



## **MIKE AND KAREN STUART SCHOLARSHIP**

FFVA has created the Mike and Karen Stuart Scholarship to encourage college students who intend to pursue a career in the specialty crop industry. It was named in honor of Michael 'Mike' Stuart and his late wife, Karen.

Mike Stuart worked in the fruit and vegetable industry throughout his more than 40-year career – first as a grocery produce clerk in high school, and then moving through the ranks at Western Growers, an association that represents farmers in California, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. From 1992 until his retirement in 2018, Stuart was president of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association. In that position, he worked on farm bill negotiations, trade agreements, and immigration issues as he represented Florida farmers in Tallahassee, Washington and around the globe.

While in college, he met his future wife, Karen, who would become a familiar face at FFVA conventions. Karen genuinely cared for people and touched the lives of anyone she interacted with. She lit up the room with her smile and infectious laugh. They were married for 40 years before she lost her battle with pulmonary fibrosis in 2016.



Stuart was well-regarded and respected in the industry for being an ambassador and effective leader for agriculture. As a member of USDA's Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade, he worked overtime to help Florida farmers seeking relief in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). He was co-chair of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance working on three farm bills to secure federal investment in programs critical to fruit and vegetable production. He also held numerous government advisory positions to ensure U.S. trade policy adequately reflects the interests of the specialty crop industry.

Stuart received numerous awards during his career, including national recognition as one of The Packer 25, which distinguishes exemplary leadership and global contributors. In 2018, he was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame.

During his tenure at FFVA, his leadership extended beyond agriculture. He was a member of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association's board of directors for 13 years, eight of those as president. He also served on the executive committee of an annual event benefiting the Level One Trauma Center at Orlando Regional Medical Center.