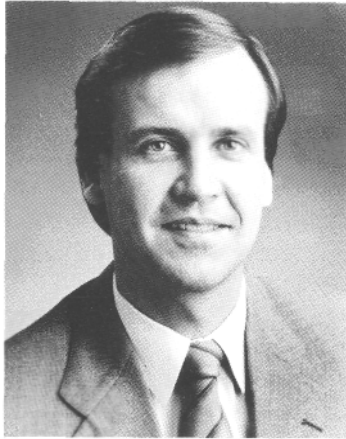


## Awards of Honor

Presented by Director Emeritus W. H. Brokaw



MARK AFFLECK



JOHN S. (JACK)  
SHEPHERD

**Hank Brokaw:** It is my job to present a couple of awards. These are the highest awards that are given by the California Avocado Society. I was trying to think of some kind of an image which would give me an idea of what these awards are—I mean who gets these awards; and so I was thinking and thinking, and I thought of a tent as a "protector," something that was sheltering this industry, and I figured that these awards are really afforded for the poles of that tent. Now I know that this is not a new idea—this is associated with things like "pillars of the community" and "towers of strength." I'm more of pole guy, so I think of these as poles. The people that I'm going to present today are certainly center pole people, as in a tent when you have the center pole, it's the one that everything else is geared to.. .and you can kind of miss one of those peripheral poles, I guess; but you can't miss one of these big poles. Both of these people that are going to receive awards today are "center pole" type of people.

The first man. .I'm going to do him a disservice because I hope that you recognize the sort of modified Kennedy chop. It goes something like this: "Now, we have this marketing plan today...we know our conditions, we know what our resources are, we know what our goals are and what the market is out there; and our job is to lay out these goals, identify these goals, and then we're going to figure out what strategies we have to adopt in order to take our resources and get to these goals."

And there you've got the picture—because everybody knows who I'm talking about: Mark Affleck.

This is an award, I think, which is long overdue, because Mark has been among us now

for a number of years, and he has been truly in a pivotal part of this industry; and I think he has performed marvelously. For one thing, I've been in meetings with Mark when he's describing the strategies toward these goals. One of the things that always comes up in these meetings is, "It's not working. We need to abandon this or that." And it goes on for a while and the arguments go, and then pretty soon they call on Mark, and Mark says, "I'm glad you said that; that's a very good suggestion. We will take that into account." And there goes Mark again. Now, we've got to get from here to there, and that's the way it goes. Truly he's the most organized man that I've ever had the pleasure of working with, and he's extremely intelligent and does a wonderful job for our industry.

You also might notice that he's quick of foot. Those people who've been around for a long time might remember 1981 and '82. When that happened—that was a huge crop year, in case you don't remember—a head rolled. Then came 1987 and '88. You may remember that. And then a head rolled. And then came 1992 and '93. And we haven't heard any heads roll. I think that in itself is quite an accomplishment.

It's amazing to me how forward looking Mark has been, and how optimistic he's been through the difficult times. And I know we've talked to each other...just said little things to each other...when things are difficult. And they're difficult for everybody from time to time. But through all this, Mark has persisted, and he's done so in a very fine way. That's one of the things I really appreciate about him is his optimism and his persistence.

There's another thing that I've appreciated about him a lot, and that is how he has taken a broader view of the industry. It's not just the marketing. Now, there are people who have argued that, "You're only supposed to market, Mark; you're not supposed to be concerned about these other things. We're paying you to sell the fruit." But Mark has a broader vision than that, and he knows that if we do not protect ourselves as far as outside pests are concerned, as far as future relations with the rest of the world are concerned, we're going to be in a big difficulty; and as far as the government is concerned, it's under his leadership that that protective tent has been held up over us.

And Mark, it's just my *great* pleasure to present you with the Award of Honor of the California Avocado Society. (Applause.)

Mark Affleck: I have to say something. How many minutes do I have?

Well, this is the biggest shock I've ever had in my professional career. I have to tell you, I should have been tipped off when my office said you need to take your video camera to the California Avocado Society annual meeting, and I didn't know why, and now I know why as it shines its red light at me.

I really appreciate from the bottom of my heart this award for me. I'm stunned. I can't really think of what to say, but I will thank you for the opportunity to work on your behalf. It has been an honor, and I truly appreciate what you've all done for me. I entered into my career with one simple thought, that I would create things and build things and not work at a job; and I would try to find the biggest "canvas" I could to paint on and try to create something special, so I've always looked at my career as something beyond a job, and it's been wonderful because you've given me such a huge canvas to paint on. So, I really appreciate that; and I would like to thank a few people who've been

instrumental in my success here. First, I'd like to acknowledge Hank and Jack Shepherd for their inspiration and what they've done for me. I'd also like to acknowledge a couple of chairmen that I worked under and one that I'm working under now: Bob Tobias back here who I became very close with, and Al Guilin who I'm working with now, getting to know, and having a great relationship with. Those two gentlemen have been very important to me. And I would also like to thank the person that had enough confidence in me to hand me the "brush" to paint: and that's George Farrelly.

