

2023

Honoring the Past
FORGING
THE FUTURE



December 7, 2023

California State University,
Stanislaus
Foundation Board

Menu

SIGNATURE COCKTAIL

Cranberry Bubbly Bliss

Champagne with cranberry, lime and mint

MOCKTAILS

Cranberry Cosmo

Cucumber Melon Mojito

FIRST COURSE

Hand Passed Appetizers

Deviled eggs

Savory mushroom and parmesan palmier

Brussel sprouts with bacon jam

Spinach and feta tarte soleil

SECOND COURSE

Fire roasted beet salad with feta cheese, chopped romaine, spring mix, shredded cabbage, mandarin oranges, candied walnuts and citrus vinaigrette

THIRD COURSE

Airline chicken, parmesan with herb risotto and fresh green beans with garlic, tomato and basil

FOURTH COURSE

Luscious chocolate mousse trio

This evening's wine and champagne are compliments of E. & J. Gallo Winery.

Program

6:00 P.M.

Photographs and social
Signature cocktail, wine and hand passed appetizers

6:45 P.M.

President's Welcome
Dr. Sue Borrego, *Interim President*

7:30 P.M.

Honoring the Past, Forging the Future:
Award of Distinction
Ernie Gemperle

Presented by Mr. Ryan Fitzpatrick
Foundation Board President

Accepted by Mr. Stephen Gemperle
Foundation Board Corporation
Vice President/President-Elect

Closing remarks from
Dr. Sue Borrego, *Interim President*

Honoree

ERNEST “ERNIE” GEMPERLE (1929-2008)

Advancing the community in which he settled and adopted as his home was as much a part of the



late Ernie Gemperle's life as producing the best eggs possible and rearing seven children.

The Swiss immigrant came to the United States in search of the American Dream, and not only realized it, but put his heart and dedication into helping others achieve a piece of it as well.

His community service awards and recognitions are countless, from Rotary International's highest honor, the Paul Harris Award, to Turlock's Citizen of the Year and Agri-businessman

of the Year. He was dedicated to the Boy Scouts and the Catholic Church as well as arts and athletics programs in Turlock.

In achieving so much as a businessman and founder of Gemperle Family Farms, Ernie Gemperle never lost sight of the value of higher education and its path to greater life success. He embraced Stanislaus State and its mission to provide that path to residents of the region he called home.

Gemperle, this year's recipient of the Stanislaus State Foundation Board's Honoring the Past, Forging the Future Award, was born in 1929 and immigrated to the United States from Switzerland in 1949. He was armed with just \$12 in his pocket and a diploma in poultry science from the International Poultry School in Bern, Switzerland. He started a poultry business in Washington state on a leased ranch with 6,000 chickens. A year later, in 1951, he sold the lease and moved to Turlock, where he would become a key figure in egg production across the Western United States.

Those early days in Turlock were marked by two other important milestones — war and marriage. He served

stateside in the U.S. Army during the Koran War, and in 1955 he returned to his native Switzerland to marry Annemarie Dezlhofer,. They enjoyed 44 years of marriage until Annemarie passed away in 1999. Ernie later married Marie, his second wife, to whom he was married at the time of his passing.

Together, as Ernie and Annemarie created their family of seven children — Heidi, Anita, Susan, Peter, Richard, Steve and Mike — the couple worked to build their Turlock poultry business. Seemingly always at the forefront of the industry, Gemperle, in 1958, was among the first to use a bulk feed tank, replacing the task of loading and unloading heavy feed sacks, and he pioneered using Aquamagic egg washers, which improved egg safety.

He established Gemperle Enterprises and upgraded his egg packing facilities. As his offspring joined the business, they modernized production to provide consumers with the highest quality eggs possible at an affordable price. His company led the way in bringing organic and specialty eggs to western markets.

Ernie served as chairman of Nulaid Foods, and was on the boards of Nucal Foods, Nu-West Milling, National Foods and West Coast UEP. He also served on the California Egg Commission.

One of his 11 siblings, Walter, joined Gemperle in 1961 and started Gemperle family orchards, which now has just over 1,000 acres of almond trees. Ernie, though, remained committed to his egg-production business.

Ernie Gemperle's children not only learned about the hard work and dedication required to run a thriving company, which enables them to now operate Gemperle Family Farms, they saw the impact of their parents' generosity to their community.

Ernie Gemperle, who became a United States citizen, said upon receiving one of his many accolades, "I really believe in giving back some things to the community for the good things that have come my way. This country has been very good to me, and I believe in being a good steward in return."

The company continues Ernie Gemperle's generosity, donating eggs to school lunch programs and to the United Samaritans Foundation for food distribution.

Stanislaus State has long been a recipient of that generosity, because Ernie Gemperle understood the importance of higher education and instilled it in his children.

Gemperle was instrumental in the growth of the Stanislaus State Foundation Board during his 17 years of service as a board member beginning 1989. He served as its president from 1992-93 and was an active member until 2006, two years before he passed away. Stan State honored Gemperle with the University Medal in 1991 and he was recognized as the Champions of the American Dream honoree in 2000.

His son Steve, president of Gemperle Enterprises, is a current Foundation Board member and will soon follow his father's footsteps as its president.

The Gemperle name is familiar to Stan State students. Gemperle Lecture Hall is in Demergasso-Bava Hall and the first Ernie Gemperle Endowed Chair of Finance was awarded to Finance Associate Professor Yili Lian for three years in 2021.

Through the years, Ernie Gemperle donated to a variety of Stan State funds and drives, including establishing the Annemarie Gemperle Memorial Scholarship/ Endowment, the Ernie and Annemarie Gemperle Presidential Scholars, and the Ernie Gemperle Valedictorian Scholarship, all dedicated to improving opportunities and quality of education for students.

In 2015, his adult children generously donated \$250,000 in their father's honor to establish an endowment for future scholarships. That same year, they established the Gemperle Family Farms College Scholarship fund, in conjunction with the Stanislaus Community Foundation, to help fund higher education for children and grandchildren of Gemperle Farms employees.

"My parents encouraged all of us to get an education, and so for us to continue our parents' legacy of supporting education is meaningful," his daughter, Anita Mahaffey, said when the family made its quarter million-dollar gift to the University's One Purpose Scholarship Fund in 2015.

California State University, Stanislaus Foundation Board

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HONORING THE PAST FORGING THE FUTURE AWARDEES

Michael P. Zagaris – 2017
Marjorie H. Bright – 2018 (presented posthumously)
Norm Porges – 2019
Viji Sundar – 2022 (presented posthumously)

