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2009 SunTrust Governor's Cup Tasting Honors Virginia's Prestigious Industry Leaders

RICHMOND, VA, February 27, 2009 – The Virginia Wine Board and the Virginia Wineries Association announced the recipients of this year's industry awards at the 2009 SunTrust Governor's Cup Tasting held February 27th at the Richmond Convention Centre in conjunction with the Virginia Wine Expo. Over 650 industry supporters and friends attended the event and enjoyed sampling a vast selection of award-winning Virginia wines and food. "We are pleased to join with the Virginia Wine Board to present the Annual Virginia Wine Honors in conjunction with the Virginia Wine Board at the excellent Virginia wine event. This is an opportunity to recognize excellence to those in our industry who go above and beyond to help the Virginia wine industry reach its potential," said Ann Heidig, President of the Virginia Wineries Association. "These distinguished awards honor organizations and individuals that have made significant contributions toward the promotion and advancement of the Virginia wine industry."

Virginia Wine Industry Person of the Year

Terri Cofer Beirne, previously the attorney of record for the Virginia Wineries Association as a lawyer for McCandlish Holton Law Firm, received the coveted Virginia Wine Industry Person of the Year Award. The Wine Industry Person of the Year is awarded by peers to someone who has made significant contributions to the Virginia wine industry. Terri worked with the industry beginning in 2003 where she was instrumental in directing the Virginia Wine Industries efforts to enable direct shipping. She also worked with the Virginia Wine industry on land-use and the direct distribution legislation. She developed expertise in state and local laws pertaining to winery rights and privileges. First awarded in 1993, past recipients include: Luca Paschina, Berkeley Mitchell, Patrick Duffeler and Tony Wolf.

Gordon Murchie Lifetime Achievement Award

Former Governor Gerald Baliles presented **Felicia Warburg Rogan**, distinguished winery owner of Oakencroft Vineyards with the 2009 Gordon Murchie Lifetime Achievement Award. Created in 2005 and originally awarded to Gordon Murchie, this award honors an individual who has performed a lifetime of service to the Virginia wine industry and has served as an inspiration to peers and colleagues. Felicia, who started Oakencroft Vineyards, over twenty-five years ago, has been an integral part of the industry since that time. In 1985 she was elected the first Chairman of the Virginia Winegrowers Advisory Board under Governor Chuck Robb. She served on that board for over 18 years. She founded the Jeffersonian Wine Grape Growers Society, and served as its Chairman for 26 years. During that time she was instrumental in creating the federally designated Monticello American Viticulture Area, its accompanying website and the Monticello October Wine Festival.

With her winery in Albemarle County, she was a pioneer in creating the Virginia Wine Country ambiance that has grown to be so popular today. Her wines have won awards nationally and the stunning beauty of her farm made it a popular destination.

In 2000, the Charlottesville Chamber of Commerce named this year's recipient the "Small Business Person of the Year," and in 2005 the Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitor's Bureau gave her their "Annual Tourism Appreciation Award." In 1995 she was given an award for "Outstanding Achievement for Support of The Wine Industry" by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia's Governor's Cup

The Virginia Governor's Cup Wine Competition, created by the Virginia Wineries Association, was first held in 1982 to recognize excellence in winemaking. This year, the competition continued to highlight the state's various wine producing regions with a panel of approximately 44 judges evaluating entries from more than 40 Virginia wineries and vineyards. After a full day of tasting and deliberation, the judges awarded 22 gold medals, 45 silver medals and 64 bronze medals.

The Virginia Wineries Association and the Virginia Wine Board would like to congratulate these award winners and thank them for their contributions and support to the Virginia wine industry. For more information about the awards program, please contact Annette Boyd at (804) 344-8200.

The Virginia Wineries Association, established in 1983, is a non-profit trade organization, representing the wineries of Virginia and dedicated to promoting public wine education and appreciation, wine and health research, quality wine production, market development and growth of the wine industry.

The Virginia Wine Marketing Office was created by the Virginia Wine Board in 2007 to assist wineries, retailers, restaurateurs, tourism entities and others with the marketing and promotion of Virginia Wines. For more information, please contact The Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office at 804.344.8200 or visit www.virginiawine.org

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