

# Wedgworth Leadership Institute Alumni Newsletter

Third Quarter 2008

## WLI Alumni Annual Meeting A Rousing Success

The reviews are in and this year's annual alumni meeting was outstanding! From the silent auction, to the incredible speakers, to the tribute to Mason Smoak and the awards ceremony, this meeting was one of the best this association has ever held. With well over 100+ alumni in attendance, the weekend was filled with something for everyone—education, networking and a chance to enjoy being a part of such a great organization.

Thanks again to our 2008 Annual Meeting Sponsors:

### **Gold- \$1,500**

Douglass Fertilizer / The Anderson's  
Farm Credit Associations of Florida

### **Silver- \$1,000**

Dean Mead  
Florida Tomato Exchange  
Wheeler and Traviss, P.A.  
Prudential Agricultural Investments

### **Bronze- \$500**

A. Duda & Sons, Inc.  
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association  
Harris Moran Seed Company  
Pavese Law Firm  
Driscoll Strawberry Associates

### **Contributor- \$250**

BASF Corporation  
JJ & Jennifer Grow  
NGM Productions  
Smoak Groves, Inc.  
TKM/Bengard Farms, LLC

## WLI Alumni Honor Own With Annual Awards

Eugene Trotter Leadership Award: *John Hoblick*  
Presented by: Gale and Dottie Trotter



Farm Credit Leadership Award: *Teena Borek*  
Presented by Lyn Cacella-DuBois



WLI Honorary Director Award: *Danny Raulerson*  
Presented by Hannah Carter



WLI Lifetime Achievement Award: *Mason Smoak*  
Presented by David & Nancy McDonald to Tracee Smoak



2009 Annual Meeting Announcement

**WEDGORTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
AND  
WLIANR CLASS VII GRADUATION**

**AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>, 7<sup>TH</sup> AND 8<sup>TH</sup>**

**INNISBROOK RESORT  
AND GOLF CLUB  
PALM HARBOR, FLORIDA**

<http://www.innisbrookgolfresort.com/maps-directions/index.cfm>

Please schedule your calendars now for the **August 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009** Wedgworth Alumni Association Annual Conference and Class VII Graduation, to be held at the **Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida.**

Innisbrook has an amazing selection of activities for children; adults; and families, both on-property and nearby. Recent facility renovations include a new Spa opening in January 2009, a new urban village with deli and restaurant opening in Spring, 2009.

With four restaurants; golf courses; tennis courts; putting green; miniature golf; Spa; nearby beach and shopping excursions; nature trails; etc., you will have a wide range of choices. The weekend's focal point for the families will certainly be the "Lochness Pool," complete with slides, beach areas, hot tub, snack bar, etc.

The conference and meeting facilities have all been recently renovated and are first class. Individual rooms and suites are in the process of being updated and the grounds are beautiful.

**RATES**

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	08/06/09	08/07/2009	08/08/2009
Rate	\$115.00	\$115.00	\$115.00

All rates are quoted exclusive of applicable state and local taxes, currently at 12%, if applicable. Room rates are based on single or double occupancy. Any additional occupants 18 years of age and older will be subject to an additional charge of \$20.00 per person, per night, plus applicable taxes. **Group rates will be offered 3 days pre and post scheduled event dates.**

**RESORT SERVICE CHARGE – Inclusive in group rate**

The Resort Charge includes self parking; use of the fitness center; in-room internet access; on property shuttle transportation; in-room newspaper delivery; local

and toll free phone calls; in-room coffee service; use of the nature preserve; use of the miniature golf, volleyball, basketball, and six swimming pools; scheduled beach shuttle transportation; and 24-hour gated security.

