My introduction to the California Ag Leadership Foundation (Calf) was decades ago when the company, Frieda’s Specialty Produce, received the annual solicitation letter. I vaguely recall that the program was to help develop future agricultural leaders. I recall aspiring, at some point in my career, to be able to qualify and participate in the program.

Then, about 10 years ago, when Bob Gray joined Calf, I was invited to participate in a two-day strategic planning process. It was after this session that I started regularly contributing financially to Calf and received Horizons magazine. It astounded me to discover how many alumni I knew from the fresh produce industry.

I really got a taste of Ag Leadership when I was invited to be the executive-in-residence at Cal Poly Pomona for Class 43 and 44. I didn’t know what to expect when I took a seat at the front of the room. But, I’ve always been honest and willing to be vulnerable, so I shared intimate details of my experiences of being in family business, heartbreaking, and everything in between. I will never forget those two sessions, and I have stayed in contact with alumni from both classes.

So, in March 2017 when I was “surrounded” by three board members, I was not surprised that they were approaching me to join the board of directors.

My first board meeting was in October in Clovis. I met members of the Alumni Council and fellows of Class 47. By the time I arrived for a two-day strategic planning session in November, I was beginning to piece together the strengths and opportunities of the program.

But nothing prepared me for Class 47’s exit interviews. We laughed, cried, listened to fellows and spouses talk about how they had profoundly changed their lives. After the board meeting and exit interviews, I was committed to having “the full experience” and stayed for the awards dinner and of course, commencement.

I remember being told the graduation would be emotional. I tried to imagine how it would be.

At that moment, I also realized why Joe Pezzini (28) was selected as the first president of the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement after the 2006 spinach crisis. That morning, he told me, ”going through Ag Leadership gave me the strength and skills needed to lead the industry in a time of deep crisis, chaos, and fear. I could never have done it without the skills I learned in the program.”

Although I never had the good fortune of going through the program, I know that I will benefit greatly from my association as a board member. I look forward to meeting up with the members of Class 48 during some of their programs, so I can understand firsthand the richness of this program of personal transformation.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service to this amazing program.

Karen is president and CEO of Frieda’s Specialty Produce.
In our last edition of Horizons, we highlighted one of the founders of the California Agricultural Leadership Program, Mr. Dean Brown. Now we take a close look at the other half of that forward-looking duo, Mr. James G. Boswell II, who was so instrumental in the establishment and development of leadership training for California agriculturists.

The concept of the California Agricultural Leadership Program was first incubated within the Council of California Growers (CCG) in the 1960s. Formal agricultural leadership training had originated within the state of Michigan with a group called Michigan Young Farmers, which received its initial support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. In February 1968 the board of directors of the California Agricultural Education Foundation (CAEF), as structured through CCG and which included Mr. Boswell, met in San Luis Obispo to listen to a presentation about the possible establishment of a leadership program within the Golden State. Work immediately began on the development of a “training syllabus” that would serve as the basis for the program’s curriculum. This effort was led by Bruce Obbink from CCG and Dr. Edgar Hyer from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

In May 1968, the CAEF board once again met to hear the formal proposal related to the creation of the program. While there was unquestionably underlying enthusiasm for the concept as developed, it was Mr. Boswell who stepped up to the plate with a proclamation that the Boswell Foundation would make a substantial pledge to the effort with the instruction that other prominent foundations be contacted to do likewise. With his distinctive leadership and direction, both the Kellogg Foundation and the Irvine Foundation would also become early supporters of the program and the first class of fellows was selected in 1970.

Mr. Boswell was an icon in California agriculture. His family first began farming in California, moving from their native Georgia, in the early part of the previous century. When he passed away in 2009 at the age of 86, his obituary was carried by almost every major newspaper in the country, including the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times. The following are selected passages from those memorials which explain much about the man:

Born on March 10, 1923, in Greensboro, Ga., Mr. Boswell was the son of William Boswell Sr. and Kate Hall Boswell. When he was a child, the family moved to California to join in his uncle’s enterprise. After serving in the Army in the Pacific during World War II, Mr. Boswell returned to Stanford University in 1946 to complete his bachelor’s degree in economics. There he met Rosalind Murray; they married and had three children. She died in 2000. Mr. Boswell is survived by his second wife, the former Barbara Wallace; his son, James, who now runs the business; two daughters, Jody Hall and Lorraine Wilcox; and five grandchildren.

James Boswell II eventually expanded the family’s holdings to approximately 200,000 acres, including 60,000 in the Australian outback but not including the 20,000 acres in Arizona that he sold in the late 1950s to the Del Webb Development Company. Those 20,000 acres were transformed, with Mr. Boswell as a development partner, into Sun City, one of the nation’s first retirement communities. Mr. Boswell introduced techniques that became a model for large-scale farming: lasers that ensured level fields for even water distribution; bioengineering of new and pest-resistant seeds; computerized cotton gins with a capacity to produce 400 bales a day. He saw himself as a cowboy and was proud that he had lost two fingers in a cattle-roping accident. He sat on the boards of General Electric, the Security Pacific Bank and the Safeway supermarket chain. He was chairman, president and chief executive of his company from 1952 until he retired in 1984.

