

## **Rotary Club of Santa Rosa Foundation (RCSRF)**

### **“Behind the Scenes” #4**

You may have heard the phrase “Jamison Merit Award” and wondered what is the award and why Rotary is involved? First, who is Wes Jamison? “Mr. Jamison” as most of his former agriculture students respectfully call him passed away in 1989 at the age of 82. He taught agriculture at Santa Rosa High for 37 years and his membership in the Rotary Club of Santa Rosa spanned nearly 30 years. He was noted in Rotary for his efforts to bridge agriculture, education and the business community. He frequently brought his Santa Rosa High FFA kids to Rotary, sponsored numerous farmers to join Rotary and hosted an annual day-long Sonoma County Ag Tour for Rotarians. As the Livestock Superintendent for the Sonoma County Fair, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Junior Livestock Auction and encouraged Rotarians and other Santa Rosa business owners to purchase prized animals raised by local FFA members. He also established the Sonoma County Harvest Fair in 1975 to focus attention on the rich and diverse bounty of the county’s agricultural crops.

On or about the time of Mr. Jamison’s passing there were six former students who were active members of the Rotary Club of Santa Rosa. These individuals formed the nucleus of what has become the J. Wesley Jamison Memorial Endowment Fund Committee which is coordinated and managed under the auspices of the Rotary Club of Santa Rosa Foundation. The initial memorial fund balance of approximately \$7,000 has grown over the years to \$400,000 thanks to the continued fund-raising efforts of the “Jamison Committee” and the management of the funds by the Club Foundation. The committee currently uses the annual proceeds from the fund to award grants to local FFA kids to assist with the purchase, raising and exhibition of market animals at the Sonoma County Fair. The grants are merit based hence the name “Jamison Merit Award”. Eighty-five students received grants in 2026 with awards ranging from \$300 to \$1,000. If you visit the livestock barns at the fair in August, you will see the colorful Jamison Merit Award banners on display over the stalls and pens of the award recipients.

The Rotary Club of Santa Rosa has many legendary members (Stan Lance, John Brown, Jack Levar, etc.) whom we remember for the significance of their contributions to Rotary and the greater community. Mr. Jamison is included among the club’s Rotary Legends because of his lasting agricultural legacy and contributions to Rotary.