

California Avocado Society 1979 Award of Honor

Everett M. Johnston



Everett M. Johnston's outstanding meritorious service in behalf of the avocado industry was recognized by the California Avocado Society by its 1979 Award of Honor.

Mr. Johnston has been prominently involved in the avocado industry for more than fifty years, both as a grower and as a marketer. He served as a director of this Society for the 1972-75 term.

Born in Illinois, he was reared on a wheat farm in Oklahoma. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, young Mr. Johnston first entered his family's ice business, but soon heard the siren song of California. Arriving in this state in 1926, he sold real estate in Encinitas. In due course, he bought ten acres in Encinitas for himself, and eventually became an avocado grower.

Seeing opportunity in the commercial aspects of the avocado industry, Mr. Johnston began packing avocados (in Encinitas) in 1934. A year later, he built a packing house in the avocado-growing community of Vista, California; and began marketing avocados under the trade name, "King Salad" — with the unflagging encouragement and invaluable assistance of his wife, Virginia. The business prospered and became an important entity in the California avocado industry. The Johnstons sold their business a few years ago, but have maintained their keen interest and personal involvement in the industry.

Everett Johnston was a factor in the creation of the California Avocado Development Organization (CADO), a trade association of avocado handlers, which had as its goal a voluntary industry-supported program of advertising and market promotion. The effort

was unsuccessful, but lead to the issuance of a state marketing order in .response to the wishes of growers and packers. CADO continued, with other objectives and with Mr. Johnston as its early president.

Mr. Johnston held a seat on the advisory board established by the marketing order, and eventually became its chairman. Promotional functions of the advisory board were absorbed by the California Avocado Commission, following enactment of enabling legislation by the California Legislature — an activity in which Mr. Johnston played a prominent role. He became the Commission's first chairman, serving two terms. He retired from the advisory board and the Commission late in 1979 — an event marked by ceremonies attended by scores of friends and well wishers on December 20. Society President Don Munro presented to Mr. Johnston, on this occasion, his Award of Honor.