



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mutual Fund Companies Honored for Communications Excellence
Heartland Funds, The Royce Funds and John Hancock Funds Take Top Awards

The Mutual Fund Education Alliance announced winners of the 2008 **STAR Awards** for Excellence in mutual fund marketing and communications Tuesday evening at the Swissôtel in Chicago. The **STAR Awards** are presented annually by the Mutual Fund Education Alliance (MFEA), a national mutual fund industry trade association, and have become a prestigious recognition of companies in the fund industry who excel in print and online marketing, education and communications for shareholders, advisors and the investing public. Top awards for outstanding overall communications were presented, as well as awards for achievement in specific categories, based on a company's assets under management.

The top **STAR Awards** for Excellence in Overall Shareholder Communications, which evaluates a fund company's comprehensive efforts, were presented to the following:

Small Companies	Up to \$5 billion in assets	Heartland Funds
Medium Companies	\$5 - \$25 billion in assets	The Royce Funds
Large Companies	Over \$25 billion in Assets	John Hancock Funds

A complete list of the STAR Awards winners in all categories is attached.

Now in its 12th year, the **STAR Awards** program continues to distinguish itself as the premier fund industry competition and is unique in that members of the MFEA serve as judges and evaluate the programs of their peers. That, according to MFEA Executive Committee Chairman Merrilyn Kosier, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, Mutual Funds at Ariel Investments, is one of the most gratifying aspects of the awards program. "To be fairly evaluated by your colleagues, who are your competitors, provides a great sense of achievement," says Kosier.

In addition, the sixth annual **Community Investment Award** was presented to Ariel Investments of Chicago for their Ariel Education Initiative. ([See separate press release for details.](#))

The Mutual Fund Education Alliance is the national trade association of mutual fund marketers and distributors. Since 1971, the MFEA has been dedicated to informing and educating the investing public about how to achieve important lifetime goals using mutual funds. The members of the Alliance represent nearly \$5 trillion in mutual fund assets.