



Hall of Fame

Class IV





NATIONAL
Watermelon
ASSOCIATION



Honoring

Charles (Charlie) Lankford

Knox City, Texas

Art Perry

Manteca, California



Charles (Charlie) Lankford

Working with American Sun Melon in the 1980s, Charlie was an instrumental member of the team that pioneered seedless watermelon and brought them to consumers across the country. He worked directly with many of the first commercial seedless growers on the front lines, assisting them with growing, packing and shipping. For weeks he would work with growers on site, and then would travel to the southern hemisphere during the winter to develop seedless watermelons with growers there. Fluency in the Spanish language made him a big asset in dealing with farm and shed labor.

In addition to being a member of the NWA Executive Committee and becoming a member of the Lifetime Council in 2005, Charlie was always willing to do anything asked of him to support the association. From numerous committees to assisting and overseeing the annual seed spit contests, and serving as a greeter at NWA events, Charlie never met a stranger. One member suggested that Charlie knew more convention attendees than anyone else. His personality was such that if he did not know someone, he would walk over and introduce himself. More importantly, once he met you, he never forgot. And it would not have been surprising to see him roll up on your business the following spring or summer just to say hello and ask how he could help. That was Charlie.

It was only when his beloved wife Jan fell ill that he missed a national convention. He knew that job 1 was to take care of her, and he did with grace. "Early in my career he taught me to respect and support the NWA in any way that I could, just as he had done", said Jim Schmidt. "The more I got to know him the more I realized how wise of a man he was." Charlie was a man that was never bound by a pay check or a time clock; only a drive to get the job done and do it right. A proud man and a true patriot, if you ever asked him where he was from, he would reply, 'Knox City America'. His family and friends are grateful for this induction to honor a great man, Mr. Charlie Lankford.

Art Perry



Born into the agriculture industry and living in Manteca, California his entire life, Art Perry acquired a passion for the industry at a very young age. Involvement with the Future Farmers of America to majoring in dairy science at Cal Poly, his original idea of becoming an agricultural teacher was short-lived, as the passion for farming and love of his family kept bringing him back to the family farm. Working alongside his father and family members, they sold the dairy operation and began farming that grew into a sizable farming & produce company called George Perry and Sons. The family operation grew a number of crops, with watermelons and pumpkins being what they are known for. At the same time Art was instrumental in the development of higher quality and sizing standards in the watermelon and pumpkin industries.

Art Perry was one of the founders of the old California-Arizona Watermelon Chapter, known then as CAWA. Years later when he was called on, he was instrumental in reorganizing CAWA into the Western Watermelon Association. He is a strong believer in the NWA and the NWPB. At one time a NWA officer, he had to make the difficult decision to step down as an officer to help his wife and family care for his youngest son when he fell ill. What he did then is to show us all how important family is, and where priorities should be. That was an important lesson to teach, without ever becoming that teacher (officially).

For over 40 years Art has served his church devotedly as a lector, and for many of these years has led our convention in prayer at our convention banquet.

A humble, honest and extremely hardworking gentlemen, Art always give Jesus Christ, the center of his life and being, credit for the success he has experienced both personally and professionally. Working side by side with his family, he believes that the success of his family's company is due to his family living by the company mission statement: George Perry and Sons is built on a foundation of believing in and having faith in Jesus Christ, working together as a family, and being fair and honest in all of their dealings. An honorable man, a respected man, a family man and a man of God. That describes Art Perry to a 't'. That is the essence of this man.

