

## Westchester Group CEO Receives Iowa State University Distinguished Alumni Award



On April 17, 2009, Murray Wise, CEO of Westchester Group, will receive the 2009 Iowa State University Distinguished Alumni Award. Wise, a 1973 graduate of Iowa State University, received a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Agriculture. He will receive the award during VEISHEA, the largest student-run celebration in the country, which takes place each spring at Iowa State University.

The Distinguished Alumni Award was first established in 1961 and is the highest honor given to alumni by Iowa State University through the university's Alumni Association. This award honors Iowa State University alumni who have made both national and international contributions to their profession or life's work. Previous recipients of the Iowa State University Distinguished Alumni Award include former United States Vice President and Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace and Iowa Senator Tom Harkin.

"I am both honored and humbled to receive this award from my Alma Mater," says Wise. "Iowa State University fostered my passion for agriculture and I am grateful for the educational experiences I received during my academic career, providing me with the life skills and opportunities to be successful in any agricultural discipline."

### **An enthusiasm for farm asset management**

Growing up on a grain and livestock farm in Ontario, Canada, Wise identified his passion for agriculture early on in life. He attended Iowa State University and graduated in less than four years, taking a position in sales directly following school. Wise then joined the Sandage Companies, a traditional farm management firm which also brokered farmland sales, and quickly gained a deep interest in this discipline. In

1986, after learning skills and developing a number of innovative ideas to involve investors in farmland, Wise purchased the Champaign office of the Sandage Companies and formed Westchester Group, Inc.

Today, Westchester Group is a leading agricultural asset manager with over \$770 million in assets under management, literally from coast to coast. From the row crops of its Midwestern base, the firm has expanded to involve citrus development in Florida, vineyards and almond orchards in California, and apples in Washington.

Wise has become a national authority on farmland investment, valuation and management. He has been featured on national television and radio stations, addressed national and international conferences related to agribusiness and written two books and multiple articles on agricultural real estate investing.

### **An opportunity for education**

Because of the importance of his agricultural education at Iowa State University, Wise has created the Westchester Foundation, which annually provides financial scholarships to college students dedicated to pursuing degrees within agriculture.

“It has become increasingly important for young people involved in agribusiness as well as production agriculture to obtain a college education in order to excel in the industry,” said Wise. “I’m grateful to have the resources available to ease the financial burden of higher education for dedicated students who can make a difference in agriculture in our country and around the world.”

### **About the Westchester Foundation**

The Westchester Foundation was established in 1997 solely to provide financial resources toward a college education for students with the talent and drive to continue the extraordinary success of the nation’s agribusinesses.