



***Progressive Grocer* names Carole Christianson, of Western Association of Food Chains, to 2012's Top Women in Grocery**

LAKWOOD, CA (June 11, 2012) -- In an industry such as retail grocery where senior manager positions have traditionally been filled by men, Carole Christianson worked hard to make a name for herself while paving the way for other women to break through. The good news is that her outstanding efforts, leadership and success in the supermarket industry have not gone unnoticed. Christianson is one of 204 women named to *Progressive Grocer's* 6th annual "Top Women in Grocery" listing. *Progressive Grocer* is a leading grocery industry trade magazine. The Western Association of Food Chains (WAFC) is elated its chief operating officer is among the list of 2012's distinguished recipients.

"This year's Top Women in Grocery award winners collectively represent the true architects of change in a business where men have traditionally far outnumbered women in all management capacities. In turn, we're deeply honored to have an opportunity to commemorate the critical role women like Carole play across all sectors of the dynamic and indispensable grocery industry," cites Jeffrey Friedman, *Progressive Grocer* VP and Group Publisher.

Throughout her career in the beverage industry, Christianson achieved a remarkable number of "first" milestones. In 1982, she was the first woman voted to chair the Combined Food Sales Clubs of Southern California. In 1992, she was the first woman to be honored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) within the Food and Beverage Industries Division with the prestigious "Humanitarian of the Year" award. Five years later,

Christianson went on to be the first woman elected “Headlite” (President) of the Illuminators and followed that up in 1999 by being the first woman inducted into the Southern California Grocery Sales Association Hall of Fame. In May of 2007, Christianson became the first woman in the 86 year history of the WAFC to hold the position of executive vice president. Three years later, the Western Association of Food Chains appointed her chief operating officer, a position she holds today.

“This recognition by *Progressive Grocer* is no surprise to the WAFC. We’ve seen firsthand how Carole’s dynamic leadership and drive has taken the WAFC to new heights. Her breath of experience, creativity and passion for the business serves our mission of advancing the food industry through education and leadership perfectly. Carole’s unwavering dedication to achieve the ‘best ever’ has become her mantra,” emphasized President and Chairman of WAFC and Co-President and COO of Northgate Gonzalez Markets Oscar Gonzalez.

At the WAFC’s helm, Christianson is responsible for all aspects of the organization’s day-to-day operations. Working with a Board of Directors comprised of senior management from national and regional chain supermarkets and wholesalers, the primary focus is achieving growth in the number of food industry employees enrolled in advance educational programs. Additionally, Christianson produces an annual convention each April to showcase WAFC initiatives and that convention is often heralded as one of the industry’s best.

Established in 1921, the WAFC is a non-profit organization comprised of retailers and wholesalers in the 14 Western United States. It is focused on providing educational opportunities for food industry associates. The Food Industry Management Program at the University of Southern California has been available to qualified industry participants for more than 54 years.

“The Food Industry Management Program is one of the great legacy programs at the USC Marshall School of Business. The partnership we share with Carole and the WAFC industry leaders has never been stronger or more vibrant than it is today, in great part due to her guidance,” added USC Marshall School of Business Dean James Ellis.

In 2000, the WAFC expanded its scope by working with community colleges throughout the west to establish the Retail Management Certificate Program. The 30-unit, ten class curriculum is now available online and at over 160 campuses and satellite locations.

The list of honorees was selected by *Progressive Grocer* editors and was based on industry nominations. Several factors contributing to the choice included leadership and influence within both the nominee’s organization and the greater supermarket industry, areas of responsibility, career accolades and achievements, industry and community involvement, and philanthropic activities.

For more information about the WAFC go to www.wafc.com, or contact Michelle Rodger.

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