



CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

BY MEREDITH RITCHIE

For many years, the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation has preached its mission of “we grow leaders who make a difference.” From 2009 to 2016, we were extremely fortunate to have a board chair and president/CEO who practiced what we preach and set an extraordinary example of leadership.

When they began their tenure in 2009, there were many unique and challenging issues to tackle. The foundation needed stability, which it had not had in many years. It needed effective leadership and management. It needed financial support. Loren and Bob set the tone for excellence and positive transformation in order to strengthen the foundation and the program.

Together – and with the dedicated involvement of board members, core faculty and staff – Loren and Bob spearheaded numerous projects to renew CALF: strategic planning, communications overhaul, five-year program review, fundraising challenges and capital planning.

With purpose and personal commitment, they pushed, encouraged, motivated and guided during these projects. Loren’s overwhelming financial generosity was crucial in helping sustain Ag Leadership.

Loren’s goals were strategic, but also very personal. A Class 27 graduate and longtime

CALF board member, she continually shared her feelings about how the program changed her life in powerful ways and taught her many life and leadership lessons. Loren was always grateful and intensely proud to be a part of Ag Leadership. She wanted the program to endure and to continue developing leaders for the agricultural industry.

In 2013, Deanna van Klaveren (32) wrote, “Loren is the epitome of time, talent and treasure. She has given her treasure in order for the foundation to keep its doors open as we restructured and aligned our strategic plan and as we kick off our capital campaign and continue to give opportunities to our fellows and alumni. And then she gave her time: traveling to countless meetings, doing one-on-one visits, setting up events, leading the board of directors, showing up to foundation gatherings, giving her support, sharing the foundation’s vision, and being the head cheerleader for CALF. And if that wasn’t enough, she shared her talent: her leadership, her enthusiasm (which is contagious) and her grace.”

Bob had a list of ambitious goals and aspirations for Ag Leadership when he came on board: to maintain and enhance program excellence, with respect to relevant content and the changing methods of delivering higher education; re-engage and reconnect with alumni; work toward financial stability for the

foundation; and deliver services as effectively and efficiently as possible.

“After a distinguished 29-year career working for a major produce company, Bob transitioned to successfully lead our nonprofit educational organization,” said Jeff Elder (35). “He was instrumental in steering the foundation with vision, wisdom, business acumen and patience. He was a non-alumnus who cared about and believed in Ag Leadership and wanted it to succeed for future generations. He definitely accomplished the goals he established seven years ago.”

We don’t want to think about the path that the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation would have taken without Loren and Bob. We appreciate that *they never gave up on Ag Leadership*. They made a transformative and positive impact that will always be remembered.

With great respect and admiration, we say farewell. We celebrate their legacy of leadership and thank them for all that they have done to preserve the excellence and value of Ag Leadership for future fellows and the agricultural industry. The foundation and program are better because of you.

Thank you for keeping the dream of our founders alive!