

San Joaquin County Ag Hall of Fame Inductees Announced

THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY Agricultural Hall of Fame, now in its 35th year, recently announced its 2019 inductees:

David Lucas, The Lucas Winery

Everett Rankins, Rankins AG Inc.

Christina Schallberger, Sundance Kids Boer Goats

Tom Stokes, Stokes Farms

Patrick “Pat” Connolly (posthumous)

The Agricultural Hall of Fame honors those individuals who have contributed to agriculture and to their community in significant ways. The honorees will then be recognized at our annual Agricultural Hall of Fame Banquet on Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 at the Robert J. Cabral Ag Center in Stockton. For tickets and additional information visit the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce webpage, <http://stocktonchamber.org/ag-hall-of-fame/> or call (209) 547-2770.

David Lucas

David Lucas was born in Southern California and grew up surfing on the beaches of Santa Monica. He earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Chico State and a master's degree in International Design and Development from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. David was in the Peace Corps for three years in India in the early 1960s and he served another three years as a Peace Corps director in Iran prior to the 1979 revolution.

David moved to Lodi in the early 1970s, bought a 30-acre vineyard, and began making wine as a home winemaker. The remainder of the crop was sold to home winemakers on the east coast through a broker. In 1978, The Lucas Winery was legally bonded, making it the second oldest boutique winery in the Lodi Appellation.

Early in his agricultural career, David worked for Cal Can Cannery as a tomato technician, then buyer. In 1981, David was hired by Robert Mondavi in Lodi as a grower representative/grape buyer for Woodbridge Winery. He became their statewide representative when the company expanded their grape purchasing to other parts of the state (mainly the Central Coast). David was responsible for Mondavi's joint ventures including Opus

One, a collaboration between Château Mouton Rothschild and Robert Mondavi. It was through the Opus One joint venture that he met his wife, esteemed winemaker Heather Pyle-Lucas.

David's work at Woodbridge introduced him to a variety of vineyard practices aimed at improving wine quality. Many of these techniques were modeled after the practices of European wine grape growers and winemakers which David observed on his travels to Europe with Mondavi.

David retired in 1995 from Woodbridge Winery. His flagship Lucas ZinStar Vineyard is certified organic by California Certified Organic Farmers. The winery is 100% solar powered and the Lucas Winery relies on direct-to-consumer marketing as their wine is not distributed.

David participated in the International Organization of Vine and Wine, attending international congresses around the world on behalf of Mondavi. In 2000, The Lucas Winery was a founding member of the Lodi Appellation Winery Association and David served as vice president.

David also helped craft the original San Joaquin County Winery Ordinance. David was instrumental in a 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision to strike down laws that forbid the direct interstate shipment of wine to consumers.

David is a member of the California Association of Winegrape Growers and served as the Wine Institute district director. He served on the Sustainable Winegrowing Joint Committee and is an active member of the Lodi District Grape Growers Association.

David is a member of the San Joaquin Farm Bureau and supports the Foundation for Agricultural Education annual wine tasting event.

Everett Rankins

Everett Rankins is the greatest living authority on hay baling in San Joaquin County. He has been instrumental in revolutionizing the hay industry in the West and has held up to 15 patents in the agricultural machines industry and has employed more than one hundred people from the Stockton, Manteca and Tracy communities. Everett has baled more hay than anyone in the history of San Joaquin County, with bale counts reaching one million in peak seasons.

From the early to mid-'90s, his corporation was responsible for harvesting and spraying up to 9,000 acres, annually, for some of the best agricultural land in the world.

Everett, in partnership with his uncle, George Jay, held patents on attachments and modifications that redesigned four-man balers, allowing them to be operated by two men. This remarkable innovation required the elimination for the "eye" wire system in favor of the spooled baling wire. In cooperation with U.S. Steel, Rankins and Jay developed the first spooled baling wire system in 1949.

In collaboration with Ogden Riddle, University of California, Davis, Everett pioneered the spraying of alfalfa for weed control. To this end, he designed and built the first commercial spray rig for the application of herbicide (weed oil) on dormant hay fields around 1960.

At the request of tomato farmers Don and Bob Bianchi in 1962, Everett invented the first tomato bin dump trailer.

