

State of California

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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 19, 2020

To: Board of Directors
California Exposition & State Fair

Via: Rick K. Pickering, Chief Executive Officer

From: Jay Carlson, AG Program Director

Subject: Recommendations for Approval of 2020 Wine Industry Awards

BACKGROUND

The California State Fair annually recognizes the accomplishments and service of key individuals or organization through a series of prestigious awards. The recipients below will be publically recognized and honored at the annual Wine Judges Dinner on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. They will also be acknowledged at the Friends of the California State Fair Gala on Thursday, June 25, 2020.

Included here is the process for selection of each award, and background of 2020 award honorees as recommend.

AWARDS SUMMARY

Wine Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes a person, family or institutions who are pioneers in the wine industry based on their lifetime contributions to the California wine industry. Each year, the California State Fair Wine Advisory Task Force puts forth recommendations and selects a final honoree through an open meeting process.

Wine Advisory Task Force respectively recommends **Randall Grahm** as the 2020 Wine Lifetime Achievement Award.

Randall Grahm

A trailblazing vintner, Grahm founded Bonny Doon in 1983 with his family's help in the remote Santa Cruz Mountains, intending to make Pinot Noir. He quickly turned to Rhône varieties and released the inaugural vintage of Le Cigare Volant in 1986. Le Cigare Volant has been the winery's flagship label ever since. His success at promoting

Rhone wines throughout California has earned him the moniker “The Rhone Ranger”, and a trade group of the same name was established to carry on his advocacy.

In addition to being California's earliest advocate for Rhône-style reds, Grahm was a constant innovator and envelope-pusher. He was one of the first to use *microbullage*, adding tiny oxygen bubbles to the wine in California and to employ screwcaps on premium wines.

Bonny Doon is known for its eccentric labels and interesting blends. The winery was a nearly 500,000-case operation before Grahm sold several of the brands in the portfolio in 2006, including Big House Red and Cardinal Zin.

In 2009, Grahm purchased 400 acres near San Juan Bautista, Calif., for a project he called Popelouchum. Here he hopes to breed 10,000 new grape varieties in his quest to grow the quintessential California terroir-based wine.

In 1991, Randall was added to the Who's Who of Cooking in America by Cook's Magazine, and in the same year Ted Bowell of the Lowell Observatory in northern Arizona named the "4934 Rhône Ranger" asteroid in his honor. He was proclaimed Wine and Spirits Professional of the Year by the James Beard Foundation in 1994.

Randall lectures frequently to wine societies and technical groups, and occasionally contributes "quixotically sincere" articles to wine journals. His newsletters and articles were collected and published as the award-winning book, "*Been Doon So Long: A Randall Grahm Vinthology*" in 2009. In 2010, The Culinary Institute of America inducted him into the Vintner's Hall of Fame. He currently lives in Santa Cruz with his partner Chinshu and their daughter, Amélie.

Vineyard of the Year Award

The Vineyard of the Year recognizes the California vineyard that consistently, over several growing seasons, produced grapes, which have contributed directly to wine of superior quality and marketability within commercial sales systems and among fine wine. Each year, the California State Fair Wine Advisory Task Force puts forth recommendations and selects a final honoree through an open meeting process.

Wine Advisory Task Force respectively recommends **Sangiacomo Vineyard** as the 2020 Vineyard of the Year.

Sangiacomo Vineyard

The California State Fair wine advisory task force has listed the Sangiacomo family on their list of potential honorees for the vineyard of the year for many years. This year the vote was nearly unanimous, and for good reason.

The Sangiacomo family story in California goes back to the early 1900's when Vittorio Sangiacomo emigrated from Genoa Italy to northern California, working his way from San Francisco to Sonoma. In 1927, he bought a 52-acre fruit orchard and set about raising a family. The farm expanded over the years but when the pear market failed, the family made the leap into wine grapes, starting in 1969. By 1980 all 300 acres of land was converted, and the third generation began to make their contributions.

Today, in addition to the home ranch, Sangiacomo vineyards is comprised of 14 ranches covering 1700 acres of award-winning chardonnay and pinot noir. Some 85 of the north coast's finest wineries are counted as clients, 35 of whom choose to vineyard designate the Sangiacomo name on their labels. Well-known names like Artesa, Benziger, Buena vista, Francis Ford Coppola, Landmark, Rombauer and Saintsbury are just a few among the many who have bestowed this recognition to the Sangiacomo family.

The vineyards are now largely in the hands of third generation siblings Mike, Steve and Mia. They embrace a customer service philosophy with their clients, whom they refer to as partners. They farm sustainably. Many of their clients and vineyard workers have been with them over 25 years.

The Sangiacomos are not only good stewards of the land, they are also stewards of the wine and grape industry, active in numerous associations in leadership roles. Their contributions to Sonoma's success are widely known. For the quality of the grapes and wines they produce, not only on the home ranch but also across their farming operation, the task force enthusiastically recommends them for the 2020 vineyard of the year honor.