### **CUT-OFF DATE**

The "cut-off date" for accepting reservations into this guest room block is **07/15/09**. Reservation requests received after **5:00 p.m.** local time at the Resort on the cut-off date will be accepted at Resort's prevailing rate, based on availability

We are looking forward to seeing each of you **August 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009** at the **Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida!**

### **2009 WLI Alumni Board of Directors Elected**



The WLI Alumni Association's Board of Directors are:

Co-President: Nancy McDonald

Co-President: David McDonald

Vice-President & President-Elect: Jeff Lee

Past President- Wes Wheeler

Secretary: Stephen Basore

Region I: Chris Lance  
Region II: Roger Scarborough  
Region III: Bernie Hamel  
Region IV: Stacy Mello  
Region V: Pam Fentress  
Region VI: Sylvia Gordon

### **Survey Update**

Thank you to all who have completed the Opinion Leader Survey being conducted by Christy Windham. This is another chance to help further the research within the area of agricultural leadership and I appreciate your willingness to help with this survey!

### **Class VII – Update**

Class VII headed to Washington, D.C., Iowa & Illinois on their national trip October 6<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>. To read about their adventures, check out the WLIANR Class VII blog, the blog address is: <http://wlianr.blogspot.com>. We will be posting updates and pictures from along our route.

For those of you who attended the annual meeting, you learned about social networking and tools to keep people connected. Even if you weren't at the meeting, you can still utilize these tools. There are now over 20 WLI alumni members who belong to the WLI Alumni Group on Facebook. To join Facebook, go to <http://www.facebook.com>.

### **Florida Farm Bureau establishes Mason Smoak Memorial Scholarship**

Florida Farm Bureau Federation has established a scholarship in memory of Mason G. Smoak, a Lake Placid

citrus and cattle producer who died in a plane crash near Lake Placid June 20. The Mason G. Smoak Emerging Leader Award will benefit a participant in the University of Florida/IFAS Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

“Mason was a leader in the agriculture industry,” said John L. Hoblick, president of the Florida Farm Bureau Federation. “He was past president of Highlands County Farm Bureau and of the Florida Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Program. He was a strong supporter of the Wedgworth Institute, of which he was an alumnus.”

The Florida Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors will select recipients based on the recommendation of the president, in collaboration with Farm Bureau staff and the executive director of the Wedgworth Institute. The scholarship will be fully funded by Farm Bureau; individuals who wish to honor Mason Smoak are asked to donate to a separate fund, the Mason G. Smoak Memorial Fund at Heartland National Bank, 600 U.S. 27 North, Lake Placid, FL 33852.

“By establishing this scholarship, we will continue to honor Mason’s memory while supporting the Wedgworth Institute,” Hoblick said. Wedgworth fellows are mid-career professionals who participate in a two-year course of instruction and experiences, including an international tour. The Institute’s mission is to develop and refine the leadership capabilities of young leaders.

Smoak began his role in the family business of citrus and cattle following his graduation from the University of Florida. He managed the business with other family members while assuming leadership roles in the agriculture industry. In addition to his involvement in Farm Bureau, he was president of Highlands County Citrus Growers Association and chairman of the Heartland Agriculture Coalition. In

2005, Mason was awarded the Horizon Award from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Florida for his contributions to agriculture.

The Florida Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general-interest agricultural association with about 140,000 member-families statewide. Headquartered in Gainesville, it is an independent, nonprofit agricultural organization.

### **Mr. and Mrs. George Wedgworth to be honored as Honorary UF Alumni**

Join us in honoring Mr. and Mrs. George Wedgworth as they are honored for their contributions to UF and Florida agriculture at TailGATOR, Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. The event will begin 3 hours prior to kickoff and be held at the O'Connell Center. Registration can be found at: <http://cals.ifas.ufl.edu/tailgator/alumni.shtml>

### **2009 CALS Career Expo**

If you are interested in recruiting interns and/or full-time employees from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the 2009 CALS Career Expo is scheduled for Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. Additional information and employer registration are available at [www.cals.ufl.edu/careerexpo](http://www.cals.ufl.edu/careerexpo).

### **International Leadership Alumni Conference**

**S A V E T H E D A T E !**

*August 19-22, 2009*

We invite you to join us for the **2009 International Leadership Alumni Conference, "Leaders at the Confluence of Change"** located in the beautiful Tri-Cities area of Washington State. The 2009 ILAC is an opportunity to network with fellow leadership groups and to experience Washington State's natural resource industries, including our growing wine and energy industries.

