It has been a year of tremendous change in the footwear industry, as storied brands have found new homes, retailers have recalibrated and budding talents have gained their footing.

At the 2018 FN Achievement Awards on Dec. 4, the industry will gather once again at the IAC Building in New York to celebrate these successes, which are all the more notable for occurring in one of the most challenging business climates of recent memory.
This year was complex for a number of reasons. The industry players faced a wildly unpredictable playing field, " said Michael Atmore, editorial director of FN and director of brand development for Fairchild Publishing LLC. "Our winners should be incredibly proud that they not only survived but thrived during this revolutionary period in fashion and retail."

Few fashion rms were as assertive this year as Authentic Brands Group, which landed three game-changing deals, including its acquisition of Nine West and Bandolino, and its purchase of Camuto Group in partnership with DSW. For its aggressive growth moves, FN has selected ABG as the Company of the Year.

Also in a buying mood this year was the Person of the Year, Diane Sullivan. The CEO, president and chairman of Caleres Inc. snapped up both the Blowfish and Vionic brands, all while spearheading an effort to promote female leadership throughout the company.
When it comes to strong leadership, though, few are as legendary in the retail world as Bruce Nordstrom, who will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. During his illustrious tenure, the family-run department store—which began as a shoe retailer—grew into a market powerhouse that continues to expand its rule.

The 2018 recipient of FN’s coveted Shoe of the Year honor is the Fila Disruptor 2. While in the past, the winners of this accolade have had celebrity associations, this updated sneaker dominated on its own. The modern, on-trend chunky design appealed to fashion-obsessed men and women, and became an instant street-style favorite across the globe.

Another hot name in the sneaker space was Allbirds, the Brand of the Year. After launching online in 2016, the label’s eco-conscious wool kicks became Silicon Valley’s go-to shoes, and the rest of the world quickly caught on, with more than 1 million pairs sold in just over two years.

The athletic and fashion worlds also united to outstanding result with the Reebok x Pyer Moss design partnership, which celebrated African-American culture. The union, a critical and sales success, has earned the Collaboration of the Year award.

The past year was truly a time when the fashion industry embraced political discourse, as evidenced by Rebecca Minkoff, the winner of the Social Impact Award. The designer adopted a new brand philosophy built around activism and launched a partnership with the Women’s March to celebrate and empower inspiring females.

Designer of the Year Tabitha Simmons has become a go-to for Meghan Markle and many other trendsetters. The style maven has also been behind some of the year’s buzziest collaborations.
For Launch of the Year, FN will recognize up-and-comer Amina Muaddi, who cut her teeth with the Oscar Tiye label but has now truly stepped into the spotlight with her eponymous line of glamorous women’s heels.

A sandal from the spring ’19 Tabitha Simmons collection.

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In gratitude of the creative energy in the men's and women's markets, FN has selected two designers to receive the Vivian Infantino Emerging Talent Award. The honorees are Chloe Gosselin, whose feminine aesthetic has evolved into a confident statement, and Mike Amiri, L.A.'s breakout name in boots.
And in recognition of their many contributions to the footwear industry during their careers, FN will induct three new members into the Hall of Fame: design legend Pierre Hardy, footwear veteran Marc Fisher and retail guru Peter Harris of Pedder Group. More honorees will be announced in the coming days.

The sponsors for the awards are FFANY, the Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America, Micam, Zappos Luxury, Ruffino Wine and Avery Dennison RBIS.