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SONOMA COUNTY FAIR HONORS AL GERHARDT WITH 2018 EXHIBITOR GUIDEBOOK DEDICATION

Longtime advocate and hero for local agriculture selected for top honor

SANTA ROSA, CA – July 2, 2018– To say that Al Gerhart was a longtime advocate of Sonoma County agriculture would be a vast understatement. Al could be found at every meeting, committee, or fundraiser benefiting agriculture youth. In recognition of his decades of leadership and service, the Sonoma County Fair Board of Directors and staff are honored to dedicate this year's 2018 Exhibitor Guidebook to Al Gerhardt.

Growing up, Al's experience in agriculture was diverse from the very beginning. His family grew apples, raised chickens, sheep, and cattle. Al was a very active member of 4-H, showing sheep at our very own Sonoma County Fair decades ago. In his youth he enjoyed being a member of the Sonoma County Trail Blazers, and loved to dive for abalone. Upon graduation from Analy High School in 1956, Al's career led him to be a machinist in the East Bay.

Al kept his connections in agriculture close, making him a staple at just about any agriculture fundraising event, town hall meeting, or agriculture advocacy event needing support. In his retirement, Al and his wife Jan enjoyed life on 137 acres raising beef cattle. As a member of the Sebastopol FFA boosters, Al not only supported his alma mater, he attended every other 4-H or FFA chapter fundraiser. "His main objective was to always support the kids" said his wife Jan. Adding to his contribution of support for Sonoma County, Al became a Farm Bureau director in 2002, and maintained an active role advocating for Sonoma County agriculture serving on multiple committees. Al was also active in the rural food program through his Parish at St. Philip the Apostle church and St. Theresa.

Stephanie Larson, UC Extension rangeland livestock advisor, grew to know Al well over the years as a rancher. Stephanie shared that what she remembers most was his dedication to Sonoma



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County agriculture. Al was a historian; he studied the Counties deep agricultural history. His vast knowledge of people and places made him a great resource.

“Al didn’t have an email account or use the internet, everything he read and studied he received by mail, but he never missed a thing”, said Stephanie.

The Sonoma County Fair is proud to dedicate the 2018 Guidebook to Al Gerhardt. They celebrated the honor during its annual Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 22 at the Fairgrounds.

Join in a “Salute to Heroes” at this summer’s Sonoma County Fair from August 2 to August 12! In addition to tributes to the many heroes of Sonoma County, visitors to the Fair will find all the makings for a fun-filled family outing. A floral tribute to the beauty of Sonoma County, free entertainment and tasty fair foods are just the beginning. From the exhibit buildings filled with your neighbors’ works of art to the livestock in the barns; from the cheering horse race fans to the screams of excitement in the carnival, the Fair has something for everyone. For details, visit SonomaCountyFair.com or call (707) 545-4200. Like us on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram and Twitter to keep up with the fun. See you at the Fair!

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