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WASHINGTON WINEGROWERS HONORS INDUSTRY LEADERS

[Kennewick, WA] - The Washington Winegrowers Association (Winegrowers) recognized achievements of industry leaders last week at an Honor Luncheon during their annual Convention & Trade Show in Kennewick. The annual awards included Grower of the Year, Industry Service, Lifetime Achievement, and the Grand Vin award. About 2,000 state, national, and international participants from the grape and wine industry attended.

GROWER OF THE YEAR –

Mike Andrews, owner of Coyote Canyon Vineyards and 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. Andrews has been growing grapes for over 20 years and has consistently produced brilliant results. His grapes have been part of numerous 90-point wines from Ste Michelle Wine Estates. In the award presentation, it was noted he understands grape growing from a vintner's perspective and treats all grapes as if they are destined for reserve wines. Andrews' hybrid of machine and hand labor has allowed his vineyard to evolve while maintaining perennial quality. A common comment from visitors to Coyote Canyon is that it is one of the best kept vineyards they've ever seen. Andrews has built a reputation as an industry expert and with deeply rooted relationships throughout his field.

INDUSTRY SERVICE –

Tom Waliser, owner of Beresan Winery, received the Industry Service Award for a lifetime of impactful service to and for the grape and wine industry. Waliser was actually one of the first growers in the Walla Walla area to plant Gala and Fuji apples, and was instrumental in bringing new apple varieties and high-density plantings to the area. Shortly after he started with winegrapes, he became a local authority - consulting on planting and managing vineyards. Waliser has planted more winegrape acres in the Walla Walla Valley appellation than anyone. He has trained many of the vineyard managers who now oversee the competition and some orchard managers over the past 20 years, teaching young men and women in the vineyard, the what, the how and the why. He is constantly helping grow and expand opportunities for winegrowers in Washington State through his devoted industry volunteer work: research committees, board positions for associations, foundations and other countless committees. Waliser has worked for, with, and in, the industry since the early 90's, serving on both the Washington Winegrowers and Washington Wine Industry Foundation boards. He is not only an industry leader, but an industry pioneer.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT –

Paul Champoux, former owner of the famed Champoux vineyards, received the Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize his work as a pioneer of the Washington grape and wine industry. Champoux is one of the state's most respected vineyard experts with over 40 years of experience. As a forerunner in the industry, he worked to produce the same quality of grape for the winemaker. He took unbelievable chances to get highest quality, sought-after crops, and kept his nose to the grindstone and made a difference, making a legacy. He is values-driven and built loyal relationships over the years, through thick and thin, and always shares credit with people he worked with and who worked for him. He has overcome adversity that not many have

to conquer in their lifetime. But he did it with perseverance, faith and success. He is also a consistent and supportive volunteer. He was a long-time board member of the Washington Winegrowers and a founding member of the Washington Wine Industry Foundation where he still serves.

GRAND VIN –

Rick Small, owner of Woodward Canyon Winery, was awarded the Grand Vin Award, for making a significant impact on the winery, the wine, the brand, or the process. Small has done them all. With deep agricultural roots in the Walla Walla Valley, Small believes strongly that the quality of the wine starts in the vineyard and that one must never compromise by cutting corners. He is known for setting a standard of quality, collaboration and camaraderie amongst Washington wineries. Studying agriculture at WSU and then going back to school for architecture, Small never planned to grow grapes or make wine. But then curiosity got the best of him after seeing work being done at Chateau Ste. Michelle and his passion for wine began. He started planting winegrapes at his family wheat farm at Woodward Canyon, educated himself about viticulture, and through lots of trial and error, started crafting award-winning wine. For many, it's impossible to imagine the Walla Walla wine valley without Small and his family. For over 40 years, Small has been a humble contributor to the growth and prestige of the Washington wine industry – constantly looking for ways to improve or add to his wealth of knowledge. From grapes to glass, Small has truly made legacy impact 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.