



The Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame was formed in Year 2000 to recognize and honor distinguished individuals that have made significant contributions to the agricultural community in the Greater Franklin County region and its immediate surrounding areas; although nominees from neighboring counties of Franklin County within a 150-mile radius are often also considered for this prestigious award.

The Pasco Chamber Board has proudly created a Selection Committee comprised of quality individuals representative of our agriculture industry and has chartered them with the honorable task of reviewing all nomination submittals. Induction candidates are selected based on their outstanding performance in the agriculture industry and their bountiful support of the local and rural communities. Candidates are recognized by their peers for not only their dedication, generosity, and selflessness, but also their demonstrated achievements, noteworthy expertise, and creative innovations that often provide a legacy of impactful results and lasting benefit to the overall enhancement of the local agricultural industry and community at large. Farmers, growers, ranchers, and owners/employees of agribusiness firms are all eligible for nomination as either individuals and/or families.

The Ag Hall of Fame inductions will be presented at a special gala January 22, 2015 at the Pasco Red Lion. **Deadline for Application is November 26, 2014.**

Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame Intent to Nominate

Nominee's Name Steve Lancaster

Mailing Address 1318 White Bluff St, Richland, Wa

Nominee's Phone 509-521-1434 Fax _____ E-Mail Steve.Lancaster@Wheatlandbank.com

Date of Birth 6-1-1955 Birthplace Othello (Family moved to Othello 1961)

Date of Death (if deceased) _____

Nominator's Name Everett Wray

Phone 509-546-1376 Fax 509-545-1966 E-Mail Ewray@gardengate trees.com

Family Contact _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Sara Morales

From: Everett Wray <ewray@gardengatetrees.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 26, 2014 6:10 AM
To: Sara Morales
Subject: Steve Lancaster nomination

Hello Sara,

Below is Steve's info at present. He just moved to Wheatland Bank...also a list of organizations he has been involved with. His cell is 509-521-1434

Thanks

Everett Wray 509-546-1376

Steve Lancaster SVP/Team Leader Tri-Cities Loan Production Office/Loan Officer
101 E. 1st Ave, Ritzville, WA 99169
P: 509.659.0330 | M: 509.521.1434 | F: 509.221.1861 | Steve.Lancaster@wheatlandbank.com

[This is what he sent me....](#)

4 H , FFA tri-city high school ag advisory board, Pasco chamber-various committees---Tri-Dec, Tri-City chamber,19 yr. member of Benton Franklin fair board –two term president, Horse heaven roundup rodeo committee,15 yr-2 term as chair—Kamiakin high FFA scholarship organizer 6 yr, CBC ag scholarship formation committee

Nomination Package Requirements

1. Cover of Nomination packet (front page)

Name of Nominee
Hi Resolution Photo of Nominee
The Nominator and relation
Date submitted

2. Years of Community and Agriculture Service

Please list no more than twenty (20) organizations and services the Nominee has participated in to enhance our agriculture community. (E.g. commissions, associations, community service, volunteer activities and events, etc.)

3. Brief Bio of Nominee

Please provide (1-2 pages) of background information profiling the Nominee's family history and childhood experiences, including the geographic region of Nominee's upbringing. Be sure to emphasize any and all character traits and attributes unique to the Nominee and discuss personal interests and values that would help create a *Nominee signature story*. As the Nominator, It is Imperative to include your personal sentiments and justification to support the selection of your Nominee into the 2012 Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame.

4. Attachments (not to exceed ten (10) pages)

Please provide photos, newspaper, and/or magazine clips, individual letters of recognition and support, special awards, event photos etc.

Upon request, the Chamber will provide a guideline to serve as a framework to assist you with the development of your submittal. It is important that the nomination process remain streamlined, easy, and enjoyable.

Return completed nomination form:

1925 N. 20th Avenue,
Pasco, WA 99301

Nomination for Ag Hall of Fame

My nomination for Ag Hall of fame is Steve Lancaster and the reasons are herein stated.

Steve Lancaster has been in banking for 37 years in the Columbia Basin, and has a huge foot print behind the scenes in many family farm operations. We at our operation now known as Wray Hay LLC, Garden Gate Nursery LLC, another company we helped start ESC Northwest LLC (have no ownership of today) and the company my sons now own C & E Trenching all had their roots with Steve Lancaster as a banker.

Needless to say all the years of the multiple business's we started were not smooth and there were many challenges along the way.

If it had not been for the faith and vision of Steve as a banker we would not be in business today. The reality of the previous statement was in no way understood at the time until we now look back and wonder how we did it. From day one we should have never been able to accomplish with the meager assets we had when we started out, but with careful steady help from Steve as a banker we have succeeded this far, and divine providence as a guide.

It would be interesting to know how many farm families could say the same thing in the Columbia Basin. Steve has been a great part of keeping the dream alive that the original design of the Columbia Basin Irrigation system was designed to do, which was to promote the family farm. As the different blocks developed pass their 50 year repayment plan and the 960 acre rule becomes obsolete, the Basin will be changed forever as the large corporate farms take over. They are already putting a lot of pressure on those of us trying to run a family farm, that today 1,000 acres is considered small.

This is the reason we would like to recommend Steve for the Hall of fame, but do not know what category to recommend and would be open for the committee's suggestion.

