



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Winner

Winner pays tribute to 2010 'Woman of Distinction'

GEORGE WINNER May 26, 2010

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Albany, N.Y.-- A prominent Finger Lakes farmer and agribusinesswoman, Mary-Howell Martens, was honored on Tuesday evening as a “Woman of Distinction” by New York State Senator George Winner (R-C-I, Elmira) and his colleagues in the New York State Senate.

The Senate's "Women of Distinction" program, which began in March to coincide with Women's History Month in New York State, allows senators statewide to select one honoree from their respective legislative districts.

Martens and her husband, Klaas, own and operate Lakeview Organic Grain in Penn Yan (Yates County), one of the Northeast's largest and most successful organic grain businesses. Winner noted that Martens is widely respected as a national leader in sustainable agriculture.

Martens represented Winner's 53rd Senate District and join more than 50 honorees from across New York at the Senate's 13th annual "Women of Distinction" tribute. The awards ceremony was held in the Legislative Office Building, where Martens' biography and photo was displayed as part of a special exhibit.

"I'm fortunate to have this opportunity to recognize the contributions of an outstanding local citizen like Mary-Howell Martens. Her devotion to excellence, innovation, and quality within New York's number one industry, agriculture, is inspiring and outstanding," said Winner, whose legislative district encompasses Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County. "I'm also honored and pleased to have the chance to celebrate and highlight for my legislative colleagues from across New York one of the jewels of the upstate agricultural economy, Lakeview Organic Grain."

Following is the brief biography of Martens that accompanies her "Woman of Distinction" award:

Mary-Howell Martens is admired and recognized as one of the nation's pioneering leaders in sustainable agriculture.

Together with her husband Klaas, Ms. Martens owns and operates Lakeview Organic Grain in Penn Yan, New York, one of the Northeast's largest and most successful organic grain businesses. Started in 1991, the Martens' 1400-acre farm and feed mill, which they work with their children Peter, Elizabeth, and Daniel, and 10 employees, currently supplies organic feed and seed to over 300 organic livestock farmers in New York and Pennsylvania.

Noted for her wide-ranging efforts to promote sustainable agriculture, Ms. Martens is equally revered throughout the industry for her innovation, leadership, and stewardship. She received the prestigious Patrick Madden Award for Sustainable Agriculture in 2008, and has testified before the United States House of Representatives. She and her husband speak throughout the United States and Canada on sustainable agriculture and have written many articles on the subject.

Lakeview Organic Grain is prized as a jewel of the upstate agriculture economy -- one of the most prominent employers in Yates County and the Finger Lakes – and Ms. Martens is beloved by her employees for her compassion, generosity, and commitment to family.

In addition to her agribusiness endeavors, Ms. Martens, a graduate of the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, served on the USDA Advisory Committee on Agricultural Biotechnology from 2000-2002, and on the Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Science's Dean's Advisory Committee from 2003-2009. She is also a member of the New York State Department of Ag and Markets' Organic Advisory Committee and the Yates County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, in addition to numerous community volunteer efforts.