

International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Its First Hall of Fame Class

The International Towing Museum in Chattanooga, TN, celebrates 40 years of honoring towing industry leaders worldwide at Museum Weekend 2026.

CHATTANOOGA, TN, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum [ITRHFM] proudly commemorates the 40th anniversary of its inaugural Hall of Fame Class of 1986 with the induction of the Class of 2026.

Established by the Friends of Towing, the predecessor to the Towing Museum, the first Hall of Fame class consisted of 27 distinguished members representing six countries: Australia, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These trailblazers were honored for their innovation, leadership, and lasting impact on an industry that keeps the world moving.

Among the inaugural inductees were two members of the Holmes family — widely recognized as the founding family of the U.S. towing and recovery industry. Their legacy began with Ernest Holmes Sr., inventor of the first practical tow truck, whose ingenuity laid the foundation for modern towing and recovery services. The Holmes name remains synonymous with innovation, resilience, and service excellence throughout the profession.

“The 1986 class set the standard for what it means to be a Hall of Fame inductee,” said Bill Gratziana, ITRHFM president and a Hall of Fame member. “These individuals not only built businesses — they built an industry. Their courage, creativity, and commitment continue to inspire towing and recovery professionals around the world.”



From its original 27 inductees, the Hall of Fame has grown to include 382 members representing 18 countries, reflecting the global reach and essential role of the towing and recovery profession. Each honoree embodies the values of integrity, innovation, and dedication to service that define the industry.

Located in Chattanooga, Tennessee — the birthplace of the tow truck — the Museum preserves and celebrates the rich history of towing and recovery while educating the public about the industry's critical contributions to roadway safety and transportation infrastructure.



Joanne Blyton, Billings, MT, accepting her induction at Museum Weekend 2025.

As the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum marks this 40-year milestone, it reaffirms its commitment to honoring the pioneers of the past, celebrating the leaders of today, and inspiring the innovators of tomorrow.

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*Bill Gratziana, ITRHFM
president*

For more information about the Hall of Fame and to view portraits of each inductee, visit the Museum in Chattanooga. Read inductee bios and learn more about the upcoming celebration at [TowingMuseum.com](https://www.towingmuseum.com).

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