For much of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation’s existence, there was no greater visionary or supporter than James G. Boswell II. Thankfully, that legacy continues with his son Jim, grandson Cameron (42), the Boswell Foundation and everyone associated with the Boswell organization. Mr. Boswell and his family have been there during the peaks, as well as the valleys, and their unwavering commitment to leadership development and California agriculture is one of the primary reasons we have this program “to grow leaders who make a difference.” We are eternally grateful for what Mr. Boswell did for this foundation and we will never forget his many contributions. Thank you.
The 24th annual World Ag Expo breakfast was held on Feb. 15 in Tulare. To date, the annual fundraising breakfast has raised more than $1 million for CALF. This year, approximately 900 people attended and more than $115,000 was raised for CALF.

Breakfast committee members, led by chairman John Schaap (39), demonstrated their leadership skills in securing a replacement for the original keynote speaker who had to cancel a day prior to the event due to a family emergency. Dr. Victor Davis Hanson stepped in to provide a thought provoking review of current events, both statewide and nationally. Hanson is a noted historian and social critic whose philosophies are rooted in classicism. An author, contributing editor and professor, Hanson writes a world affairs column syndicated by Tribune Media Services. He is also an American military historian, columnist, former classics professor and scholar of ancient warfare. As a National Review Institute fellow, he has been a commentator on modern warfare and contemporary politics for National Review and other media outlets. He was a professor of classics at Fresno State, and is currently the Martin and Ilie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson is perhaps best known for his 2001 book, “Carnage and Culture.” He was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush and is also a raisin grape farmer in Selma.

Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea provided the keynote address at the annual event. In February 2017, Sheriff Honea played a key role in managing the public safety response to the Oroville Dam spillway incident and was responsible for ordering the Feb. 12 evacuation of the areas threatened by the potentially catastrophic failure of the dam’s emergency spillway.

Roland Fumasi, senior vice president and agricultural economist for Rabobank’s Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory (FAR) group, provided the annual economic report. Fumasi and his team analyze and conduct market research on California agribusiness as well as the North American fresh fruit and produce sectors.

Colusa Farm Show Breakfast

The 16th annual Colusa Farm Show Breakfast was held on Feb. 7. The popular fundraising event supports the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation and the CSU Chico College of Agriculture, for scholarships and other academic needs. This year, more than 400 people attended and approximately $50,000 was raised.

Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea provided the keynote address at the annual event. In February 2017, Sheriff Honea played a key role in managing the public safety response to the Oroville Dam spillway incident and was responsible for ordering the Feb. 12 evacuation of the areas threatened by the potentially catastrophic failure of the dam’s emergency spillway.

Roland Fumasi, senior vice president and agricultural economist for Rabobank’s Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory (FAR) group, provided the annual economic report. Fumasi and his team analyze and conduct market research on California agribusiness as well as the North American fresh fruit and produce sectors.

Colusa Farm Show Breakfast

The 16th annual Colusa Farm Show Breakfast was held on Feb. 7. The popular fundraising event supports the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation and the CSU Chico College of Agriculture, for scholarships and other academic needs. This year, more than 400 people attended and more than $115,000 was raised for CALF. This year, approximately 900 people attended and more than $115,000 was raised for CALF.

Breakfast committee members, led by chairman John Schaap (39), demonstrated their leadership skills in securing a replacement for the original keynote speaker who had to cancel a day prior to the event due to a family emergency. Dr. Victor Davis Hanson stepped in to provide a thought provoking review of current events, both statewide and nationally.

Hanson is a noted historian and social critic whose philosophies are rooted in classicism. An author, contributing editor and professor, Hanson writes a world affairs column syndicated by Tribune Media Services. He is also an American military historian, columnist, former classics professor and scholar of ancient warfare. As a National Review Institute fellow, he has been a commentator on modern warfare and contemporary politics for National Review and other media outlets. He was a professor of classics at Fresno State, and is currently the Martin and Ilie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson is perhaps best known for his 2001 book, “Carnage and Culture.” He was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush and is also a raisin grape farmer in Selma.

Roland Fumasi, senior vice president and agricultural economist for Rabobank’s Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory (FAR) group, provided the annual economic report. Fumasi and his team analyze and conduct market research on California agribusiness as well as the North American fresh fruit and produce sectors.

Colusa Farm Show Breakfast

The 16th annual Colusa Farm Show Breakfast was held on Feb. 7. The popular fundraising event supports the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation and the CSU Chico College of Agriculture, for scholarships and other academic needs. This year, more than 400 people attended and more than $115,000 was raised for CALF. This year, approximately 900 people attended and more than $115,000 was raised for CALF.

Breakfast committee members, led by chairman John Schaap (39), demonstrated their leadership skills in securing a replacement for the original keynote speaker who had to cancel a day prior to the event due to a family emergency. Dr. Victor Davis Hanson stepped in to provide a thought provoking review of current events, both statewide and nationally.

Hanson is a noted historian and social critic whose philosophies are rooted in classicism. An author, contributing editor and professor, Hanson writes a world affairs column syndicated by Tribune Media Services. He is also an American military historian, columnist, former classics professor and scholar of ancient warfare. As a National Review Institute fellow, he has been a commentator on modern warfare and contemporary politics for National Review and other media outlets. He was a professor of classics at Fresno State, and is currently the Martin and Ilie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson is perhaps best known for his 2001 book, “Carnage and Culture.” He was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush and is also a raisin grape farmer in Selma.