Steve grew up on the farm where his parents still live above Basin City of which his father drew for as a Korean War veteran. Steve was a typical farm boy, doing all the things and hard work that boys did of that era. From tractor driving to picking corn by hand, and because they were not able to afford a combine..... Steve and his brothers would pick corn by hand in the winter and bring it to a grinder for the cows. Along the way somewhere Steve's Dad advised him to do something different than farming so he took that advice and went to WSU. In his junior year of college he became the first intern for Farm Credit and upon graduation went to work for them for his first 7 years. Today Steve would tell you he wishes he could have stayed in farming as he observes the wonderful tools that have come along, from irrigation systems to machinery, which make farming so much more efficient today. Hence is most likely the reason for his passion for his work in banking, and to see the success of his many farm families he has helped finance over the years. Enclosed is another document with a biography.

As far as organizations involved, we do not know what they are but will research that.

Enclosed is a picture and am in process of obtaining the original to make this the high resolution it should be.

Thanks for your consideration.

Everett Wray 2761W Sagemoor Rd, Pasco, Wa 99301 509-546-1376 ewray@gardengatetrees.com

Steve Lancaster - Steve.lancaster@wheatlandbank.com

"I believed in the farmer. For 37 years, I've enjoyed helping want-to-be farmers who have nothing but maybe a pickup truck, get started farming and who today are successfully farming hundreds of acres," smiles Steve Lancaster. "Helping farmers is a joy to be because of their integrity and strong work ethic."

Steve's family settled up near Basin City in 1961 on land his dad received from the veteran's drawing. The Lancasters became one of the first farmers to irrigate in the Basin. They grew sugar beets and hay and always had cattle. "My dad still ranches today," tells Steve.

My mom, Cindy, was a teacher at Othello School District for 30 years. She was awarded 'Teacher of the Year' for the state of Washington. While the rest of Steve's siblings graduated from Connell High School, Mrs. Lancaster took Steve with her every day and he graduated from Othello High school. After high school, Steve headed off to WSU to complete four years for an Ag Economic degree. During Steve's junior year at college he received the first internship that Farm Credit Services (FCS) offered. He worked with FCS for seven years before switching banks. During his 37 years in the banking industry Steve has processed hundreds of millions of dollars in loans. "One of my customers called me the 'Debt Doctor,'" laughs Steve. "At first I was kind of offended but then I realized that I was able to help and keep people farming that otherwise wouldn't be farming." Most of Steve's customers have been with him for 15-20 years and some have been with him since he started at FCS. "Today I'm working with the 3rd generation of farmers of my original customers. It really is a joy to watch them thrive."

"Having grown up on a farm, I can understand the challenges facing a farmer," comments Steve. "I know the hard work that it takes. I grew up doing everything on the farm. I drove tractor, weeded sugar beets, and even picked corn by hand for the cattle." At that time the family have about 150 head of cattle but couldn't afford a combine. Steve's dad, brother, and he would go out and pick the corn then bring it back to this grinder, grind it all up and feed it to the cows in the middle of winter. "My parents told me that farming was hard and there was a better way to live. They were right, farming is hard, but sometimes I wish they hadn't told me that so that I would still be farming today. I guess I live vicariously through the farmers that I bank with. Farming is good way of life and I still farm with my dad. Together we tend cattle. Almost every weekend I'll be out at the farm helping with something. At 85 years old, my dad still feeds the cattle every day with the help of a loader tractor."

"I kept a lot of people in business. I've helped a lot of people out that didn't have more than a pickup or a tractor but I had confidence that they had a good work ethic." Today Steve wouldn't pick any other folks to work with. My biggest banking risk was choosing to finance a guy who had a net worth of about \$10,000 to grow potatoes. He's still farming today and raising over 2,400 acres of potatoes. One of

Steve's unique projects was when a guy wanted to import alpacas and llamas from Bolivia. He had loaned a million dollars to get the animals shipped over to the US. Then they had to be quarantined for a while. "The highlight was when he flew me to Kentucky to watch the auction. It was like watching a thoroughbred auction. Everyone was dressed to the nines. It was an experience." Steve's biggest loans are typically annual operating revenue for potato farmers of about \$10-12 million dollars and his smallest was for \$500 to a student who need an FFA project. "I've got customers on all levels. Many times I make loans to the guy that grows the crops, the guy that packages the crops, and the one who sells the crop. It is interesting to see all levels."

Today farming is different than it was when I started in the banking industry. The banking regulations have changed, land prices have skyrocketed and land is sparse. However, some things don't change. Farmers still need money to farm their fields. While prices have gone up, so have crop values. Today the irrigation and soil are totally different than what the pioneers faced. The original settlers used rill irrigation to try to water soil with the substance of sugar where the water just drained through. Today farmers install a \$100,000 circle that they control with their phone and use it to water soils that has some consistency and holds water. "The Columbia Basin is a good place to raise a family and as far as farming goes, you can't beat it," remarks Steve. "We have the river, we have exports, we have irrigation – you can't beat farming in the Basin."

"There are times I miss the good ole days," recalls Steve. "Every Friday and Saturday night we'd head into town and it would be like 'American Graffiti.' You'd just cruise up and down Pasco. You'd go to the A&W. It was a much simpler life. Back then if you got in trouble the police would just call your parents or at least threaten to call your parents and that was enough to scare you! It wasn't all the craziness of today." Steve loved hunting and did a lot of bird hunting "back in the good old days when you could take your shotgun to school and go hunting with your teacher at lunch."

Over all, "you know it's been fun. If you deal with honest people, and most farmers are honest, they will try to pay you. That is why I like to work with farmers most of all because they are of high integrity and a good work ethic. It's been a lot of fun and it's gone really fast. I'm ready for another ten years."



