Kelley Blue Book Founder Les Kelley Named to the Automotive Hall of Fame

Industry pioneer who transformed vehicle valuation will join the Class of 2027 as Kelley Blue Book celebrates 100 years of trust and innovation

ATLANTA, November 18, 2026 – Kelley Blue Book, a Cox Automotive brand, today announced that its founder, R. Leslie "Les" Kelley, has been selected for induction into the Automotive Hall of Fame as a member of its Class of 2027. The recognition, the Automotive Hall of Fame's highest honor, comes as Kelley Blue Book celebrates its 100th anniversary and a century of helping consumers and the automotive industry understand what vehicles are worth.

Les Kelley pioneered a more consistent and trusted approach to vehicle valuation. After establishing the Kelley Kar Company dealership in Los Angeles in 1918, Kelley began distributing lists of the vehicles he wanted to purchase and the prices he was willing to pay. Dealers and banks came to trust his judgment as an accurate reflection of the market and began requesting the lists for their own use.

In 1926, Kelley expanded that information into the first *Blue Book of Motor Car Values*, helping bring greater transparency and consistency to a rapidly growing automotive marketplace. His original idea laid the foundation for Kelley Blue Book and helped make "Blue Book Value" part of the American automotive vocabulary.

"Les Kelley did more than create a pricing guide. He gave people a trusted way to understand the value of one of their most important purchases," said Steve Rowley, President at Cox Automotive. "One hundred years later, that belief remains at the heart of Kelley Blue Book. His induction into the Automotive Hall of Fame is a powerful recognition of the standard he established, the industry he helped shape and the trust his name continues to represent."

Kelley's innovation addressed a fundamental challenge facing the early automotive industry: before the first Blue Book was published, there was no reliable or standardized way to determine vehicle values. His market-based approach created a common point of reference for dealers, financial institutions and consumers, establishing principles of transparency and confidence that continue to guide the industry today.

A Centennial Built on Kelley's Original Idea

The Automotive Hall of Fame recognition coincides with Kelley Blue Book's centennial. Since the first Blue Book was published in 1926, the brand has continually adapted its trusted information for new generations and new technologies.

Today, Kelley Blue Book publishes millions of market-reflective vehicle values each week and provides information and tools for consumers, dealers, automakers, lenders, insurers and governmental agencies. Its offerings include Blue Book® Trade-In Values, Kelley Blue Book® Price Advisor, expert vehicle reviews, Kelley Blue Book℠ Instant Cash Offer, and more.

"Reaching 100 years is a testament to the trust generations of consumers and the automotive industry have placed in Kelley Blue Book," said Jessica Stafford, Senior Vice President, Consumer Solutions at Cox Automotive. "This honor brings the centennial full circle. The same original thinking that inspired Les Kelley to share his vehicle values continues to drive us forward as we build new tools and experiences for the next generation of car buyers, sellers and owners."

As vehicle research and shopping move further into digital and AI-powered experiences, Kelley Blue Book continues to evolve how its trusted information reaches consumers. The brand's work includes AI-enabled appraisal capabilities, more personalized vehicle experiences and new ways of making Kelley Blue Book Values accessible through conversational technology.

For more information about Kelley Blue Book's history and centennial, visit https://www.kbb.com/kbb100/.

About Kelley Blue Book
Founded in 1926, Kelley Blue Book, *The Trusted Resource*®, is the vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry for nearly a century. As the industry standard for generations, Kelley Blue Book provides transparent, objective information and data-driven, innovative tools for consumers, automotive dealers and manufacturers. Kelley Blue Book publishes millions of market-reflective values weekly on its top-rated website KBB.com, from its famous Blue Book® Trade-In Values to the Kelley Blue Book® Price Advisor tool, which offers a range for what consumers reasonably can expect to pay for a vehicle in their area. KBB.com editors rate and review hundreds of new vehicles each year to help consumers understand the Best Cars and Best SUVs to meet their needs. Kelley Blue Book℠ Instant Cash Offer provides a redeemable trade-in offer to transaction-ready consumers and conveniently connects them to local participating dealers. Kelley Blue Book's Service Advisor provides guidance on how much to pay for service and repairs, allowing consumers to schedule service with local dealers on KBB.com. Kelley Blue Book also provides vehicle values to finance and insurance companies as well as governmental agencies. Kelley Blue Book is a Cox Automotive brand.

About Cox Automotive
Cox Automotive is the world's largest automotive services and technology provider. Fueled by the largest breadth of first- and third-party data fed by 2.3 billion online interactions a year, Cox Automotive tailors leading solutions for car shoppers, auto manufacturers, dealers, lenders and fleets. The company has 29,000+ employees on four continents and a portfolio of industry-leading brands that include Autotrader®, Kelley Blue Book®, Manheim®, vAuto®, Dealertrack®, NextGear Capital™, CentralDispatch® and Cox Fleet®. Cox Automotive is a subsidiary of Cox Enterprises Inc., a privately owned, Atlanta-based company with $23 billion in annual revenue. Cox Automotive has been included on Glassdoor's Best Companies in Tech & AI 2026 and Best Place to Work in 2026 lists. Visit coxautoinc.com or connect via @CoxAutomotive on X, CoxAutoInc on Facebook or Cox-Automotive-Inc on LinkedIn.

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