In partnership with his uncle, Everett invented the first bale pick-up machine in 1965. Also with his uncle, Everett invented the first “Roadrunner” type squeeze lift that could be operated on highways and therefore moved quickly from job to job. At the request of the Hay Growers’ Association and with his uncle, they manufactured the first double-compressed hay press. Together they also developed the first knife system for hay balers, which sliced hay rather than tucking it. Everett also invented and patented a detachable, one-wheel power system which, when connected to a piece of equipment, made it self-propelled, eliminating the need for a tractor.

In addition, Everett has designed and manufactured countless other systems including: the first hydraulically-controlled hay rake, overhead rakes, the first rake wheel counterbalance system, basket-type rakes and a serious of mini-balers which is exclusively manufactured by him.

Everett has been a member of both SJFB and the San Joaquin County Hay Growers Association for many years and has served multiple terms as a board member for the Naglee Burk Irrigation District.

Christina Schallberger

Christina Schallberger did not grow up in the country or have a background in agriculture but it is something she has fully embraced and taken immense pride in promoting and teaching others. Chris got her first introduction into agriculture after the family purchased two Boer goats from a vendor at the San Joaquin Fair in 1997. With a steep learning curve, Chris was determined to get their business off the ground. Along with three others, she helped start their farming enterprise, Sundance Kids, which was comprised of breeding and raising show and market goats. Christina quickly took charge of improving their herd by learning everything she could about raising Boer Goats. With the breed only coming to the United States in 1993, the Schallberger Family was one of the first in the area to raise and commercially breed Boer Goats. This farming operation currently runs 150 head of Boer Goats on four locations in the Lodi Area.

Determined to educate youth and newcomers into the industry, Chris started field days (Breeder, Leader & Feeder) that took place at the San Joaquin Fairgrounds where youth and adults attended seminars to learn more about breeding, showing and raising Boer Goats from 2000-2008.

Christina has been a leader for the Tokay Colony 4-H for the past 21 years. In addition to leading the speech/presentation, turkeys and scrapbooking, she also serves as the co-community leader and assists in organizing all aspects of the Tokay Colony 4-H.

When the San Joaquin Fair decided not to host the livestock portion of the fair, Chris was instrumental in the start of AgFest. She is currently assists the AgFest Executive Board and has held the offices of vice president and secretary.

Sundance Kids has been an active member of the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation for the past 15 years and Chris has personally been a big supporter of the SJFB Foundation for Agricultural Education and the San Joaquin Young Farmers & Ranchers.

Outside of agriculture, Chris has immersed herself in several organizations over the years. With their family being of the Swiss descent, she has been an active member of the San Joaquin Valley Swiss Club for over 35 years.

Aside from Sundance Kids, Christina is also president of L&W Cabinets and is responsible for bidding and laying out jobs, billing, bookkeeping and overseeing the overall day to day operations. Christina and her husband Walter have five children and two grandchildren, all who reside in San Joaquin County.

Tom Stokes

In 1919, Jacob Dawson, maternal grandfather of Tom Stokes, settled in Lodi on what is now considered the family's "Home Ranch." In 1935, his daughter Ramona married Bill Stokes, and the family businesses began to grow. They owned a dairy, operated a small gas station and managed the Thornton Hotel in the 1950s.

As a youth, Tom Stokes was an active member of the Thornton 4-H Club, raising hogs as his primary project. He attended Galt High School his freshman year and was active in Galt Future Farmers of America. He moved with his family to the Ray Road Ranch and started attending Lodi High School his sophomore year, where he was an active member of Lodi Future Farmers of America and was awarded the State Farmer Degree.

Tom Stokes started farming with his parents when he was a student at Lodi High School. He convinced his parents that they should grow grapes and in 1954 they planted their first vineyard. Their operation, Bill Stokes and Sons, included farming, a custom hay business as well as a parts store.

After his marriage to Sandra Ciucci in 1960, Tom continued to work with his parents and also began Stokes Farms, farming wheat, corn and Sudan grass on his own. He ventured into the cattle and sheep business, running large herds of sheep and cattle on leased property in the Rocklin & Franklin area. After the property was sold for development in the late 1970's, Tom began planting wine grapes on the Home Ranch, which was originally purchased by his grandparents in 1919. This is the home he still lives in today.

Tom continued to purchase and lease property to plant wine grapes in both San Joaquin and Sacramento County. He was one of the first wine grape growers in the Lodi area to use mechanical harvesting in his operation in the 1960s.

In the early years, Tom farmed a handful of varieties such as Tokay and Carignan. Today the Stokes family farms many winegrape varieties which are sold to a variety of buyers. They currently farm wine grapes, cherries, hay and grain crops on properties that have been in the family for years.

