

Life Sciences Pa. reveals awards for its top CEO, top products and deal of the year

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Life Sciences Pennsylvania members mingle before Wednesday night's annual dinner and awards presentation.

Pennsylvania's life sciences industry honored its own Wednesday night as awards were handed out at Life Sciences Pennsylvania's annual dinner. The event at the Pennsylvania Convention Center drew a record crowd of more than 1,300 people.

The awards include two name in honor of biotech pioneer's [Hubert J. P. Schoemaker](#), the co-founder of Centocor, and [Frank Baldino Jr.](#), the co-founder of Cephalon. Schoemaker died in 2006, seven years after Centocor was sold to Johnson & Johnson for \$4.9 billion. Baldino died in 2010, a year before Cephalon was sold to Teva for \$6.8 billion.

The winner of this year's Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Leadership Award was [Barbara Schilberg](#), CEO of BioAdvance, an investor in early-stage life sciences companies. Schilberg has been BioAdvance CEO since its inception in 2002. BioAdvance has invested more than \$44 million in 89 companies and academic technologies — which went on to attract another \$2.75 billion in capital investments. Twelve of BioAdvance's portfolio companies have been acquired and 11 portfolio companies' products have received Food and Drug Administration approval.

The winner of this year's [Frank Baldino](#) CEO of the Year Award was [Christopher Burns](#), co-founder, president and CEO of VenatoRx Pharmaceuticals, which is developing new antibiotics to treat drug-resistant infections. Since the company was founded in 2010, VenatoRx has raised more than \$100 million in government funding and more than \$45 million from private investors. Burns has more than 25 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry and previously held leadership roles at Protez Pharmaceuticals, ViroPharma and Rhone-Poulenc Rorer.

Other honors went to:

- Patient Impact Award (three honorees): Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for its novel treatment of eosinophilic esophagitis; ITF Pharma in Berwyn for its amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) drug Teglutik; and Takeda, a Japanese biopharmaceutical company with operations in Pennsylvania, for its type I and type II hereditary angiodema drug Takhzyro.
- Deal of the Year Award: Emergent Biosolutions \$735 acquisition of Narcan nasal spray developer Adapt Pharma of Radnor.
- Scientific Achievement Award: [David Weiner](#), executive vice president and director of the vaccine and immunotherapy center at The Wistar Institute.
- John Nash MedTech Leadership Award: [Paul Touhey](#), operating partner at 1315 Capital.
- President's Service Award: [Vincent Milano](#), CEO of Idera Pharmaceuticals.
- Thought Leader of the Year Award – Jeffrey D. Marrazzo, CEO of Spark Therapeutics.
- Emerging Company of the Year Award: Ariel Precision Medicine, a genomics and digital health company based in Pittsburgh.
- Federal Official of the Year Award: U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, R-16, whose district includes Butler, Crawford, Erie and Mercer counties.
- State Official of the Year Award: State Rep. [Marcy Toepel](#), R-147, who district covers parts of Montgomery County.
- Clarkston Award & Scholarship: Hannah Johnson, a sophomore at Drexel University majoring in biological sciences.

Founded in 1989 and based in Wayne, Life Sciences Pennsylvania has grown to more than 800 members, including biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, medical device and diagnostic product manufacturers, contract research organizations and research institutions.



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