

Here's to you, Joe



Kurt Ellison

Fair Board President Denise Fagundes presents plaque to Joe Crosetti.

Colleagues and old friends pay tribute to Crosetti

By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

The message on the plaque marking Joe Crosetti's 48 years as a Santa Cruz County Fair director was short and to the point:

"No one has done more."

Crosetti, 79, was honored on

his retirement from the board yesterday by 40 friends and former fair directors in a brief ceremony in the fairgrounds hall that bears his name.

There were several short speeches, commendations from state and local governments, and a new title for

Crosetti: honorary director. He's the first former board member so honored.

Crosetti has been in ill health for the last few years and hasn't been attending board meetings, but "he's been there in spirit," said

See CROSETTI page 2 ►

CROSETTI

► From page 1

Crosetti's wife, Theresa, after the ceremony.

"It's a happy occasion," Mrs. Crosetti said. "He feels he still belongs because of the 'honorary director' title."

The main speaker was Charles Spencer, a classmate of Crosetti's at Watsonville High School and a former colleague on the fair board.

He told of Crosetti's skill at football and basketball, including the story of his winning touchdown in a 7-0 victory for the high school.

Spencer remembered that Crosetti "fell heir to a Buick with a rumble seat" in the '20s. "Do you remember that, Joe?"

"Yes, I do," Crosetti said softly.

Crosetti went into farming after his school days and built a successful business that included operations as far away as Arizona and the Imperial Valley in southern California. He also founded Crosetti Frozen Foods, which recently merged with Norcal Frozen Foods.

He's been active in a variety of community activities, including the Cancer Society, Chamber of Commerce and Red Cross.

The Crosetti Ranch off Riverside Road has traditionally been the site of numerous political and charity events,

including the annual Spring Lamb Barbecue that has raised thousands of dollars for the American Cancer Society.

Spencer praised Crosetti's generosity, saying he "has always been the first to give a dollar to any community organization."

Crosetti, a saxophone player, was an original member of the Watsonville Band.

There was one former fair director present yesterday who was on the board before Crosetti — Fred McPherson Sr., 86, retired publisher of the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

McPherson and Crosetti were on the board in the early '40s when the current fairgrounds site was chosen.

"Before that it (the fair) was jumping around" from site to site, McPherson said after the ceremony. "We agreed it ought to be in the heart of agriculture."

McPherson and Crosetti were active in party politics, but on different sides — McPherson as a Republican, Crosetti a Democrat.

But party differences went by the wayside when it came the issues affecting the county in general, McPherson said.

"We thought of the county first," he said. "Joe was a strong 100 percent for the county."