

Honorary Business Excellence Award



John Herma

John F. Herma graduated from Rutgers College in 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts in History. A track star in his student years, Herma applied his competitiveness and strong work ethic to help create the modern department store by reinventing, along with two other partners, the Milwaukee-based Kohl's retail chain. When Herma and his two partners bought the company in 1986, Kohl's consisted of 39 stores doing \$268 Million in sales. Today Kohl's has over 1100 stores doing \$20 Billion. It is the largest department store in America. In today's age of on-line shopping, Kohl's remains one of the most stable and robust brick-and-mortar businesses of its kind. John's philanthropic pursuits grew significantly in 1987 when in response to a family tragedy, he established the Herma Heart Institute of Children's Wisconsin Hospital, which ranks among the top pediatric heart centers in North America. He has given generously to the Rutgers University Class of 1970 and Rutgers Athletics, making the largest gift in the history of Rutgers football to upgrade the Hale Athletic Center and build the Brown Football Recruiting Lounge and Welcome Center.