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WATER GROUP HONORS CONNORS, LEMARGIE, AND WOODS FAMILY

Earlier this month, at the Columbia Basin Development League's annual conference, the League presented three awards recognizing area leaders who have played key roles in the development of the Columbia Basin Project (CBP). Nominations for the awards were submitted by CBP stakeholders and recipients were selected by a committee of League Trustees.

The title of Trustee Emeritus was conveyed upon Steve Connors of Warden for his board service and over 25 years of faithful membership and commitment. Richard Lemargie of Ephrata was awarded an Honorary Life Membership for his tireless and dedicated support of the Columbia Basin Project and its continued development. The Woods Family of Wenatchee was honored for nearly 100 years of Columbia Basin Project advocacy.

Steve Connors returned to the Columbia Basin Project after graduating from Washington State University to join his family's farm before partnering with his brothers in 1972 to start Skone & Connors Produce, still in operation today. Connors has served as a member and President of the National Potato Executive Board, served for a decade as Chair of the Washington State Potato Committee, and has been a long standing CBDL member and trustee. Recently, he has remained involved behind the scenes by helping with fundraising efforts and personally supporting the CBDL's work.

Richard Lemargie was born on the Columbia Basin Project, growing up near Grand Coulee Dam. He attended Washington State University before completing his law degree at Gonzaga University School of Law and moving to Ephrata to start his career. Lemargie focused on state and federal reclamation and irrigation law and hydropower development. He spent a majority of his general practice representing Columbia Basin Project irrigation districts and the Columbia Basin Hydropower development. He is an active honorary member and participant on the Washington State Water Resources Association Legal Committee and received their Leadership Award in 1997. As a CBDL member for many years, Lemargie is considered by many to be a trusted advisor. He has personally supported many CBDL projects and events.

The Woods Family, publishers of the Wenatchee World newspaper, has been a strong advocate for central Washington since 1907 through their dedication to humanitarian causes, the arts, and local issues. Their commitment to the Columbia Basin Project has played an integral role in its development since taking over the paper in 1907. Rufus Woods Sr. began the family's legacy through his vision for the incredible benefits of bringing irrigation and power to the Columbia River Basin. He took that message across the state and nation, advocating for the creation of Grand Coulee Dam and Columbia Basin Project development. His son, Wilfred, continued this legacy of advocacy, writing countless articles and columns about the importance of irrigation, economic development and the wonder of seeing the Columbia Basin desert bloom with fruit and produce. The legacy continues to this day as the Wenatchee World, now run by Wilfred's son Rufus, published an article by Wilfred this summer highlighting the importance of saving irrigated lands and emphasizing that current victories, such as the recent completion of Lind Coulee siphon construction, can only continue through cooperative partnership.

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Since 1964, the Columbia Basin Development League has supported the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project and its future development. We protect its water rights and educate the public on the renewable resource and multiple-purpose benefits of the project.