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◀ Dorothy Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Subaru demonstrates her commitment to education by supporting Operation Outreach-USA, a program that provides books to elementary-school students and teacher guides to educators to promote literacy and character building.

The Drive for Better

Each year, the **TIME Dealer of the Year Award**, sponsored by **Ally**, celebrates automobile dealers who are doing it right—both on and off the lot.



At Wilsonville Toyota in Oregon, Dave Jachter implemented a “no bull” one-person, one-price policy to improve the retail purchase experience. Outside the showroom, his straight-shooting style has helped raise millions of dollars for local charities.

In Rockville, Md., Dorothy Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Subaru created a unique work-study partnership between local auto dealers and the school district. That was 40 years ago, and she’s still big on education, supporting Operation Outreach-USA, which provides books to elementary-school students and teacher guides to educators to promote literacy and character building.

At Sellers Buick GMC and Sellers Subaru in suburban Detroit, Sam Slaughter has received four nods as one of the 100 Best Dealerships to Work For by *Automotive News* because of the way he has positively impacted his employees. As a board member and past president of the Foundation for Youth and Families in Farmington Hills, Mich., Slaughter has had a similar impact off the lot, too.

These are just three of the 47 nominees for the 2018 TIME Dealer of the Year Award, the industry’s highest accolade given to auto dealers for outstanding performance in their industry and in their communities.

“It is, hands down, the most prestigious award that a new-car dealer can earn,” says Peter Welch, president and CEO of the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA). “The TIME Dealer of the Year Award distinguishes a dealer as an exemplar in the auto industry—someone who not only has attained business success but is also a pillar of the community. Dealers are not just business owners. They are philanthropists, civic leaders and activists. There’s nothing better than being recognized for distinguished service and giving back to your community.”

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HERE'S TO THE DEALERS DOING IT RIGHT.

- AMBROSE BARBUTO • MICHAEL BASIL • JAMES BENSON, JR. • JP BISHOP • GARRY BRAYKO
- BRAD BROTHERTON • BRENT BROWN • WALLACE CAMP, JR. • MIKE CARPINO • RAYMOND H. COTTRELL, SR.
- SID R. DILLON • RYAN DOLAN • DAVID EDWARDS • STEVEN EWING • JOE FALZON • WILLIAM FENTON
- DOROTHY FITZGERALD • GREGORY GAGORIK • FRANK HANENBERGER • WILLIAM HATFIELD
- ART HUDGINS • DAVE JACHTER • JIM JANKE • PETER KOLAR • ELSIE MACMILLAN • MARCY MAGUIRE
- PAUL MASSE • TODD MAUL • MATT MCKAY • CARLO MERLO • JOHN MILLER • FLOR NAVARRO
- MICHAEL NIETHAMMER • MARK PETERSON • TONY PETRO • SAMUEL ROBERTS • HARRY G. ROBINSON, JR.
- JACK SALZMAN • TED SERBOUSEK • SAM SLAUGHTER • WALLY SOMMER • KEVIN WARD
- STEVEN WATTS • RODNEY WILHELM • ISAAC WILLIS • EDWARD WITT • GEORGE YOUMANS

Nominees for the 49th annual TIME Dealer of the Year Award consistently exhibit exceptional leadership. Their dedication to doing right by others is evident both at their dealerships and in their communities. Congratulations to each of this year’s nominees from all of us at Ally.



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Striking this balance isn't easy, nor is the selection process. Of the nearly 50 nominees, four finalists are chosen—one from each NADA geographical region—by a panel of judges composed of faculty from the

“Being nominated as TIME Dealer of the Year is much more than a plaque on the wall or a badge on a website.”

University of Michigan's Tauber Institute for Global Operations before one national winner is selected. This year's award will be presented on March 23 at the 2018 NADA Show, the auto industry's largest event.

“Being nominated as TIME Dealer of the Year is much more than a plaque on the wall or a badge on a website,” says Tim Russi, president of auto finance at Ally, one of the largest full-service auto finance operations in the country. “It is formal recognition of the kindness that drives dealers to support local charities and causes, epitomizing what it means to do it right. Over the seven years that Ally has sponsored the TIME Dealer of the Year program, we have been inspired

by all of the dealers who are examples of strong local leadership.”

By donating more than \$475,000 in grants to eligible 501(c)(3) charitable organizations selected by all the nominees over the past seven years, Ally plays a key role in this network of generosity. “Our dedicated team at Ally takes a personal approach to working with our dealers to help them achieve their business goals, empowering them to give back to their local communities and invest in their employees,” says Russi.

The panel of judges bases its decision on more than 10 criteria at the dealership, including customer satisfaction, ethics and market share, as well as a half dozen criteria recognizing community involvement, such as civic, political and educational activities. The two biggest reasons dealerships excel in these areas are increasing competition to deliver customer value and dealerships' deep commitment to their communities, resulting from the fact that most new-car dealerships in the country are locally owned.

“The greatest advantage of a locally owned and operated dealership is that customers benefit from the savings,” says Welch. “Fierce competition among America's franchised auto dealers benefits car buyers by driving down retail costs on both vehicle prices and financing rates. So when local dealers compete for business, the customers always win. It's inherent in our franchise model.”

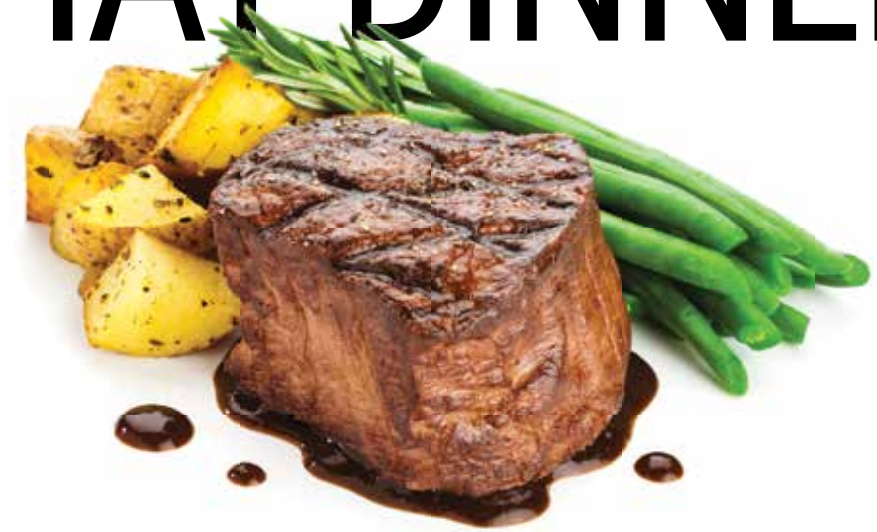
So is giving back, since your local auto dealer is also your neighbor and the dealership is typically a family legacy. “Dealers are part of their communities,” adds Welch. “They live and play in the same neighborhoods where they work. The dealer network is a powerhouse because dealers are some of the first to respond during times of crisis and natural disaster.

“For example,” Welch says, “in 2017, the NADA Foundation's Emergency Relief Fund quickly mobilized the resources of thousands of dealers across the country after the devastation of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and Nate and the California wildfires. Within weeks, we raised more than \$2 million and began distributing critical relief for dealership families in need. It's important for dealerships to give back because this is, after all, a *people* business first.” ●



◀ Ally team members in the Houston area banded together after Hurricane Harvey to help and support one another by providing food assistance and cleanup relief to those in need.

THAT DINNER



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