGAZINE ...

Vintage Voice

The undeniable lightness of being

By Rick Dana Barlow

SCHAUMBURG, IL (June 30, 2025) – Back in the late 1980s, attorney Joel Hyatt started his Hyatt Legal Services television commercial while strolling through a library this way: “Somewhere in all these dusty lawbooks a great idea got lost ... the idea that law is for people, and people should be able to afford it ...” Fact check here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnzxuwiNqNI>.

Let’s apply it to Bellwether League Foundation™ (BLF) and its Healthcare Supply Chain Leadership Hall of Fame™.



“Somewhere in all the hustle and bustle of media saturation and provider operations a great idea got lost ... the idea that healthcare supply chain innovation and leadership can be celebrated and recognized, and the professionals who serve and have served should be able to access it and participate ...”

BLF clocks its 18th year in 2025 and looks forward to the Bellwether League Foundation Induction & Recognition Event (BLFIRE)18 on November 10, 2025, at Wayne State University in Detroit.

During three separate weeks this month, BLF unveiled the 2025 classes – three Future Famers, two Ammer Honorees and six Bellwether Honorees, the latter of which officially will be inducted into BLF's Healthcare Supply Chain Leadership Hall of Fame this fall on the eve of Veteran's Day. This brings BLF's total of honored professionals to 154 Bellwether Honorees, eight Ammer Honorees and 45 Future Famers out of hundreds of thousands of healthcare supply chain, materials management, purchasing, cooperative buying professionals from providers, distributors, manufacturers, group purchasing organizations (GPOs), consulting/service firms, academia and media since the late 1800s. That's 207 professionals spanning nearly 170 years.

And there's always more room to grow, to honor, to recognize. Maybe someday, it will be you.

Still, the curmudgeonly, cynical, dismissive, myopic, sarcastic, self-serving and skeptical have doubted, questioned and shrugged off all the good BLF has been accomplishing and granting to the profession and industry since inception in 2007.

- Read some of the background of and motivations behind BLF, just peruse its website, starting here: <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/about.php>.
- Learn how to nominate someone for consideration for any of the three BLF award categories, then click on this: <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/nominations.php>.
- Learn how the organization conducts the nomination process, then click here: <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/nominations.php>.
- Listen, read and watch all of the insights and intelligence of those affiliated with, associated with, honored by, participating in and supporting BLF, click here where you can peruse a plethora of magazine articles, newsletters, opinion columns, podcasts and videos: <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/leaders-luminaries.php>
- View photos that chronicle the history of healthcare supply chain as recorded through recognition and social activity, click here: <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/sliders/gallery.php>

- Watch videos or educational, informational and recognition events, click here: <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/sliders/videos.php>

The reason for sharing this? To bring absolute clarity where there may have been – and may still be – milky and murky opaqueness. BLF demonstrably cares about the profession and industry that fortifies and powers culture, life and civilized society as we know it. With such a staunchly dedicated and devoted advocate buttressing an essential component, participant and service to humanity, it should be impossible to diminish its value, its return, its investment and its contributions.

BLF exists to serve others. Nothing more, nothing less.

Yes, there are bushels of awards given out by lots of organizations. And that's fantastic. The healthcare supply chain profession and industry deserve recognition and honor; they yearn to be appreciated, respected, revered, validated and valued. BLF doesn't view them as competitors among a cloud of noise but as colleagues that share in a common and similar mission.

As an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable foundation, BLF considers itself to be something of an outlier.

We've heard the murmurs, musings and mutterings of critics; sometimes directly, other times as hushed conversational asides or whispers from third parties.

Among the cavils, let's start with these six:

1. *"Oh, it's just an old boys' club."* No. Don't tell that to the 44 women recognized to date. In fact, our "most vintage" inductee is a woman who helped fortify troops during the Civil War more than a century ago and arguably planted the seed that would germinate into supply chain.
2. *"They just recognize their chums, friends and pals."* No. BLF recognizes both colleagues and competitors, business partners and rivals, familiar names and unfamiliar ones. What they do (or did) shapes (or shaped) who they are (or were).

3. *"It's just a popularity contest based on who's hip on the speaking circuit or to piggyback on who receives awards by all the prominent manufacturers, distributors, GPOs and trade magazines."* No. Incidentally, BLF has received nominations from executives and professionals representing all those organizations. And their nominations go through the same discussion, research and scrutiny.
4. *"They just reward people either nominated by or employed by companies that give them money through donations or sponsorships."* No. There is no quid pro quo linking recognition to funding and vice versa. No one is required to donate funds to get recognized and no one is obligated to donate funds after getting recognized. Thankfully, a growing number of professionals (and their loved ones and colleagues) have been philanthropically generous to BLF over the years.
5. *"I'm not a member of BLF so I'm not able to participate."* No. BLF is not a membership-based organization. From a service standpoint, it's not like the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which is considered by many as "Hollywood's most exclusive club." (Yet, you could make the comparison that BLF recognition may be akin to the healthcare supply chain Oscars, but we won't nickname BLF awards the "Savies" or the "Spendies.") Anyone can get involved, participate, nominate, donate and sponsor. Those who voluntarily serve on the governing Board of Directors (BOD) are elected each year to the position. Those who voluntarily serve on the operating Advisory Council are appointed each year by the BOD to serve on committees and provide much-needed and much-valued advice. Those who volunteer to assist the Advisory Council via BLF's four committees – Nominating, Marketing, Philanthropy and Professional Development – ask to participate.
6. *"No one cares about the past anyway, so BLF won't succeed or go anywhere."* No. Believe it or not, we heard this one directly from a fairly prominent association executive a few years ago during the height of the pandemic. How myopic and short-sighted. One of the central tenets behind BLF's establishment was to ensure everyone remembers the past and those who helped establish and build the foundation upon which cooperative buying evolved into purchasing and then into materials management followed by supply chain management and all the other titular synonyms

