



**In
Memoriam**

**FAREWELL,
JACK
SHEPHERD**

Few individuals have had as profound and lasting impact on the California avocado industry as Jack Shepherd. His career, indeed his life, has been interwoven into the fabric of the avocado story in California and around the world.

Jack was born on May 16, 1913, in Berkeley California. His given name was John Stickney Shepherd. He arrived in southern California as a teenager. His formal education included attendance at Pasadena Junior College.

In 1933, Jack went to work for Calavo Growers of California. At that time the pioneer avocado cooperative had been in operation less than ten years. Indeed, the California avocado industry, in an organized sense, was less than 25 years old when Jack began to make his many contributions. Jack told the story about his first day at Calavo. A toilet in one of the restrooms was clogged, and he was handed a plunger to take care of it. Thus, as Jack was pleased to recount later, he definitely started at the bottom of the avocado business.

Jack rose through the ranks of Calavo during his 45-year tenure, and retired in 1978 as president emeritus. His career spanned the development of the avocado industry. Jack entered the industry when avocados were considered a minor exotic fruit with the disadvantage of having a plethora of varieties vying for attention. By the time Jack retired from Calavo, the Hass variety was well on the way to become the dominant avocado worldwide, and the avocado had entered the realm of mainstream produce items. Jack was an integral part of that progress.

Jack was instrumental in the formation of the California Avocado Advisory Board and the California Avocado Commission. He was an active and loyal member of the Rotary Club for many years.

The California Avocado Society owes Jack a tremendous debt. Jack generously shared his experience and wisdom during decades of leadership in the Society. Perhaps his singular contribution among the exceptional work he did for the Society was as editor of

the Society's Year Book. He began supervision of the Year Book in 1949 and produced a continuous stream of journals until 1997. Jack's contributions to the avocado industry continued for years after his retirement from Calavo. The Avocado Society twice presented Jack with its Award of Honor, a distinction shared with only five other individuals.

Jack's knowledge of avocados was encyclopedic, and his interests spanned a broad range of topics. The brevity of his formal education was counterbalanced by a long life of curiosity, engagement, and contribution. He was preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Beatrice, in 2002. He leaves behind a son, Jerry, and a daughter, Linda, three grandsons, and two great-granddaughters.

Jack also leaves a rich legacy for the avocado industry. We are the beneficiaries of his choice to work among us.

Farewell, Jack.