

California Avocado Society 1997 Yearbook 81: 27-29

DONALD E. BARTLETT

AWARD OF HONOR — 1997



Presented at the 1997 Annual Meeting of Members

By H. Leonard Francis Past President (1988-1989), California Avocado Society

One of the most rewarding functions of the Society is to search our industry and try to find an individual who has contributed to the California avocado industry in ways few others have. The contributions may be as one major effort or as a composite of several, that as a composite or singular the person's contribution have greatly added to or reshaped our industry. We recognize such an individual with the California Avocado Society's Award of Honor.

The Awards of Honor have been given since 1938. Will all past recipients in our audience today please stand and be recognized?

I have the pleasure today to present an Award of Honor.

I first saw our award recipient in my first year as a Farm Advisor for the Agricultural Extension Service. He was a featured speaker at an avocado growers' meeting in Fallbrook. He shared his knowledge with new and prospective growers about how to establish and care for a new avocado grove. His presentation was complete and very well done.

Later that same year I met him at an avocado research committee meeting, and again at a Varieties Committee meeting. I didn't know who he was, just that he was everywhere where volunteers were meeting to enhance the avocado industry. And he did not just attend, he contributed

The statistics I have about our honoree say he is 5' 9" in height. That must be an error. Within the avocado industry's pro-active organizations he is a large man, and he casts a

long, wide shadow. I have always looked up to him.

I ask you to join me in welcoming Don Bartlett to come forward to join me on the podium. Don, please escort your wife, Carlyn, to the platform, as we would like her here, also.

Don, now that you and Carlyn are on stage, I want to tell your fellow avocado growers and friends a little more about you. I was glad to read that you were born in 1933. I always thought you were just a couple of years older than I and wondered how you had accomplished so much in so few years. I understand a little better.

You went to the University of Arizona, where your education was interrupted by two years in the Army, then graduated from the only major college specializing in avocado and citrus culture: California State Polytechnic College in Pomona.

You worked for Sunkist Orange Products, then for the Irvine Company in their orchard department, honing your skills.

You then managed the Corona Co-op, which did pest control and mechanical pruning of orchards. (Have you ever come up with a way to prune our hillside avocado groves mechanically?)

You were then in charge of field operations for Jameson Ranch Association's 2,600 acres of orchards in Rancho California.

In 1967, you bought your own management company, which today is "Bartlett Agri-Enterprises." Boy, did you blossom!

By then, you and Carlyn had been married a few years. The two of you have reared two beautiful and independent daughters.

It was as "Bartlett Grove Management" that you saw the need for and the value of such industry organizations as the California Avocado Society and the San Diego County Farm Bureau. You eventually led those two organizations as president—in the instance of the Society, in 1975 and 1976. You were a director of the Society for 20 straight years!

You have had the desire to serve not only your fellow growers, but also your community—specifically, as a Rotarian for twenty-five years, where you absorbed their motto: "Service Above Self."

The Avocado Society was experiencing the pains of the post-1987 period: Should we down-size and survive; or should we expand by taking on the responsibilities of the troubled "Avocado Growers Association" and possibly die...or thrive? You were one of the four-member committee of the Society's board who forged that decision. You kept listing the pros and cons: you were the balance scale. We expanded.

You were also on the Water Task Force of the California Avocado Commission, the committee whose efforts have already saved California agriculture over 30 million dollars.

Today, we honor you for your continued, unending dedication to the California avocado industry. Today, we give you the California Avocado Society's Award of Honor for Outstanding Meritorious Service. We thank you. I am honored to be your friend.