Tom is a member and supporter of numerous agricultural organizations including SJFB, Western Growers Association, Farm Employers Labor Service, California Association of Winegrape Growers, and the Lodi District Grape Growers Association. Tom was a charter member of the Lodi Woodbridge Wine Grape Commission. He is a supporter of California Women for Agriculture. He is a past member of the California Cattlemen's Association and California Wool Growers Association.

Tom served as a member of the San Joaquin Grand Jury from 1976-77. He is a member of Lodi Rotary Club and was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow Award in 1992. He is a member of the Lodi Elks Lodge 1900. He is also a member of the San Joaquin County Historical Society.

Tom is a longtime supporter of the Lodi Boys and Girls Club and a donor to the World of Wonders Science Museum in Lodi. He is a supporter of local Boy Scouts of America and member of Thornton Boy Scouts. Tom is a supporter of the small community of Thornton through various donations of time, equipment and financial assistance. He also served on the Thornton Fire District Board. Tom is a strong supporter of youth in agriculture. He is a member of San Joaquin County 4-H Foundation and is a past 4-H Leader for Turner Ray 4-H Club. He is a longtime supporter of 4-H Clubs and FFA Chapters in San Joaquin County and donor to Ag Boosters. Tom is a donor to the Hospice of San Joaquin Butterfly Auxiliary and has made significant contributions to Hospice of San Joaquin including donated use of office building to open Lodi Regional Care Center. The Stokes family are also supporters of the Lodi Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Today their daughter Sharon, and sons Bill and Mike Stokes continue in the family business. Their grandson is also farming – the 5th generation to be active in the family operation.

Patrick "Pat" Connolly

Patrick "Pat" Connolly was born in 1959 and was raised in the Corral Hollow Canyon area in Tracy. The Connolly family has operated an established cattle ranch in Tracy for generations, 146 years to be exact. The family ranch's success was recognized as a Century Old Farm in 2000 and Patrick Connolly has made sure to leave his own mark on the family legacy by not only operating the cattle ranch but by staying informed of current agricultural issues and volunteering his time to local agricultural organizations.

After his graduation from Tracy High School in 1977, he attended UC Davis where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics in 1981. While his siblings branched out to pursue other careers, Pat stayed home to work on the ranch and after time, he solely ran the family's cattle operation.

The family ranch was truly something that Pat took great pride in, he had some of the best stock of beef cows and he'd worked on his herd for years. He believed that the combination of work ethic and awareness of your heritage were the keys that made the Pat Connolly Ranch endure over a century long. He believed that one has to enjoy the business and have a true passion for the trade because you have to be in it for the long haul.

Pat's dedication to SJFB was always a centerpiece his life. Starting with the Young Farmers & Ranchers, he then moved onto the SJFB Board of Directors where he served for more than 30 years. Whenever something needed to get done, Pat was always there. He truly had a reputation for action.

As a longtime advocate for agriculture in San Joaquin County and the state, Pat was a voice for issues like the Williamson Act, the Big Green Initiative, and Country of Origin Labeling for Beef. Pat also served on a variety of committees in addition to YF&R and SJFB boards, including the Tracy Farm Center and San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District. Pat never missed a meeting and was always the news media's go to person for information as he excelled at getting his point across to others.

Pat was also a founding member of the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education. Pat was instrumental in the creation of the SJFB Foundation's annual wine tasting fundraiser.

Pat's passion for the beef industry was apparent to anybody who was lucky enough to have met him and he worked diligently to educate and be an advocate for the livestock industry. His passion led him to the American

Farm Bureau Federation where he served on the Beef Advisory Committee and also dedicated his time to serving on both the San Joaquin-Stanislaus Cattlemen's Association, the California Cattlemen's Association Board, and the California Farm Bureau Federation Livestock Advisory Committee.

Pat attended St. Bernard's Catholic Church which is where he met his true partner in life, Diana. Pat also spent time giving back to the community he grew up in and was always seen volunteering at a variety of fundraisers throughout the community. He arranged numerous educational tours to showcase the importance of agriculture and gave students a hands-on experience to see where their food comes from and demonstrated the extensive diversity of commodities that are produced locally right here in San Joaquin County.

Pat passed away in March 2012 and was a tremendous loss for his family, community, the Farm Bureau, and everybody else that had the pleasure of meeting Pat.