

OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT FOR RICHARD R. SMITH MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP FUND

BY LIZA TEIXEIRA ROBERTSON

Richard Smith (7), passed away in late December, 2015 after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. Smith, known for his graciousness and friendship, was a leader and advocate for California's wine industry.

After his passing, fellow Ag Leadership alumni, Kurt Gollnick (16) and Steve McIntyre (21), worked with the foundation to establish The Richard R. Smith Memorial Fellowship Fund to remember Smith's legacy of leadership in the agriculture industry.

"I met Rich in 1981 and he was always such a gracious person and always made himself available to people in the business," said Gollnick. "His leadership and friendship were highly valued and we wanted to do something to keep Rich's star burning bright."

For Gollnick, establishing the fund was a way to create a memorial for his friend.

"Rich was an inspiration to our whole community—not just the wine industry—but he was instrumental to the ag industry in the Salinas Valley," said Gollnick. "I'm grateful to do something small in his memory. He was a modest guy and when he left us, he didn't ask for anything—so we'll honor him, whether he likes it or not."

For McIntyre, establishing the fund was a way to honor Smith's legacy and to make sure the program can continue well into the future.

"We wanted to do this to help ensure that Ag Leadership continues to prosper and to help ensure its legacy because we knew how important it was to Rich and how important it is to us—and hopefully to my children when they're older and to my employees," said McIntyre.

After graduating from Ag Leadership, Smith encouraged his friends and colleagues to apply to the program.

"I remember when I was considering the program, Rich was an instrumental mentor to me and he really pushed me to apply at a time when I thought I was too busy," said

McIntyre. "It worked out and I thanked him for encouraging me to do that."

Since Smith's passing, \$12,000 (as of mid-March) has been donated to Ag Leadership in his name—a testament to his impact in the agriculture industry over several decades.

"I'm not surprised at what has been donated, given his stature and the fact that he never met a person he couldn't talk to," said McIntyre. "He always had something good to say—people liked to talk to him and he was genuine and that's unique in a lot of ways and I think that quality really endeared people to his memory."

Smith served in many leadership roles throughout his life as an advocate who was involved in making a difference in his community and in the agriculture industry.

"He was a great mentor, and he was still so vibrant and so involved—especially in regards to water—and right now, we don't have anyone's shoulders to really stand on because he was so instrumental," said McIntyre. "Some of us are trying to step up to the plate and hope his spirit is still mentoring us. We'll miss him."

Smith's family is grateful for the support and kindness of the agriculture community in the wake of his passing.

"First and foremost, it's an honor to have Ag Leadership setup the memorial foundation—the fact that it was established was an honor because he really believed in Ag Leadership," said Rich's son, Jason Smith. "The fund is a way for friends and the community to say thank you and to give back to a great program and to express their appreciation."

Jason, who was nine years old when Smith went on the international seminar to Russia, still recalls the impact the trip and the program had on his father.

"I still remember when he was gone on his trip to Russia—at my age, I didn't understand what he was doing—but I know that it had a big impact on him," said Jason. "Something that was important to him was education and he talked



"HE VALUED AG LEADERSHIP AND HE WAS TRULY IMPRESSED WITH IT—IT IS A FABULOUS PROGRAM AND HE WOULD BE SO HONORED THAT PEOPLE ARE CONTRIBUTING TO HIS MEMORIAL FUND."

- RICH'S WIFE, CLAUDIA SMITH

about how the program broadened people's horizons and helped get them out of their comfort zone."

The impact of the program on Smith's life continued well after he returned from the international seminar.

"Through the program, he had a lot of leadership and eye-opening experiences—Ag Leadership was a good stepping stone to building our company from zero to 3,200 acres of wine grapes over 40 plus years," said Jason.

McIntyre encourages anyone who was influenced by Smith to join him in honoring his friend's memory and legacy.

"Please join us by contributing in remembrance of Rich and the entire Smith family and their tireless contribution to California agriculture," said McIntyre.

To make a donation to the California Ag Leadership Foundation through The Richard R. Smith Memorial Fellowship Fund, visit www.agleaders.org or call (831) 585-1030.

"RICH WAS AN INSPIRATION TO OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY—NOT JUST THE WINE INDUSTRY—BUT HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL TO THE AG INDUSTRY IN THE SALINAS VALLEY."

- KURT GOLLNICK