Roland Fumasi, senior vice president and agricultural economist for Rabobank’s Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory (FAR) group, provided the annual economic report. Fumasi and his team analyze and conduct market research on California agribusiness as well as the North American fresh fruit and produce sectors.

Colusa Farm Show Breakfast
AGRICULTURAL & GOVERNMENT LEADERS RECEPTION

On March 6, the annual Agricultural & Government Leaders Reception was held at the Sutter Club in Sacramento. The important social and networking event brought together California government leaders, agricultural industry leaders, Ag Leadership alumni and current program fellows. The annual event connects CALF to influential decision makers to further the goal of a strong and viable future for California agriculture.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross was in attendance and addressed the group about current ag issues. As part of the event, more than 500 pounds of fresh California produce was donated to the River City Food Bank.

AG LEADERSHIP HAS A “NACK” FOR ALUMNI!

At the board of directors strategic retreat held in November, one of the prime areas of discussion led by alumni board liaison Mike Young (35), related to how the foundation could more efficiently interact with the many energetic Ag Leadership alumni to assist in fulfilling the mission and vision of our organization. There was a clear need articulated for a dedicated staff member to help direct and support day to day efforts by the alumni in connection with recruiting, fundraising and networking. There was agreement that alumni liaison Darlene Din (35) continued to do an outstanding job with the D.C. and California Exchange programs and those efforts needed to continue essentially as is. However, more would be required in the form of an in-house alumni coordinator if we were going to be truly successful.

Therefore, based upon the board recommendation to add such a position, we are pleased to announce the hiring of Amanda (Mandi) Nack as our new alumni coordinator. Mandi, a Salinas resident with lifelong ties to the Central Coast area, began her new role in January. She attended local schools and later lived in Fresno and attended Fresno State. She has work experience in the transportation industry—mainly shipping produce—and owns an event planning company.

“Her background should prove to be a great asset in helping organize the approximately 30 annual events in the 11 statewide regions for the alumni as well as the upcoming all-class reunion in 2019 which will serve as the springboard for the huge Ag Leadership 50th anniversary celebration in 2020,” said CALF President Barry Bedwell (13).

The addition of Mandi to the Ag Leadership team will help strengthen our efforts to “grow leaders who make a difference” and “to serve as a catalyst for a vibrant agricultural community.” Please join us in welcoming Mandi. If you feel so inclined, please do not hesitate to call the office and introduce yourself to her! And as always, thank you for your support of Ag Leadership.

VALLEY WOMEN HONORED WITH COMMON THREADS AWARD

Five women have been selected as the 2018 honorees for the Common Threads Award, which recognizes women from the San Joaquin Valley for their agricultural, philanthropic and community service.

The Common Threads Award recipients for 2018 are Janet Johnson, Madera; Angie Avila, Lemoore; Josephine Giampaoli, Le Grand; Jessie Maggini, Riverdale and Teri Penfold, Kingsburg. These five valley women have strong agricultural backgrounds and are active participants in their communities through philanthropic endeavors and community service.

The honorees were recognized at a special luncheon on March 21 at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Hall. Common Threads is a collaborative effort of CALF, Fresno State’s Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology and the Ag One Foundation. Net proceeds raised from the luncheon support CALF, the Ag One Foundation and charities of the honorees’ choice.
On Feb. 10 the 24 fellows of Class 47 celebrated the completion of their advanced leadership development experience at a commencement ceremony held at Fresno State. Commencement is a time for reflections by the fellows about what they learned during the intensive 17-month program which included studying leadership theory, effective communication, motivation, critical and strategic thinking, change management, emotional intelligence and complex social and cultural issues. Class 47’s seminars were delivered by four partner universities—Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Fresno State and UC Davis. To reach their commencement, the fellows participated in more than 50 seminar days, including an 8-day national travel seminar to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore and a 15-day international travel seminar to Morocco, Gibraltar and Spain.

The program began with opening remarks from Jenny Lester Moffitt, who spoke about how the group of 24 strangers had grown close through the course of the program by sticking together during important milestones.

“Together we have faced highs and lows,” said Moffitt. “Together we have supported classmates battling cancer, celebrated two weddings, the birth of four babies and one more on the way. Together we are family.”

Class 47 fellow Darrin Monteiro introduced Fresno State President Joseph Castro, who spoke about the long-standing relationship between Ag Leadership and the university.

“Fresno State has been a very proud partner in this program,” said Castro. “We are proud to have helped to produce over 1,300 alumni of this prestigious program and we are proud to be so deeply involved in Ag Leadership.”

Castro continued by congratulating the class and emphasizing the importance of the program.

“I congratulate each and every one of the class members on sharpening their leadership skills and broadening their horizons,” said Castro. “I commend you for making that personal investment in yourself and the long-term viability of California agriculture. Thank you for being here and congratulations and best wishes to each of our graduates.”

CALF President Barry Bedwell (13) welcomed the group of Ag Leadership supporters and began by thanking the families of the graduating fellows for their support.
“ON BEHALF OF THE FOUNDATION’S BOARD AND ALL ALUMNI OF AG LEADERSHIP, WE OFFER OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS 47 FELLOWS FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT.”

