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Texas produce industry leaders inducted into Hall of Fame

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Nearly 120 people attended the 2022 Texas Produce Hall of Fame banquet and ceremony on Monday evening, Jan. 24, at the Mission Event Center in Mission, TX.

Organized by the [Texas International Produce Association](#), the Hall of Fame has been a proud tradition since 1988. For 34 years, the event has recognized industry leaders who have made exceptional contributions crucial to the long-term success of the trade.

Honored for their longstanding contributions to the produce industry throughout Texas, this year's inductees were the Wiesehan family, including John F, Raymond, Richard, Kenneth, George, John and Roger; and a posthumous award to Abel Salazar of Salazar Farms.

In addition to the Hall of Fame inductees, Scott Fletcher of Allen Lund Co. and Harold Wilkins (posthumous) retired of United Supermarkets, were awarded the Scott Toothaker Award for their many years of commitment and service to the industry. Established in 1989, this award recognizes those who may not be directly involved in production agriculture, but who have made important contributions to the industry's success.

The Texas Produce Hall of Fame Committee accepts and reviews nominations throughout the year. Frank Schuster, who heads Val Verde Vegetables Co. in McAllen, TX, has served as chairman of the committee since 2018. Schuster said, "Our biggest challenge as a committee is finalizing a list of honorees when there are so many deserving people. Hearing the stories from last night, in both the list of challenges alongside successes, reinforces my commitment to not only agriculture, but to the hall and ensuring these memories are cherished for generations to come. I feel proud and blessed to be but a part of this history."

Dante Galeazzi, president and CEO of the Texas International Produce Association commented, “Although COVID-19 continues, the energy at last night’s event was undeniable. The stories were very sentimental this year. The trials and tribulations our industry forebears faced to reach successes, and then sharing and building those successes for the benefit of all our region, was a beautiful reminder of why we do what we do every single day.”

The Hall of Fame is considered one of the most treasured events of the Texas International Produce Association. The goals are two-fold: to pay tribute to those who have laid the foundation for Texas produce, and to encourage and infuse new talent into the industry going forward. As such, a portion of the evening’s proceeds go toward the William E. Weeks Agriculture Scholarship Fund, which supports students wishing to pursue a degree related to the fresh produce industry.

In what has traditionally been a biennial event, the next Texas Produce Hall of Fame is tentatively scheduled for January of 2024.

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