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Tomato Industry Loses a Great Leader

Fred Williamson Passed Away on March 20, 2007

San Diego, California; March 21, 2007- Fred L. Williamson, a well known tomato industry leader and co-founder of Andrew Williamson Fresh Produce, passed away at 5:00 pm, on March 20, at the age of 70.

A native of Plymouth, New Hampshire, Mr. Williamson moved to Oceanside as a boy, where it became his life long home. A graduate of Cal Western College in San Diego, Mr. Williamson's first position in the produce industry was Tomato Sales Manager with Kawano Brothers, Inc. in Oceanside, where he worked with his best friend Raymond Kawano for twenty years. Mr. Williamson then worked with Agri Sales, Inc. in Vista, CA.

In 1986, Mr. Williamson formed a partnership with the late Fred Andrew, and together they opened Andrew Williamson Sales Company. Considered by many to be a pioneer in the Baja, Mexico vine ripened tomato industry; Mr. Williamson introduced technology, new tomato varieties and financing to the Baja region and the company became quickly recognized as a premium vine ripened tomato shipper. Mr. Williamson's son Fred M. Williamson took over the Presidency of the Company in 1997 and Mr. Williamson remained on the companies Board and continued to be instrumental in the growth and success of the company until his death.

Mr. Williamson served on the United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Board of Directors from 1982 to 1984. He was also an active leader of the California Tomato Board, chairing many important committees and serving as Chairman of the Board for four years.

Ed Beckman, former President of the California Tomato Board said, "Fred was a visionary for the tomato industry. He was a coalition builder who worked tirelessly to build a bridge between the US and Mexico tomato industries. He was a great man who continually put the industries needs before the needs of his own company. He will be greatly missed."

Tom Stenzel, President of United Fresh Produce Association, remarked, "Fred was a visionary and leader in the industry. He was an early adopter of the 5-a-day brand, well before many others, putting the name on his boat and in his email address." "He and his wife Judy were truly ambassadors for the industry. Together, they reached out and embraced the other United Board Members and made them feel welcome in the organization," commented Stenzel.

Mr. Williamson had a tremendous passion for the industry and a genuine love and respect for the people he worked with. He was an enthusiastic mentor to many young people in the industry and was respected by competitors and customers alike.

Mr. Williamson is survived by his wife of 47 years, Judy. He is also survived by his daughter Jennifer Procacci and her husband JM, son Fred and his wife Stephanie, daughter Suzie Avilez and her husband Mark, his son Mitch, daughter Sheri, daughter Becky Hall and her husband Lou, and daughter Trisha Parkan and her husband Jeff; and his fourteen grandchildren.

Services will be held Friday, March 23 at 11:00 am at St. Patrick's Church in Carlsbad. The address is 3821 Adams Street, Carlsbad, CA 92008. There will be a reception following the service at El Camino Country Club.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent in Fred Williamson's name to either the Oceanside Boys & Girls Club at 401 Country Club Lane, Oceanside, CA 92054, or to Brother Benno's Foundation at 3260 Production Ave., Oceanside, CA 92054.