-CALF Board Chairman Jeff Elder (35)
“Thank you to everyone here today—especially the families of Class 47,” said Bedwell. “I commend all of the family members who have contributed to the success of Class 47.”

Bedwell also spoke about how the fellows now join a group of alumni who are influential leaders and active volunteers in the agriculture industry and other areas.

“During the 17 months of the program you’ve been given lots of tools,” said Bedwell. “How you use those tools is up to you. You have to take these lessons with you as you begin your leadership journey. You are now part of the bigger community of Ag Leadership alumni for the benefit of California agriculture. This is not the end—this is just the beginning of your leadership journey.”

California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross was also in attendance and addressed the group about how they can help shape the future of California agriculture.

“Ag Leadership is about building relationships,” said Ross. “If we want to strengthen ag, we must be builders of bridges. You have it in you to build those bridges because you came to the California Ag Leadership Program. You have it in you to be bridge builders to help all Californians—all 40 million of them. You have the capacity to build policies and help people support and understand so that we can continue the work of California agriculture.”

Ross added how crucial it is for fellows to have the encouragement of their employers during their Ag Leadership experience.

“I want to acknowledge how important it is for employers to support Ag Leadership,” said Ross. “Thank you to all of the employers who empower their employees because they know how important it is to support these individuals.”

Ross also congratulated the class on their recent accomplishment and encouraged them to use the lessons they learned for the good of the ag industry.

“Today is about you, Class 47—I am so proud of all of you,” said Ross. “You have been blessed with a very special opportunity and I know you will return it 1,000 fold.”

The program continued with a message from the foundation’s Director of Education Dr. Michael Thomas, who challenged the class to think about what they learned during the program.

“We have focused on our identities,” said Thomas. “As you focus on your identity, I ask you to think about what you were born to be and what you were born to do. Knowledge about who you are is very important. When you are tempted to go back to your old ways, I want you to remember that you were born to be leaders.”

Following Dr. Thomas’ remarks, three of Class 47’s fellows spoke about their personal experiences in the program and the impact Ag Leadership had on their lives.

“The California Agricultural Leadership Program is like going through a personal remodel,” said Chris Drew. “It tears you down and builds you back up. Ag Leadership has pointed me in the right direction. It has been an amazing journey and I feel that I’m on the right path and it has made me a well-rounded person and a person who can make a difference.”
Hans Herkert followed by talking about how Ag Leadership helped him improve his life.

“I am very grateful of this wonderful journey,” said Herkert. “I suffered from tunnel vision and wasn’t looking in the side mirrors. Ag Leadership took us through lots of opportunities that widened my vision. The program helps you to better yourself—we get back from the seminars and realize these things that we learned do apply to work and life.”

Class 47 fellow Jill Scofield spoke about the fear, anxiety and uncertainty of being diagnosed with breast cancer shortly after learning she had been accepted to Class 47.

“There were moments when I seriously questioned if I could continue with Ag Leadership while going through cancer treatment,” said Scofield. “I learned how lucky I was to have my classmates with me during a really difficult chapter of my life. Both experiences would have changed me, but together they created a deeper change that will always be with me.”

After the presentation of certificates, Jenny Lester Moffitt ended the program with closing remarks of thanks and gratitude to the audience of family, friends, employers and Ag Leadership supporters.

“Thank you all for being here today and thank you for celebrating with us,” said Moffitt. “Our journey is far from over. Class 47 is a class of true grit.”

“We are California
We are growth and gratitude
We are the beast and the burden
The toil and the task
We have stood with the ghosts at Gettysburg
And seen their cold breath like mist in the air
We have laughed at the sand in the Sahara
And told truths to shrink the lies
We have learned from the past
And yearn for the future
We have gained knowledge
But seek wisdom
We are humbled
And humiliated
Yet proud and prideful
We have seen death
But have yet to meet
We walk with those who have nothing
And are embarrassed by our possessions
We have taken much
And have more to give
We will reap the seeds we have sown

“WE LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR FUTURE WORK AS ‘LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE’ ON BEHALF OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE.”
- CALF Board Chairman Jeff Elder (35)
The California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (Calf) and the Ag Leadership Alumni Council presented Bob Gray and Dr. Pat Lattore with the prestigious Honorary Fellow Award on Feb. 9 at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District in conjunction with the commencement dinner and reception of the California Agricultural Leadership Program’s Class 47.

The Honorary Fellow Award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated consistent commitment and uncommon excellence in the furtherance of education and leadership in California agriculture. Recipients are also dedicated and longtime supporters of the California Agricultural Leadership Program.

“The selection by the foundation’s board and Alumni Council of Bob and Pat for this award and recognition as Honorary Fellows is absolutely spot-on,” said CALF Board Chairman Jeff Elder (35). “I cannot think of any two more deserving individuals who have meant so much to this foundation and program.”
Dr. Pat Lattore, a former university president, leadership consultant and president of PAL Leadership, LLC, played an important and influential role in the development and delivery of curriculum to numerous Ag Leadership classes. His expertise in building effective teams, increasing personal leadership capacity, facilitating organizational change, individual executive coaching and providing diagnostic and cultural analysis for teams and organizations proved to be an invaluable asset to the program and its participants. His work with individuals and groups used feedback instruments including the Myers/Briggs Type Indicator, 360-degree feedback questionnaires and personal story reflections.