Thank you very much.

**Hank Brokaw:** Now we've taken care of the *youthful* part of our... (laughter), now we're going to go to a different part, and this is the very highest highest honor that the Society can give—it's called a Special Award of Merit. They're rare. And it's another "center pole." But it's more weathered, maybe...(laughter). In every industry, in every discipline, every institution, there does come along a person who represents and symbolizes that institution, that discipline, that industry, and he's generally a person so absorbed in his subject and so energetically contributory to it and unmaterially enmeshed in it that he or she seems to be an integral part of it, and we're honoring such a person today—a person who's going to receive this award of honor for the second time in forty-one years.

You already know who he is: he's graced our industry, and I refer to "Mr. Avocado" himself, Jack Shepherd (applause).

I have a lot of recollections of Jack Shepherd. I may not be the most youthful person in this room, but I was pretty young when Jack was still within his prime (laughter). You know, in the late '60s and early '70s, I was just gaining a little confidence in this organization and starting to go to meetings and paying attention to them, and when I saw Jack Shepherd for the first time, I thought him to be marvelously articulate—kind of an acerbic perfectionist—who taught and carried along most of the members of the industry in the meetings and the field talks. He served faithfully, indefatigably in Calavo, and he rose to the top of that particular hierarchy to be the president.

One of my favorite stories about Jack is one that he told on himself, because he has been one of the persons who has really pushed nutrition in avocados. He's been the inspiration behind that whole thing. Jack, quite a few years ago, had an unfortunate heart attack, and it's kind of like Jack—Jack's never had another one. (Laughter.) He was a disciple—Jack's not a disciple of many people, by the way—but he was a disciple of Norman Cousins. When he went into the hospital, the doctors had the usual story for him: you don't eat fats, you don't eat very much, and by the way you can't eat any more avocados. Jack said, "I can't eat any more avocados? I'll have you know that I can eat purely avocados and lower my cholesterol count!" Well, you know what the conventional wisdom was at that time among healers, so Jack—unlike most of us who would have just ground our teeth—went on an avocado diet, and sure enough he did lower his cholesterol count. So that is kind of typical of what you can expect from Jack Shepherd. I've always accused him of being from Texas, because they say from Texas everything is "prickly." And Jack is that way. (Laughter.) But I'll tell you, in the subsequent years as I began to interact with Jack—carefully (laughter)—I learned that he has great wisdom, a ready wit, and lofty ideals, and has great efficiency with people, with things, with

figures, and with words. Without question, he's the most articulate of us all, and speaks with an authority that's unmatched in this industry.

Now those are words, I think, of high praise, and his specific accomplishments deserve great praise, and he certainly knows a lot more about this industry than, I think, any of us in this room. But to me, those are not the most important things about Jack. It's not his brilliancy or fluency that are the best of him, but his loyalty and dedication. I've learned through the years that it's really largely on account of Jack Shepherd that we're here today, for were it not for him, I'm convinced that the California Avocado Society would be a bit of history, would be just a slight footnote. But Jack, from his first official job with this Society in 1942, when he served as its secretary, and since 1948 when he served as—guess what—the editor of the Yearbook, has almost single-handedly poked, prodded, forced self-examination by various and often reluctant boards of directors, and kept this Society going.

So Jack has truly earned this honor he is about to receive. We owe it to him as our mentor, our symbol, and as our inspiration.

Jack... (Applause.)

**Jack Shepherd:** Thank you. I don't feel particularly articulate at the moment, maybe for several reasons. We seem to have gone from the swaddling clothes to the nursing home (laughter). Had I been aware of this, I would have worn a necktie. I've been accused of wearing them to bed—which is not true, by the way; but today I decided to relax and enjoy it, and I'm not enjoying it and I'm not relaxed (laughter). So back to neckties.

It's difficult to realize the depth of my feeling here in receiving this award because, as Hank said, it's a very rare award. It seems that I have now joined the company of J. Eliot Coit, Marvin B. Rounds, George Zentmyer, and Hank Brokaw. We are the fraternity at the moment. It's very special to me.

I've been in this industry now for just short of sixty years. It seems less than that to me. It's been fun and delightful. I've been with the California Avocado Society for 52 of those years. To me, it's been a career. To me, it's been a hobby. To me, it's been a joy. And I think perhaps if there is an award that is greater than the one that I've just been given, it is the award of the great number of friendships that [my wife] Bee and I have made in this industry, and this room is full of them. I thank you, and I love you.