

## California Avocado Society 2004-05 Yearbook 87: 21-22

### **The Lamb Family** Camarillo, California

*Award presented by Len Francis*

It is a privilege this morning to acknowledge, and express gratitude to the recipients of this year's Oliver Atkins Award -The Robert Lamb Family. They are the original, and current, owners of the historic *Rancho Santa Rosa Vista*, in Camarillo, in southwest Ventura County - a ranch that was established in the 1860's.

The matriarch of this family, until her death in 1989, was Susana Camarillo Burket Lamb. Her husband, Bob Lamb, and their sons John, Bert and David, and Bob's wife today, Carol, epitomize dedication, generosity, and hospitality to California's avocado industry.

The Lamb Family, especially via Bob, opened their ranch to avocado breeding research by the University of California. Dr. Bob Bergh of the University of California, Riverside, was always looking for grower cooperators to test his latest avocado variety "children." In the 1980's, the Lamb Family opened *Rancho Santa Rosa Vista* to what eventually became 11,000 to 12,000 "avocado children." Well over fifteen acres of this family's ranch was devoted to the breeding program by the time all the planting was done. Along with the land, the Lamb Family placed their irrigation system, labor water, fertilizers, and supervision at the disposal of the avocado breeding program. Special mention needs to be made of the service to this program by their ranch foreman, Mario Hernandez. The family gave open access to Dr. Bergh and his research associate, Gray Martin. With the evidence of promising new varieties, the Lamb family welcomed groups of researchers and industry research volunteers such as Oliver Atkins, our award's namesake, Hank Brokaw, Bob Platt, and Bud Lee, among others.

Variety names were eventually given to the most promising of the breeding selections - Lamb Hass, GEM, Marvel, and Harvest. By then there were crowds being led through the ranch to see these varieties, and the other still as yet unnamed but promising "avocado children."

The Lamb Family, benefactors to our California avocado industry, as well as the world's avocado industries, is represented today by John Lamb and his lady, Carol. Please come forward and receive this award.