In his distinguished career, Dr. Lattore has served as president of North Park University in Chicago, and assistant vice chancellor at the University of California at Davis. He received his Master of Science in education from Indiana University and his Ph.D. in organizational development from the University of Northern Colorado.

Dr. Lattore has provided coaching and training services to executive teams at IBM, Corel and Schneider International. He worked extensively with Eisenhower Medical Center in the capacity of executive director for leadership development. He was also the faculty director of the leadership program at University of Southern California’s School of Medicine where more than 150 physician leaders pursued a graduate degree.

“For all of us associated with the California Ag Leadership Foundation, we will forever be indebted to Dr. Lattore for the important and influential role he played in the development and delivery of curriculum to numerous Ag Leadership classes,” said then Alumni Council Chair Bill Van Skike (32). “His expertise in building effective teams, increasing personal leadership capacity, facilitating organizational change, individual executive coaching and providing diagnostic and cultural analysis for teams and organizations has proved to be an invaluable asset to the program and its participants. His work with individuals and groups using feedback instruments were undeniably successful and served as a crucial foundation in the refocus of the program’s curriculum.”

Bob Gray was president and CEO of CALF from September 2009 to August 2016. During his tenure, he led a reorganization of staff and faculty, assisted in refocusing curriculum, updated communications, increased participation by alumni and dramatically improved fundraising efforts. Through his work, the foundation and program enjoyed unprecedented success. His leadership and foresight were instrumental in the creation of a strategic plan which produced the mission of “growing leaders who make a difference” with the vision of “California agricultural leaders united as a catalyst for a vibrant industry.”

Born and raised in Yuma, Ariz., he graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.A. in English and philosophy and won a British Marshall Scholarship for post-graduate study at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he received an Honors M.A. in English language and literature.

After Scotland, he worked for several grower-shippers in Arizona and California. He spent 29 years with the Duda Company, ultimately heading the largest subsidiary of the corporation and serving as chief executive officer of Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc.

Gray was a director of the Hartnell College Foundation, chair of the Grower Shippers Association of Central California, chair of the Western Growers Association, chair of the California Celery Research Advisory Board, past member of the California Lettuce Advisory Board, director of the Produce Marketing Association’s (PMA) Foundation for Industry Talent and a member of PMAs retail board.

In 2010 Gray was made an Honorary Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. He was awarded for his 15 years of volunteer service to the Marshall Scholarship Program and for his support of the U.S./U.K. relationship. Also in 2010, Gray was named Alumnus of the Year by the Honors College of the University of Arizona, Tucson.

“What we are most grateful for, of course, is that Bob was the president and CEO of CALF,” said Van Skike. “We thank Bob for being a leader who has made a difference and who will continue to make a difference. We are truly honored to present Mr. Bob Gray with the Ag Leadership Honorary Fellow Award.”
Dr. Allen Christensen’s involvement with the California Ag Leadership Program (CALP) began in 1971 when he was invited to become a campus coordinator by Dr. Frederick E. Beckett, dean of the College of Agriculture at Cal Poly Pomona. At the time, Class 1 was in its second year and Class 2 was in its first year. He spent 12 years as a campus coordinator. His involvement with CALP continued for 13 more years while he served as dean and associate dean of Cal Poly Pomona. During his 25 years of working with CALP, Christensen learned countless leadership lessons—some of which he shared during a recent interview.

As a campus coordinator, he learned about planning ahead, effectively marketing the program to speakers, the power of a thank you note and importantly, he says, building relationships.

“You need to serve others, and it is very helpful if you can do that first as they are then more enthused about helping you,” said Christensen. “It is also helpful if you speak in praise of their contributions to others in the wider community, whether that community be the university or the agricultural community or the at-large community. Be serious about building lasting professional friendships.”

Christensen also noted that it is vital to become a thoughtful student of the subject matter or the issues about which you are educating others.

“I made that a special effort in international affairs especially if they were political hotspots such as the Middle East or the conflict between the United Kingdom and Ireland, or African affairs, etc.,” said Christensen. “I worked to make those presenters personal friends. I think I learned more clearly than ever before that you cannot pound a tortilla so thin that it will not have two sides and some rough edges, and that it is the way it is about many issues and challenges and personalities."

“I THINK I LEARNED MORE CLEARLY THAN EVER BEFORE THAT YOU CANNOT POUND A TORTILLA SO THIN THAT IT WILL NOT HAVE TWO SIDES AND SOME ROUGH EDGES, AND THAT IT IS THE WAY IT IS ABOUT MANY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES AND PERSONALITIES.”

-Dr. Allen Christensen
Listening attentively and keeping a journal are also on Christensen’s list of top leadership lessons learned from CALP.

“It is as essential that you listen just as intently to the small-holder farmer in the developing nation as you do to a cabinet officer in that nation,” said Christensen. “Perhaps the Ag Leadership Program was helpful in sensitizing me to that. Listening intently and making journal entries of those things you consider as significant insights for you personally is valuable. People notice when you care sufficiently to make notes about that which they are saying, especially when you have asked for information or if they have concerns.”