along the way. Like anything else, we learn from the past to shape the present and mold the future.

Those who serve, have served and will serve in any capacity within BLF do so with conviction, dedication, devotion, passion, respect and sobriety. While juggling and struggling with the myriad demands of the profession, industry and organizations in which they work they still manage to find and spend the time needed to ensure BLF and its vision and mission endures. It's creditworthy.

Here are seven reasons why the Healthcare Supply Chain Leadership Hall of Fame matters:

1. **HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION:** We celebrate essential and exceptional careers and contributions, so they are remembered and revered for their part in healing people and saving lives.
2. **HALL OF FAME MOTIVATION:** Many acknowledge that supporting the Hall of Fame is noteworthy, valuable and "*the right thing to do.*"
3. **HALL OF FAME PEDIGREE:** It's *a big deal* to be recognized by industry colleagues and peers, participate in the recognition process and be seen contributing to the movement.
4. **HALL OF FAME BREADTH & DEPTH:** We honor healthcare supply chain leadership within Providers, Manufacturers, Distributors, Group Purchasing Organizations, Consulting Firms, Academia and Media.
5. **HALL OF FAME DIVERSITY:** We honor, promote, recognize and support healthcare supply chain leadership based on documented, reported and vetted accomplishments and achievements, regardless of race, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, facility location and type, and without leveraging funding of any kind in any way. This isn't rooted in quotas but on the quality of completed nominations we receive.
6. **HALL OF FAME GENEROSITY:** Donations, sponsorship and support generate and reinforce goodwill, great publicity and solid reputations.
7. **HALL OF FAME UNITY:** We represent a community of innovators, pioneers, risk-takers and thought leaders, all united under one common aim – professional and industry performance improvement – through genuine conversations, dedicated mentoring and devoted experience-sharing.

The innovators, leaders and professionals BLF recognizes and honors – and inducts into the Healthcare Supply Chain Leadership Hall of Fame – stems solely from the content of the nominations it receives. Ask anyone who has nominated someone for consideration about the nomination form. It's not easy and doesn't ask quick-hit, softball questions you can type into an A.I. chatbot or cut-and-paste from the internet. BLF's nomination forms have been carefully designed and crafted with thoughtful and probing questions to extract the salient details of a professional's career that befit his or her status and represent their contributions to the profession and industry.

Since inception, BLF's nomination assessment process has evolved in complexity to assess and score quantitative and qualitative measures in a way that blends art with elements of science, tempering subjectivity within a mindfully fair and balanced approach.

From a philanthropic perspective, we've also kept donation and sponsorship levels as well as event donations (e.g., tickets and sponsorships) as consistent and controlled as possible, regardless of economic roiling and geopolitical maneuvering. In fact, the sticker price for a ticket to the Bellwether League Foundation Induction & Recognition Event (BLFIRE) has been the same since the first one in October 2008, which occurred during the timeframe of a noteworthy stock market crash.

We steadfastly practice due diligence with the funds and resources given to us and manage how we apply and use donations and sponsorships responsibly. All funds are reinvested into the foundation, which includes operations, events, scholarships and student projects. Who profits? Those who are honored and recognized, those who financially and operationally support the foundation and those of you who witness the results of effort and achievement.

For us, this represents as much a vintage viewpoint and voice as it does a contemporary one. Why? Because it's cemented in an attitude and an ethic unaffected by modernity and technology. That's the common thread woven throughout the tapestry of fortification and fulfillment, fundamental to how we work, partner, operate, collaborate and appreciate one another.

It's a central tenet that shouldn't get lost.

You can ensure that happens and make a difference with us.

Rick Dana Barlow serves as Co-Founder and Executive Director, Bellwether League Foundation, and Executive Editor of BLF's Leaders & Luminaries e-magazine. Barlow's column, Vintage Voice, is posted/published in Leaders & Luminaries and here. Barlow has nearly four decades of journalistic editorial experience, more than 30 years of which have been dedicated to covering a cornucopia of healthcare operational topics, including supply chain, sterile processing, surgical services, infection prevention, information technology, diagnostic imaging and radiology and laboratory for a variety of print and online media outlets. For more, visit Bellwether League Foundation's web site at <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/> and Barlow's online profile at <https://rickdanabarlow.wixsite.com/wingfootmedia>.