



News Release

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Poochigians receive Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award

Recognizing years of service to Fresno County farmers and ranchers in the policy arena, Fresno County Farm Bureau President Russel Efird presented the 2007 Distinguished Service Award to former State Senator Chuck and Debbie Poochigian, of Fresno.

"We appreciated all you both have done, not only for agriculture, but for the Fresno Community," said Efird, while making the presentation at the FCFB Annual Banquet on May 3. Efird recalled the Poochigian's long-time ties to agriculture, having both grown up on raisin and grape farms in the Lone Star and Kearney Park areas, respectively. Chuck's parents, the late-Frank and Gladys Poochigian, farmed in the Lone Star of southeastern Fresno County since 1918. Debbie's parents, the late-Deran and Mimi Koligian, farmed in the Kearney Park area of southwestern Fresno County. Both Chuck and Debbie attended local schools, including California State University, Fresno, and have remained active Fresno County residents their entire life. Chuck and Debbie have three grown children, Mark and his wife Jennifer, Kirk, and Laura, and grandson, Deran.

At the end of 2006, Chuck completed 12 years representing the Valley at the State Capitol. Chuck was first elected to the Legislature to represent the 29th Assembly District in 1994. In 1998 and 2002, he was elected to represent California's 14th Senate District. As Senator, Chuck served in several leadership positions on key committees and within the Republican party. Among the many appointments, Chuck chaired the Select Committee on Central Valley Economic Development, and was a member of the Legislative Rural Caucus.

Prior to his election to public office, Chuck practiced general civil and business law in Fresno and served in both the Deukmejian and Wilson Administrations in cabinet leadership positions.

Throughout his career, Chuck has been a strong advocate of business and agriculture in California, a champion of fair and limited taxation and minimal government regulation, and a defender of rural and Central Valley communities with regard to equitable distribution of resources for infrastructure improvements, and adequate health care delivery. He was a champion of rural crime prevention and his tough-on-crime passion led to a run for California Attorney General in 2006.

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The Fresno native is a third generation resident of the San Joaquin Valley. He received his degree in business administration from California State University, Fresno in 1972 and his law degree from the University of Santa Clara in 1975. He served for six years as a member of the California Air National Guard.

Debbie has held several leadership positions within the Republican Party and has served as the key organizational person behind most campaign events for high-level Republican federal and state candidates. In March, Senator Dave Cogdill named Debbie as 2007 Woman of the Year for the 14th Senate District.

Debbie has provided stellar leadership as a member of numerous charitable boards and civic committees. She is a participating member of the Board of Directors of the Fresno State Alumni Association, California Women for Agriculture, Fresno County Farm Bureau, Henry Madden Library Leadership Board at Fresno State, and Secret Garden Party Committee for the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature at Fresno State. Additionally, she has been a member of the Board of Trustees at Saint Agnes Medical Center, Board of Directors of Fresno Area Crime Stoppers, Board of Directors of the Fresno County and City Historical Society, and Ag One Tribute Committee to establish the Bill Jones Leadership Development Program. She also served as Co-chair of the Fresno State Alumni Association Homecoming Tailgate.

As part of the FCFB recognition, the Poochigians were presented with a specially monogrammed shovel and a resolution by the California State Legislature.

Celebrating 90 years

This year's banquet, "Your Passport to Agriculture" provided a look at the many cultures that make-up Fresno County agriculture and saluted FCFB's 90th year as an advocacy organization. As part of the anniversary celebration, a time capsule, which will be opened at the 100th anniversary celebration, was displayed containing various Farm Bureau memorabilia. In addition, Fresno County Supervisors Bob Waterston, Phil Larson and Judy Case presented a resolution recognizing 90 years of service to agriculture.

Like many other farm bureaus, FCFB began with the need for the U.C. Agricultural Extension Service to disseminate information and promote better farming methods. Today, Farm Bureau is one of the lead agricultural organizations to educate its members and to advocate for political action and community outreach.

Sponsors of the FCFB Annual Banquet were: Rancho Vista Del Rio (Borba Farms); Rain For Rent; State Compensation Insurance Fund; Allied Grape Growers; Wellington Ranch and Resort (Ben Ewell); Donaghy Sales; Jerry Baird Agency, Inc.; Jeffery T. Roberts; Bank of the West; Kenneson Farms; Robert V. Jensen, Inc.; Fresno Equipment Co.; Hedrick's Chevrolet; Microdot Security; Britz Fertilizers, Inc.; C.D. Simonian Insurance; Trinity Fruit Sales; and Smith Barney --Harry Gaykian

Fresno County Farm Bureau represents almost 5,000 members on air quality, trade, land use, water, labor and all agricultural related issues. Fresno County produces more than 350 commercial crops annually, totaling almost \$4.7 billion dollars in gross production value.

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