Not only is keeping a journal important, says Christensen, but he suggests occasionally reviewing entries as a valuable tool.

“Periodically, go back and read what you have written,” said Christensen. “I have discovered that many people who serve in leadership roles are journal keepers. I think that process enhances insight and increases accuracy of memory. It does help one to crystalize his or her thinking.”

Another lesson Christensen still relies on today has to do with asking questions.

“Learning to ask insightful, thoughtfully probing and yet inoffensive questions was aided by the Ag Leadership Program,” said Christensen. “It seems to be a studied approach or acquired ability.”

When it comes to the leadership lessons fellows learn during their time in Ag Leadership, Christensen believes that it is important to focus on attributes of character, techniques of leadership and guiding, directing and organizing others toward worthwhile goals.

“I think that integrity is significant,” said Christensen. “How many people in prominent positions are being destroyed because of a lack of integrity? It was John Adams who said, ‘Power always thinks it has a great soul and vast views beyond the comprehension of the weak.’ John Adams also said, ‘Because power corrupts, society’s demands that moral authority and character increase as the importance of the position increases.’”

When asked about the importance of advancing leadership capabilities, Christensen brought up the point that local leaders are an invaluable resource—one that the Ag Leadership Program can help develop.

“Our nation and its families are in serious difficulty,” said Christensen. “The problems we face will more than likely be successfully addressed on a local volunteer effort by leaders in the homes, schools, churches, synagogues and other organizations where local individuals effectively address local problems. Governmental fiat has relatively little impact in addressing the problems of America’s children and youth. At the same time, we need people in positions of influence that can speak and lead out against the problems that are crippling America’s emerging generation.”

For those individuals interested in applying to the program, Christensen suggests first communicating with family members about how responsibilities will be managed during the busy 17-month program.

"‘I HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF REMARKABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH OTHERS IN DIFERING SITUATIONS AND VENUES THROUGHOUT MY LIFE. I TREASURE ALL OF THOSE EXPERIENCES.’

-Dr. Allen Christensen

"Have a serious conversation with your spouse as to the time commitment required and what they are going to do to make certain their marriage prospers and their children are watched over and properly nurtured during the course of the program," said Christensen.

He recommends that once accepted to the program, fellows encourage their partners to also do the reading assignments which are given and to discuss with each other what those lessons may mean for them and their family.

After many years of working with Ag Leadership, Christensen says that the travel experiences he had with the classes gave him a degree of assurance that he could handle other tasks that he was faced with during his career.

“[Ag Leadership] was helpful in overcoming the intimidation barrier that can seemingly surround men and women of station and influence,” said Christensen. “It alerted me to cultural differences. I think I became more effective at asking relevant questions. It stimulated reading and writing well beyond my professional specialty. The travel experiences were especially helpful in that regard. At the insistence of my parents, I began my journal keeping with Class 1 on its trip to western Europe and a journal, in my experience, sharpens powers of observation and analytical thinking.”

It is important to note that although Christensen acknowledges Ag Leadership was a profound part of his life, he also had other experiences during his long career which influenced his thinking. However, it is clear that he attributes many invaluable lessons and skills learned to his years of association with Ag Leadership.

“The Ag Leadership Program was a part of my life, but other opportunities and responsibilities were also ongoing,” said Christensen. “Clearly, it was an important factor but not the only factor that influenced my thinking.”
Spring is in the air! The morning air is crisp and the crops have been pollinated and are beginning their trajectory for growth ending in a bountiful harvest. This is absolutely my favorite time of year. In the spring, our attention turns to another crop, graduates of the program.

Like any good crop, we must first start with the right seed. Farmers constantly evaluate what they have learned over generations to select the best seed that will produce a crop that will bring the highest value in the marketplace. We too must evaluate what we have learned over the generations of the program’s existence and choose the seed that will bring the highest value in the marketplace. Selecting the right seed takes time.

To assist in the seed selection process, we have a resource called “A Guide to Recruiting Program Candidates” which is available on the Ag Leadership website or by contacting the Ag Leadership office. This resource includes guidelines, scouting ideas, recruiting tips and readiness factors. Not only will this help you identify candidates who have the greatest potential, it will also help you, and them, determine the best time to plant.

In 2017 we spent as much time finding candidates for future classes as we did looking for candidates for Class 48. Engaging the candidate early and really getting to know them and also to give them a chance to get to know us better, really does go a long way in identifying the “when” as much as the “who.”

No one likes to get a rejection letter. But the fact remains, the program isn’t right for everyone. That said, rejection letters are also sent to those who we want in the program, but are not ready at the time for various reasons. These are the ones we worked to identify and ask to spend more time with us at regional events, learn and do some things that may increase their viability as a candidate and apply for a future class.

To grow leaders who make a difference requires the right seed and planting it at the correct time to increase our chance to harvest a leadership crop that will bring the highest value in the marketplace. As has been said over and over again, timing is everything.

Speaking of timing, February’s Alumni Council meeting in Clovis was time to harvest the next crop of alumni to lead our organization. Jason Cole (42) and Rachelle Antinetti (42) were both elected to the Alumni Council’s executive committee by a vote of their peers. Jason replaces me—Bill Van Skike (32)—as chairman and Rachelle replaces Deanna van Klaveren (32) as secretary/treasurer. These two have done an amazing job, not only in growing their own regions as directors, but by being very active in Alumni Council meetings and helping the organization grow and prosper. I couldn’t be happier to hand the baton off to this dynamic duo as they lead us into the future.