**Topics of Interest:**

- Columbia River system and it's relationship to natural resources, industry and culture.
- Washington State's growing Viticulture industry & Wine Tours
- Washington State Agricultural Exports & the Wheat Industry
- Wind, Hydro, & Nuclear Energy

The conference is being hosted by the Washington State AgForestry Alumni Council. More detailed information on this event will be available later this fall.

### **Alumni In The News**

#### ***Bryan Cooksey Class III wins Gamma Sigma Delta Distinguished Service Award***

Gamma Sigma Delta, the agricultural honor society of the University of Florida, Gainesville, recognized Bryan Cooksey III, class 3, and three others for their years of service at an awards dinner this past spring. He received the Distinguished Service to Agriculture award. Bryan is the president of McCall Service, Inc. a family owned pest management and fuel oil company. He is active in the Pest Management Association in Orlando.

#### ***Sandy Stein, Class VII Graces September Cover of Ornamental Outlook***

Sandy Stein, Class VII, Has his photo on the September 2008 cover of Ornamental Outlook. To see the cover and the accompanying article please go to <http://www.ornamentaloutlook.com/>

#### ***Bernie Hamel, Class IV Elected President of the Florida Seed Association***

The Florida Seed Association elected Bernie Hamel, Class IV as its President for the 2008 2009 term during their annual meeting held this summer in Key Largo, FL. Hamel succeeds Bob Conrad, Class IV who remains on the FSA Board as Immediate Past President.

#### ***Greg Davis, Class VII New CEO for Speedling, Inc.***

Speedling, Inc. one of the largest transplant greenhouses in the U.S. has named Greg Davis, Class VII as its CEO. Davis a native of

Alachua, Florida assumed his duties in June. Check out his profile in the September Issue of Greenhouse Grower Magazine.

***Mark Greeff, Class VI has been appointed Vice-President & General Manager, Eastern Region for Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc.***

### **FRANK JOHNS RECEIVES FFVA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

MAITLAND, Fla. (Sept. 25, 2008) – The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association honored Frank Johns, Jr., a leader in the state's agriculture industry, with its Distinguished Service Award Sept. 23.

"For 35 years Frank has worked in the agriculture industry and epitomizes the term 'gentleman farmer,'" said FFVA Chairman Jay Taylor. "He has shared his experience and wisdom broadly in the industry through his service in many leadership positions. This man truly leads with character and integrity – in his profession and in his community."

A fourth-generation farmer, Johns briefly worked at his family's operation after attending the University of Florida. Soon thereafter he joined Tri-County Produce, growing potatoes and cabbage. In 1976 he and his wife, Polly, founded Tater Farms in the Hastings area. Formerly one of the larger producers of fresh cabbage and chipping potatoes in the area, Tater Farms shifted its focus to chipping potatoes and sod about four years ago.

Organizations benefitting from Johns' service include the Hastings Drainage District, where he served for 14 years including a stint as chairman; the National Potato Promotion Board, on which he served for six years; the Community Bible Church of St. Augustine, as a deacon and now chair of deacons; and of course, FFVA, as a member of the board of directors for 14 years and the executive committee for 11 of those years. He served with distinction as FFVA chairman from 2002-2004.

The award was announced at FFVA's 65th Annual Convention in Naples.

"I have a great deal of respect and regard for Frank," said former FFVA Chairman Hugh English. "He's a modest man of extraordinary talent who uses it unselfishly for others. He is most deserving of this award."

Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association is an agricultural trade organization representing Florida's producers of fruits, vegetables and other crops

### **Mason Smoak to be Inducted into the Florida Ag Hall of Fame**

On February 10, 2009, Mason Smoak will be honored for his contributions to Florida agriculture by being inducted into the Florida Ag Hall of Fame. Ticket information will be available in upcoming newsletters.

### **Alumni Potpourri**

*Jeff and Melissa Lee, Class VI, welcomed Cooper Davis Lee to their family on August 15, 2008. Cooper weighed in at 6 lbs, 13 ounces and was 19 inches.*

*Ila Levin, Class VI, married Gary Locke on October 18, 2008. She enjoyed her national seminar experience so much, they returned to California for their honeymoon!*