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WASHINGTON WINEGROWERS HONORS INDUSTRY LEADERS

[Kennewick, WA] - The Washington Winegrowers Association (Winegrowers) recognized achievements of industry leaders last week at a Leadership & Legacy Luncheon during their annual Convention & Trade Show in Kennewick. The annual awards included the Erick Hanson Memorial Grower of the Year, Industry Service, Lifetime Achievement, and the Grand Vin award.

GROWER OF THE YEAR –

Jim McFerran, Director of Viticulture for Wyckoff Farms and Coventry Vale Winery, received the Erick Hanson Memorial Winegrape Grower of the Year Award for demonstrated viticultural skills that provide impact in the vineyard and in the bottle. He started in the industry working for Ste. Michelle in 1983 as grower relations providing the conduit to growers on contracting. He operated his own viticulture consulting company for many years and then played a leadership role with Milbrandt before moving to Wyckoff Farms. McFerran has built a reputation as an industry expert, a studied and respected source for viticultural expertise with deeply rooted relationships throughout the industry.

INDUSTRY SERVICE –

Rick Hamman, retired viticulture manager for Hogue Ranches, received the Industry Service Award for a lifetime of service impacting the grape and wine industry. Hamman has worked for, with, and in, the industry since the early 1980's. He was the first state viticulturist in the Colorado wine industry before making his way to Washington. At Hogue Ranches, Hamman was responsible for the quality of 5000+ tons of winegrapes delivered to Hogue Cellars, Pacific Rim, Wahluke Wine Company, Ste. Michelle, Thurston Wolfe, Hedges and Mercer Estate Winery. From grower relations to technical advice and from database management to vineyard research, Hamman was the liaison between winery, managers and growers. He has served as chairman of the Wine Advisory Committee, the research arm of the Washington Wine Commission; chairman of the Washington Department of Ag grapevine advisory committee and sat on the Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT –

Ted Baseler, former president and CEO of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, received the Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize his leadership building Washington State into one of the top wine producing regions in the world. Baseler began at Ste. Michelle in 1984 as director of marketing, eventually becoming chief operating officer before being named president and CEO in 2001. He was named by his peers to Vineyard and Winery Management's list of "20 Most Admired People in the North American Wine Industry." Seattle Business magazine presented him with an Executive Excellence Award and he received Southern Wine & Spirits of America Lifetime Achievement Award for his "visionary guidance, creative innovation and strong leadership skills... solidifying Washington State's position as the second largest wine region in the U.S." He served as chair of the Washington Wine Commission, chair of the Wine Market Council, and board member the Washington Wine Institute. He was appointed by the Governor to the Washington State University Board of Regents and along with his advocacy and leadership helped fund and build a world class enology and viticulture infrastructure at WSU.

GRAND VIN

Charlie Hoppes, owner and winemaker of Fidelitas, was awarded the Grand Vin Award, for making a significant impact in the winery, on wine and branding. Hoppes began in the wine industry in the 1980s and first worked for Mike Januik at the Snoqualmie/Langguth winery and then became a member of the winemaking team at Chateau Ste. Michelle in Woodinville. In 1993, he became the Head Red Winemaker and managed Chateau Ste. Michelle's newest facility at the time: Canoe Ridge near Paterson. During his time at Chateau Ste. Michelle, he worked with the Antinori family on the initial vintages of Col Solare. In 2007, he and his family purchased land in the Red Mountain AVA and planted a small vineyard. Hoppes continues to serve as a consulting winemaker to many wineries throughout the state allowing his legacy on the quality of Washington wine.

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Photos available upon request.

The Washington Winegrowers Association serves as the synergistic leader and unifying voice – through advocacy and education – for growers, vintners, partners, and policymakers.