



2023 Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame Inductees Showcasing Long-Time Passionate Supporters Are Honored

The Big Fresno Fair is proud to announce the 2023 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 2023 Big Fresno Fair's Opening Ceremonies on Wednesday, October 4 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 2023 Fair's horse race meet in honor of 2023 inductees.

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

2023 Hall of Fame Inductees

- **Bennie Gonsalves** | During his lifetime, Bennie was a highly active member of many boards and organizations in the community. He was awarded one of the five orders of knighthood from the Pope, the order of Saint Gregory. This honor is bestowed in recognition of an individual's personal service to the Catholic Church, through their unusual labors, their support, and the examples they set in their communities. Bennie Gonsalves served as a member of The Big Fresno Fair Board for 12 years from 1979 until 1991, serving as Fair Board President in 1983. During his Board presidency and, the more than a decade on the Board, Bennie served on many committees, rarely missing any meeting. He had a deep respect for his fellow Board members. During his time on the board, he was appointed by both Democratic and Republican governors. Bennie enjoyed the horse races, carnival, livestock and exhibits; but most of all he loved seeing the families coming through the gates on opening day. Bennie's favorite was the cow milking contest and he was rarely beat. Bennie never met a stranger. His son, Terry remembers his Dad and him sitting in Mickey Gillis' bus talking to Mickey as if they were old friends. The family of Bennie has often been told that "Bennie was a picture of class" for The Big Fresno Fair. In 1951, Bennie married the love of his life Delores. Together they had seven children; and today there are 13 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren. For his 12 years of active service on the Fair Board and his many years of support beyond that term, we are honored to induct Bennie Gonsalves into The Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame.
- **Steve Magarian** | A Fresno native and Roosevelt High School alum, Steve served Fresno County as a member of law enforcement for 33 years. During his time with the Fresno County Sheriff's Department, Magarian was active in his passion for community betterment. As a Fresno local, Magarian grew up just down the street from The Big Fresno Fair. In his time as Fresno County Sheriff from 1987 until 1999, Steve made tremendous efforts to keep his childhood neighborhood of southeast Fresno a safer place, along with all of Fresno County. During his 12 years as Fresno County Sheriff, Steve oversaw the completion of the new main jail at the northwest corner of Fresno & M streets, and the north annex jail at Merced & M streets. He also initiated the department's helicopter program and while he was sheriff, the agency became one of the first in the nation to be equipped with a computerized field reporting system, a wireless network that allowed deputies to access law enforcement databases from their vehicles and prepare and submit reports from the field. He was a fundamental force in developing the Multi-Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium (also known as MAGEC), bringing together various law



enforcement agencies to combat gang activity in the region, which continues to be an impactful program and approach today. Steve and his lovely wife, Joanne live in Fresno. They have two daughters and two grandchildren. For his more than three decades of service to Fresno County, keeping our community and Fairgoers safe, we are honored to induct Steve Magarian 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