



2024 Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame Inductees Showcasing Long-Time Passionate Supporters Are Honored

The Big Fresno Fair is proud to announce the 2024 inductees into The Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame, which was first established in 2007 as a way to honor those individuals who have demonstrated long-time continued support and extraordinary passion for the betterment of The Big Fresno Fair.

The 2023 Hall of Fame inductees will be formally honored at the 2024 Big Fresno Fair's Opening Ceremonies on Wednesday, October 2 at 2:30 p.m. in the Pacifico Yosemite Stage. Additionally, all Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame inductees will receive prominent visual recognition on the Fair's Hall of Fame Wall at the Fairgrounds and an official Big Fresno Fair Horse & Jockey Bronze statue. Members of The Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame will also be listed on the Fair's website. Additionally, a "Hall of Fame" stakes race will be held at the 2024 Fair's horse race meet in honor of 2024 inductees.

The following individuals will be honored and formally inducted into The Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame:

2024 Hall of Fame Inductees

- **Manuel Ponte** | For the past 40 years, Manuel Ponte has been a fixture in the livestock barns at the annual Big Fresno Fair. His volunteering first began in 1985 with his son, Brian, and the Pacheco brothers. When his granddaughter Madison starting showing replacement heifers, he was back in the barns. Ever since then, Manuel has been helping exhibitors prepare their heifers for the show and sale. With more than 50 years of experience in the rendering industry in Fresno County, Manuel has shared that knowledge and guidance with generations of exhibitors.

His volunteering efforts don't stop there - he has consistently donated to the 4-H and FFA Exhibitor Breakfast, even cooking and serving the meals. Manuel also generously donates to the livestock "Tool Box Program", also known as the All-Around Ag Award, as well as provides the wine each year for the Dairy Replacement Heifer Sale. He has and continues to participate in the Kerman Lamb BBQ group for over 20 years, where he has supported 4-H and FFA exhibitors by purchasing their lambs - further punctuating his commitment to encouraging youth participation in agriculture.

Manuel's ongoing volunteer work with Kerman 4-H exemplifies his ultimate dedication to the Fair and the local ag community. His consistent support and active participation not only enhance the Fair's operations, but also inspire and uplift the next generation livestock exhibitors and future community leaders. For his decades of service, unwavering commitment, and the positive impact he has had on both the Fair and the community, Manuel Ponte is truly deserving of being inducted into The Big Fresno Fair and we're honored to do that today.

- **Leta Ciavaglia** | Leta Ciavaglia's journey with The Big Fresno Fair is marked by a profound love of and an unwavering dedication to the Fair. As a young girl growing up visiting the fair each year, she developed a deep love for it and what it meant to the community. When she was appointed to the Fair Board of Directors in YEAR, and then later serving as President in 2014 and 2015, it was a crowning achievement that brought everything full circle.

During her tenure on the Board, Leta's passion for volunteering as a judge underscored her hands-on approach and passion for the Fair's diverse events. Whether presiding over contests in



the Livestock Pavilion, Jr. Exhibits or Home Arts – she brought not only her expertise but an infectious enthusiasm. Her distinctive flair extended to aligning her attire with the event themes, adding a personal touch that resonated with participants and Fairgoers alike. Today, Leta continues to volunteer as a judge for many of our competitions, which we are incredibly grateful for.

Beyond judging, Leta passionately supported fundraising efforts for vital projects throughout grounds, especially in the barn areas. Her advocacy for public education was especially felt in her involvement with the Fair Education Program that exposed K-8 grade students to the Valley's rich agriculture. Leta's leadership played a pivotal role in advancing various Fair programs, and helped strengthened the Fair's position as a cherished community event. It is for this and so much more that we are honored to induct Leta Ciavaglia into The Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame.

"The Hall of Fame provides an opportunity for our Fair team to publicly show our appreciation for those individuals who have shown the highest level of commitment to the Fair and its betterment as a longstanding tradition in the Central Valley," said Christina Estrada, Interim CEO, The Big Fresno Fair.

These Hall of Fame inductees join these past inductees:

2007: Arthur J. Rustigan, Doris Halemeier, Gary Fisher, Mark Thompson, Nat DiBuduo

2008: Brian I. Tatarian, Gordon Burrow, John C. Harris, Monte Person, William "Bill" Almeida

2009: Christopher Korby, Nick Bowles, Walter "Fritz" Lauritzen

2010: David Hill, Lucy Warren, Roy Isom, Ruby Hefley, Table Mountain Casino, Table Mountain Rancheria

2011: Kenneth L. Maddy, Carolee Boele, Larry Fortune, Chief Jerry P. Dyer, Mike Dages

2012: Ardie Der Manouel, Butch Butler, Chris Pacheco, Dale Ikeda, Louis C. Brosi

2013: Tim Bakman; Gary Nelson, Mike Fitzgerald, Robert Smittcamp, Marvin A. Meyers

2014: Alvin Quist, Carol Blasingame, Carol Chandler, Mr. & Mrs. Louie Brosi, Jr., Stephen J. Chambers

2015: Electric Motor Shop - Frank & Florence Caglia Family, Mike Kludjian

2016: Fresno Madera Farm Credit, Pardini's, Bill Phillips, Sue J. Torres, Fresno Historical Society

2017: Don Hunsucker, Powers Construction & Engineering Inc., Jon Semper, A Plus Signs, Parlier Lions

2018: Quinn Caterpillar, Phil Tews, Myers Ward Tractor, Jerry Turner

2019: Randy Perry, Elizabeth "Liz" Hudson, Conrad Jimenez, Ahronian Family, Tony Vivenzi

2020: Donald "Donny" Rollin, Jim and Debbie Christian, John Hoyt

2021: Debbie Jacobsen, Speeda Sound/Mike and Larry King, Supervisor Sal Quintero, Valley Wide Beverage/The Amendola Family

2022: Former Superintendent of Fresno County Schools, Jim Yovino; Rick Ransom; and Michael Joseph Giovannetti

2023: Bennie Gonsalves, Steve Magarian