California All Stars

California All Stars - is a posthumous award given in recognition of exemplary service and contributions to innovators, educators and/or leaders in the world of wine, based on their contributions to the California wine industry.

Margrit Mondavi - 1925 - 2016

If her husband, Robert Mondavi, who died in 2008, deserves credit for revolutionizing Napa's wine industry, Ms. Mondavi deserves just as much for transforming the valley into a paradise of cultural sophistication.

Margrit moved to the Napa Valley in the 1960's. She volunteered to organize a concert at the Charles Krug Winery, owned by the Mondavi family. This led to a job as a winery tour guide, the first woman in Napa to hold such a role. When Robert split off to start his own winery, she went to work for him as director of public relations at Robert Mondavi Winery. A personal relationship developed between Robert and Margrit, and they married in 1980.

Under her direction, Robert Mondavi Winery became an artistic hub in the valley, its Summer Music Festival drawing Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles and Tony Bennett and its Great Chefs Cooking School hosting Alice Waters and the Mondavis' lifelong friend Julia Child.

She established the Napa Valley Wine Auction in 1981 — still one of the two highest-grossing charity wine events in the U.S. — and took a leading role in funding the restoration of the Napa Valley Opera House. Other philanthropic efforts included patronage of the Napa art institution the Oxbow School; launching the now-defunct art and wine museum Copia; and, thanks to a \$35 million gift in 2001, endowing a performing arts center and a wine and food science center at UC Davis.

An accomplished artist and passionate gourmet, Ms. Mondavi wrote books including “Annie and Margrit: Recipes and Stories from the Robert Mondavi Kitchen,” with her daughter Annie Roberts, published in 2003. Two others, composed of recipes, watercolor drawings and memoir vignettes, were written with Janet Fletcher: “Margrit Mondavi’s Sketchbook: Reflections on Wine, Food, Art, Family, Romance and Life” (2012) and “Margrit Mondavi’s Vignettes: Stories and Recipes from a Life in Wine” (2015).

Although Robert Mondavi Winery was sold to Constellation Brands in 2004, Ms. Mondavi continued to serve as the winery’s vice president of cultural affairs and curate its art exhibitions. She donated \$2 million toward the Jan and Maria Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis. Mrs. Mondavi passed away in May 2017.

For her leadership in cultural affairs and numerous charitable contributions to the Napa Valley and the California wine industry, the CA State Fair Wine Advisory Task Force proudly nominates Margrit Mondavi to be recognized as one of the 2020 CA Wine All-Star awardees.

(Above content attributed to Esther Mobley of the San Francisco Chronicle).

Barden Stevenot – 1936 - 2018

Barden Stevenot was a Calaveras County grape-growing trailblazer and visionary entrepreneur.

Stevenot was credited with bringing the wine industry to Calaveras County. Longtime winemaker Chuck Hovey said Stevenot built the first major winery in the area. Recognized as the pioneer of the rebirth of wine production in the Sierra Foothills, Stevenot Winery quickly secured its reputation for producing world-class wines and for their innovative and award winning style.

Infatuated by both the microclimate that is hot in the day and warm in the night and the varying types of soil in the area, Stevenot purchased land outside Murphy’s where he would soon after grow 20 acres of grapes in the 1970s, said Liz Millier, co-owner of Milliaire and Black Sheep wineries.

Stevenot’s purchase came at a time when there were a number of smaller vineyards in an underdeveloped sector that would later become recognized federally – with Stevenot’s help – as a unique grape growing appellation, said Millier. This American Viticultural Area (AVA) was named Sierra Foothills.

“His winery was the first of this magnitude,” said Hovey, who made wine for Stevenot Winery for 24 years.

Stevenot saw a potential for the industry in Calaveras, said Millier. He had friends who had wineries in Sonoma County and he wanted to bring grapes to the foothills. Once he did, he welcomed newcomers to expand the vision.

At its peak in the early 1990s, the Stevenot label produced 50,000 cases of wine in one season with Hovey at the helm. Many were of the chardonnay varietal, Stevenot’s favorite. The amount produced was the most ever at the time.

Calaveras County now boasts 16 Estate Wineries, 25 Boutique Wineries, over 25 tasting rooms on Main Street Murphy's, and over one thousand acres of vineyards. Undoubtedly considered the patriarch of the Calaveras region, and lauded throughout the Sierra Foothills, the list of former employees that would go on to found their own companies and produce wines of exceptional quality is vast. None of this would be possible without Barden's earliest visions of Calaveras and the Sierra Foothills at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Agricultural Advisory Council and Staff respectfully request the Board approve the following awards:

- I. Accept the Wine Advisory Task Force's recommendation to honor **Randall Graham** with the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award.
- II. Accept the Wine Advisory Task Force's recommendation to honor **Sangiaco Vineyard** with the 2020 Vineyard of the Year Award.
- III. Accept the Wine Advisory Task Force's recommendation to honor **Margrit Mondavi** and **Barden Stevenot** with the 2020 California All Stars award.