For Deanna and myself, it has been more than three years since we started this journey. It started with the realignment committee where alumni from around the state met with a consultant in Pasadena multiple times to create a new and vibrant vision and plan for the Alumni Council. Then followed elections for new regional directors and at-large directors. And now, electing new leadership with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to create a vibrant Alumni Council to support the program and California agriculture.

As Deanna and I transition into other alumni activities, I am reminded of the song by the Eagles, “Hotel California.” The song simply states that you can check out, but you can never leave. Both Deanna and I have enjoyed a wonderful journey over the last three years working with dedicated alumni who inspired all of us to make a difference. Thank you all for your time, your talents, your treasures, but most of all your trust and friendship. I’m looking forward to seeing all of you at our 50th anniversary. It will be here before you know it!
“TO GROW LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE REQUIRES THE RIGHT SEED AND PLANTING IT AT THE CORRECT TIME TO INCREASE OUR CHANCE TO HARVEST A LEADERSHIP CROP THAT WILL BRING THE HIGHEST VALUE IN THE MARKETPLACE.”
- Bill Van Skike (32)
RECENT EVENTS

THANK YOU

Region 3 Holiday Mixer
December 5
Manpreet Bains (43)

7th Annual Jim Manassero Fellowship Luncheon
January 10
Ray Franscioni
Laura (29) and Ted Mills

Colusa Farm Show Rabobank Breakfast
February 7
Terry Bressler (30)
Christie Capik
Bill Carriere (27)
Colleen Cecil
Jack Coots (27)
Holly Dawley (38)
Sarah DeForest (39)
Les Heringer (13)
Mark Kimmelshue (28)
Emily Lazzerini
Tom Martin
Sam Nevis (32)
Justin Nunes
John Weiler (22)
Sharowynn Wilson

Region 6 Learning Forum and Recruitment Event
February 8
Jeff Boldt (40)
Hal Collin (14)
Gail Gray (22)
Gayle Holman (46)
Heather Jackson (46)
Nomie Kautz (30)
Stan Kjar Jr. (45)
Heather Mulholland (44)
Salvador Parra (46)
Vernon Peterson (41)
Rick Stark (39)
Rod Stark (29)
Class 47 Reception, Dinner and Honorary Fellows Award Presentation
February 9
Class 48
Jon Reelhorn (38)
Wells Fargo

Class 47 Commencement
February 10
Wells Fargo

Alumni Reception and Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast
February 14 & 15
Bill Adams (32)
Julie Allen (27)
Russ Bassett (16)
Hugh Bello (31)
Fred Berry (20)
Tricia Stever Blattler (34)
Loren Booth (27)
Michael Chrisman (2)
Steve Chrisman (10)
Mandy Critchley (37)
Doug DeGroff (29)
Debbie Hurley (21)
Heather Jackson (46)
Nomie Kautz (30)
Lynn Knudson (20)
Fred Lagomarsino (19)
Soapy Mulholland (25)
Cindy Myers (22)
James Neeley (26)
Richard Nunes (37)
Doug Phillips (40)
John Schaap (39)
Jim Sullins (19)
Raymond Van Beck (37)
Region 3 Alumni Social and Recruiting Event
February 25
Manpreet Bains (43)
Mike Campbell (3)
Louise Ferguson (30)
Mica Heilmann (40)
Doug Hemly (15)
Steve Heringer (9)
Tom Merwin (44)
Jason Peltier (16)
Barbara Smith (30)
Region 4 Alumni Social and Recruiting Event
February 26
Rachelle Antinetti (42)
Theresa Becchetti (35)
Benina Burroughs
Bob Cherenson (29)
Robin Flourney (29)
Foothill 4-H Club
Brad Koehn (47)
Paul Parreira (44)
Matt Toste (41)

Agricultural & Government Leaders Reception
March 6
Manpreet Bains (43)
Noelle Cremer (35)
Mica Heilmann (40)
Denise Moore (46)
Garry Pearson (38)
Deanna van Klaveren (32)
Stephanie Etcheverria Younger (43)
Region 1 Alumni Social and Recruiting Event
March 19
Christine Ivory (41)
Jon Munger (36)
Cherie Stephens
Nicole Montna Van Vleck (26)
John Weiler (22)
Common Threads Fresno Luncheon
March 21
Gary Brunsvik
Carol Chandler
Georgene Diener
Shannon Fast
Jackie Giacomazzi
Alcilda Freitas Gomes
Sadie Hemsath
Emily Lazzerini
Mary Mello
Karen Morais
Karen Musson
Debbie Raven
Kim Rogina (25)
Lorna Roush
Louise Silacci
Rod Stark (29)
Annie Stuhr
Helen Sullivan
Cristel Tufenkjian
Mai Vang
Marsha Vucovich
Betty Young
Greg Wegis (39) was appointed as the California chair of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. State committees are selected by the secretary, serve at the pleasure of the secretary and are responsible for carrying out FSA’s farm programs within delegated authorities.

Multiple Classes

Jason Peltier (16) and Danny Merkley (19) were featured in a December 20 Ag Alert article titled “Project backers seek investments from water bond” about California water projects.