The Inaugural Class

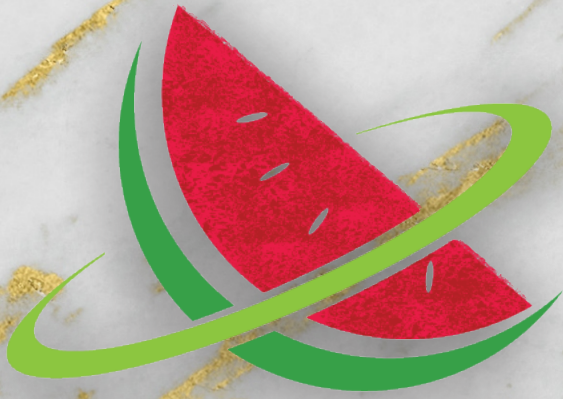
B.G. Anderson · Eustis, Florida
Tom Ayooob · Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Bob Bloebaum · Clermont, Florida
Percy Bunch · Murfreesboro, North Carolina
John Campbell · Lakeland, Florida
Nancy Childers · Morven, Georgia
Oren Childers · Cordele, Georgia
John Cooper · Centre, Alabama
E.H. Dicks, Jr. · Barnwell, South Carolina
Bob Deitz · Chicago, Illinois
J.B. Easterlin · Montezuma, Georgia
Gordon Etheridge · Raleigh, North Carolina
Gerald Funderburk · Jefferson, South Carolina
W.W. “Coonbottom” Glenn · Marianna, Florida
Al Harrison · Nogales, Arizona
Vern Highley · Fresno, California
Josephine Hughes · Houston, Texas
Dallas Jones · Clermont, Florida
Bill Knowles · Leesburg, Florida
Harmon R. Lawson · Morven, Georgia
Buddy Leger · Cordele, Georgia
J.D. Lowe, Jr. · Henderson, Texas
Wallace Luffman · Salisbury, Maryland
Ralph Meitin · Zellwood, Florida
Howard Sorrells · Arcadia, Florida
Vincent ‘Jim’ Vitale · Detroit, Michigan
C.C. Winkler · Vincennes, Indiana
Ernie Zaferis · Los Angeles, California

Our Founding Fathers

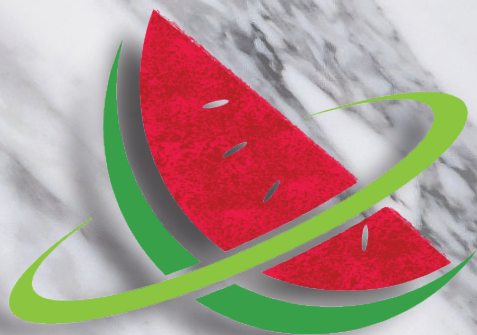
Capt. E. Bell · Trenton, Florida
David Brown · Albany, Georgia
Mercer Brown · Albany, Georgia
B.J. Christman · Atlanta, Georgia
Ike Cohn · Chicago, Illinois
S.G. Gay · Trenton, Florida
Frank H. Johnson · Hilton, New York
E.H. Kalmon · Albany, Georgia
James Leonard · Cincinnati, Ohio
Henry Mabbett · Quitman, Georgia
J.A. Murrell · McIntosh, Florida
Robert H. Pennington · Evansville, Indiana
D.H. Gilbert · Monticello, Florida
Fuller Groover · Quitman, Georgia
W.A. Gulledge · Verbena, Alabama
V.L. Hansen · Chicago, Illinois
R.L. Higgs · Fitzgerald, Georgia
O.K. Jelks · Quitman, Georgia

The Innovators Class

Matt Dietz · Laredo, Texas
Arnold Mack · Lake Wales, Florida
Bruce Price · Hinton, Oklahoma



NATIONAL
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A S S O C I A T I O N

The National Watermelon Association has stood the test of time for 104 years. With its beginning in March of 1914, eighteen (18) people assembled in Atlanta, Georgia with an idea to come together to expand watermelon's horizons. Today we assemble to honor two (2) individuals who have led, supported and taken great care of the Association across its first century of service.

We all stand at the convention to congratulate the fourth class of inductees. They have both played a huge roll in the success of the Association, and for that commitment we place their names into the highest honor that we can bestow. The honorees will forever be honored and earned members in the National Watermelon Association Hall of Fame.