



NEWS RELEASE

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United Fresh To Present Lifetime Achievement Award to Hugh Topper *H-E-B Group Vice President of Fresh Foods To Be Honored at January Event*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 6, 2017) – United Fresh Produce Association will present its Lifetime Achievement Award to Hugh Topper, Group Vice President of Fresh Foods for H-E-B, at its Foundation Gala Dinner January 16, at the Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego, CA.

“As Hugh plans his retirement at the end of this year, I can’t think of a more deserving individual to recognize for his more than 35 years serving the produce industry,” said United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel. “I know both suppliers and other retailers throughout the produce industry will want to join in honoring our dear friend Hugh Topper.”

Topper joins a distinguished group of past recipients, including Bruce McEvoy, Rick and Tonya Antle, Mike Cavallero, Joe Procacci, Reggie Griffin, Frieda Caplan and Bob Grimm (posthumously).

A native of Midland, Texas and raised on a family cattle ranch in Oklahoma, Hugh received a BS in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State University in 1982. He joined Fleming Foods Company and worked for 10 years in Kansas, California, Missouri and Texas, holding positions as Quality Assurance Manager, Produce Merchandiser, Produce Operations Manager and Manager of Frozen Food/Dairy Operations.

Coming back to his roots in Texas, he joined the H-E-B Grocery Company, where he has worked for 26 years building a solid foundation for the company in fresh produce and fresh foods. Hugh has served H-E-B as Produce Category Manager, Director of Produce Procurement, Vice President of Produce Procurement, Vice President of Produce, Chief Merchant for Central Market Division and Group Vice President of Fresh Foods.

Throughout his career, Hugh has been active in the industry serving on the United Fresh Board of Directors, United Fresh Start Foundation Board of Trustees, Produce Marketing Association’s PEIB Board Chairman, Texas International Produce Association Board of Directors and Produce for Better Health Foundation Board.

Hugh also has worked with Texas A&M University as a Guest Lecturer for the College of Agriculture, and as an Advisory Board Member for the Texas A&M Fruit and Vegetable Improvement Center and Texas Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee.

Hugh has always given back to the community. He has been the United Way Chairperson for H-E-B, which was recognized as the #1 Company Employee Contributor in Texas. Hugh also served on the San Antonio Food Bank Board of Directors and San Antonio Food Bank Committee Chair. While leading the Food Committee, he created the annual holiday gift of produce, “Harvest from the Heart,” which has generated over 14 million pounds of fresh produce for those in need to support holiday meals in the past five years.

Hugh's leadership with the United Fresh Start Foundation was a natural outgrowth of his and H-E-B's commitment to children's health. In Seguin, Texas, Hugh started a salad bar program for all elementary schools. The newest program he created is "Let's Get Growing," a program for low-income elementary schools in South Texas. The Program teaches 2nd graders how to grow produce through individual take home "farms". It also partners with H-E-B dietitians, school administrators, teachers, students and parents to put together healthy meals through education and fresh produce consumption. To help drive participation, the school that has the highest support from parents gets a new playground!

The *United Fresh Start Foundation Annual Conference*, January 16-18 at the Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego, will feature a new half-day program focused on growing access to fresh fruits and vegetables; all of United Fresh's traditional volunteer leadership board, council and committee meetings; the Foundation's annual fundraising golf tournament, and a new silent/live auction.

Topper will receive United Fresh's Lifetime Achievement Award during the Foundation's Gala Dinner January 16. Industry members and guests are invited to register for the conference and gala dinner, as well as the Foundation's Fundraising Golf Tournament. For more information about the events and to register, visit www.unitedfresh.org.

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About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org