Tom (18) and Heather (44) Mulholland were featured in a December 2017 Sunkist video titled “The Mulhollands, Family, Four Generations.” The Mulhollands, an Orange Cove based citrus grower-shipper primarily of Mandarins, are featured in the multimedia storytelling project dedicated to sharing the rich heritage of Sunkist growers.

Paul Wenger (17) was featured in a Dec. 20, 2017 Ag Alert article titled “Former CFBF president earns praise at retirement.” Wenger was acknowledged on the floor of the House of Representatives for his “passion and dedication” on behalf of California agriculture.

Karm Bains (40) was the feature of a January 24 NBC News story titled “California’s ‘Peach King’ helped build a ‘foundation for others to grow on.'” In the video, Bains explains how his father, Didar Singh Bains, became known as the ‘Peach King,’ and how the legacy his father created lives on through the Sikh community in Yuba City and beyond.

Stuart Mast (41) was elected president of the Calaveras Wine Alliance, a marketing and promotional organization representing 30 wineries and supporting vineyards of Calaveras County.

Jason Cole (42) was featured in a Dec. 20, 2017 Ag Alert article titled “Farmers look to rebuild after wildfire” about the impacts of the Thomas Fire in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

Eric Genzoli (43) was featured in a Feb. 20, 2018 Turlock Journal article titled “Freezing weather hinders almond pollination” about how February’s freezing temperatures had bee colonies hungrily in their hives as pollination season began, leaving some farmers concerned.

Sarah Hovinga (46) wrote a blog post for Bayer Crop Science titled “The ‘bugs’ we depend on” about how “good” bacteria far outnumber the “bad.”

Denise Moore (46) was featured in a Jan. 2, 2018 Auburn Journal article titled “Fowler Nurseries 105 years and still growing strong” about the longevity of her family’s Newcastle company.

Casey Creamer (47) was hired in February as executive vice president of California Citrus Mutual in Exeter.

Jennifer Lester Moffitt (47) was appointed undersecretary at the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), where she has served as deputy secretary since 2015. Moffitt was sworn in as the agency’s undersecretary on Feb. 20, 2018 by CDFA secretary Karen Ross.

Joe Struckmeyer (15) Dec. 12, 1951 - Oct. 10, 2017 Joe passed away after fighting cancer for more than a year. Joe’s first love was his family. His wife of 39 years Julie, his son and farming partner Alex, his daughter Molly and their children Annalise and Henry. He was known to many of his close friends as Papa Joe and to his grandchildren as Papa. Joe’s other loves were many but included the San Francisco Giants, farming, friends and those he championed, art, music, books, golf, talking to friends and strangers and talking about the issues. Joe graduated from UC Davis in liberal arts and was a fifth generation farmer in Colusa County.
DONOR SUPPORT JANUARY 1, 2018 - MARCH 31, 2018

$121,250
Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast

$55,000
Driscoll’s, Inc.
The McClarty Family Foundation

$50,000
Boswell Family Foundation
California Cotton Alliance

$25,000
Western Growers

$20,000
E & J Gallo Winery
Wegis & Young Property Management, LLC

$10,000
Farm Credit: American AgCredit, CoBank, Farm Credit West, Fresno Madera Farm Credit
John and Sheila Lake

$7,500
Union Bank Foundation

$5,000
D’Arrigo Bros. Co., of California

$2,500
Costa Family Farms

$2,100
Paul and Yvonne Murai

$2,000
Jeana Hultquist

$1,233
Todd Snider

$1,000
California Fresh Fruit Association
Mike Mendes

$930
Jensen Devaurs

$500
David J. Elliot & Son

William Jones
Chris and Christy McKenzie
Kim Rogina

$400
Bob and Anne Atkins

$250
FL Woody Barnes
Mike and Barbara Chrisman
Jeff Colombini (Lodi Farming)
Fred Rau Dairy, Inc.
Paul and Connie Sousa

$200
On Target Applications
Spencer Cattle Company

$190
Ted and Laura Mills

$160
Karen Caplan

$100
Walter and Robyn Fickewirth
Lynn and Craig Knudson

Margaret Marrindale
John and Christine Schaap
Chad Temel

$75
Jason and Jacqueline Pucheu

$46
Melissa Heinrich

$43.14
Amazon Smile

$35
Darlene Din

In Honor of Caroline Berry (14)
Megan Berry Swadell: $150

In Memory of Jane Carter
William and Margaret Wallace: $200
Stephen and Carmella Renton: $100
John Salmonson: $100
Suellen Witham: $100

In Kind
TMD Creative: $1,750
HORIZONS MAGAZINE
is published by the
California Agricultural
Leadership Foundation for
alumni, donors, supporters
and friends.
Phone: 831-585-1030
www.agleaders.org

Whether you are investing in future leaders or in the long-term success of your business; quality, commitment, and a forward thinking approach make all the difference. California is our home so we understand the unique challenges that face your business. As an industry leader, we combine depth of expertise with a commitment to achieve the highest level of service and outcomes for you and your business. We have a number of coverages that may be customized to meet your farm, ranch, or agribusiness needs. We look forward to sharing TheZenith Difference with you.

LEARN MORE AT THEZENITH.COM®