



2009 Award of Honor

James McCormac
Fallbrook, CA

Award presented by
Len Francis

The California Avocado Society's Award of Honor is given to a person or organization in recognition of the time and resources given that have had a major and positive impact for our California avocado industry. The award is not given each year. Rather, it is given when there is a deserving recipient -- or recipients.

It is a pleasure to introduce the first of this year's two recipients of the CAS Award of Honor. Not everybody would recognize his face, but I believe almost every active avocado grower will recognize his name – and this includes many growers throughout the world. His are the words and data, written weekly in the California Avocado Society's *Weekly Newslines* since 1993 – James McCormac.

Several years ago I called Jan Taerien in South Africa regarding research. During the conversation he said: "Jim McCormac says California has a large crop... and that it will need real organization and cooperation to get it all sold." The *Newslines*, you see, is subscribed to around the world. Jim is also our editor of the CAS Yearbook – the repository of avocado research and history since the beginning of our organization in 1915. Jim became editor in 1998 when the previous editor, the highly esteemed Jack Shepherd, recommended him.

When I was your publications chairperson, I had the privilege of working directly with Jim. It is an honor to be his friend.

Jim's association with avocados has a long history. His grandfather developed avocado and citrus groves in the Fallbrook area beginning in the 1920's. The circle of life brought Jim back to Fallbrook from the San Gabriel Valley where he was born, raised, and educated. He holds degrees from USC and UCLA. Jim joined the army, with a tour of duty in Vietnam. Thank you for serving our country in a time of war. Subsequently, he managed the family agricultural business of avocados, citrus, and persimmons. There in Fallbrook, Jim and his wonderful wife, Deborah, raised two sons – Sean and Luke.

I first took notice of Jim at a California Avocado Commission board meeting in the early 90's when he argued for the establishment of a Federal Promotion Order (FPO). This was after Ramon Paz Vega, of Uruapan, Mexico, spoke at a CAS Annual Meeting and introduced us to the enormity of the Mexican avocado industry and their desire to market avocados throughout the United States. Jim chaired the first committee at CAC to explore an FPO. About ten years later the Hass Avocado Board was formally established in 2003 via an act of Congress.

Jim, we are indebted to you for your pioneering work in our industry over the past generation and for the excellence of your publications. They have earned our Society's Award of Honor.