

Mission Produce's Founder, President, and CEO Steve Barnard has been [named](#) an Ernst & Young LLP (EY US) Entrepreneur Of The Year 2021 Greater Los Angeles Award finalist.

Now in its 35th year, the Entrepreneur Of The Year program honors unstoppable business leaders whose ambition, ingenuity and courage in the face of adversity help catapult us from the now to next and beyond.

Barnard was selected by a panel of independent judges. Award winners will be announced during a special virtual celebration on July 29 and will become lifetime members of an esteemed community of Entrepreneur Of The Year alumni from around the world.

"I'm proud to represent Mission Produce among some of the most influential business people in the country," said Barnard.

"Over the last four decades, Mission has left an incredible mark on the industry, leading the way and setting the standard in the avocado business. It's a great honor to have the opportunity to highlight the work we've done in such a prestigious program."

A respected agribusiness veteran from Filmore, Calif., Barnard founded Mission Produce in 1983. Today, Mission is the largest avocado operation in the world with its worldwide facilities servicing retail, wholesale, and foodservice companies in over 25 countries.

Under Barnard's leadership, Mission was a pioneer in the avocado revolution, which is now valued at \$6.5 billion in the U.S. alone and estimated to grow to \$8 billion by 2023. As the highest-ranking executive at Mission, Barnard is responsible for making critical business decisions and providing the general direction of the organization.

Entrepreneur Of The Year is one of the preeminent competitive award programs for entrepreneurs and leaders of high-growth companies.

The nominees are evaluated based on six criteria: entrepreneurial leadership; talent management; degree of difficulty; financial performance; societal impact and building a values-based company; and originality, innovation and future plans. Since its launch, the program has expanded to recognize business leaders in more than 145 cities in over 60 countries around the world.

Regional award winners are eligible for consideration for the Entrepreneur Of The Year National Awards, to be announced in November at the Strategic Growth Forum, one of the nation's most prestigious gatherings of high-growth, market-leading companies.

The Entrepreneur Of The Year National Overall Award winner will then move on to compete for the EY World Entrepreneur Of The Year Award in June 2022.