



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William A Stewart Gala to highlight stories of success

**Guelph, ON, March 4, 2019** — The province-wide Advanced Agriculture Leadership Program Listening Tour is wrapping up with a Gala that celebrates both the legacy and emerging leaders in agriculture, food and rural communities.

The NEW William A Stewart Gala, a recruitment and reunion reception, in London on Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup> will present a stellar lineup of alumni (Please see the attached announcement) that will share their leadership journeys since AALP graduation. Politics, Pork, Horticulture, Finance and Media will take the stage. AALP alumni panelists include **Tom Heeman, Class 16**, Field Manager and Head of Special Projects, Heeman's ; **Amy Cronin, Class 12**, President Cronin Farms; **Lisa Thompson MPP, Class 6**, Minister of Education; **John Geurtjens, Class 2**, Vice President Operations, Farm Credit Canada and our Master of Ceremonies **John Greig, Class 9**, Farmtario.

Sponsors, supporters and potential Class 18 participants will have their questions answered through informal "Everything you wanted to know about AALP" meet and greet sessions.

The reception will kick off with a tribute to the late William A Stewart, Minister of Agriculture 1961–1975, Chancellor of the University of Guelph 1983-1989, who had a tremendous influence on leadership in this sector, including being a foundational supporter of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program.

The Listening Tour, which took place over the last few months of 2018, was an experience that left no doubt that ag and food leaders are plentiful. ROI's Leadership Program Director, Gabe Ferguson says, "We heard that leaders need to be further developed and inspired to become the future of Ontario. The tour also opened my eyes to the tremendous network throughout the agriculture value chain and communities that are ready to help."

Now in its 35th year, AALP is an experiential executive development program for those who want to broaden their horizons and expand their networks to help shape the future of agriculture and agri-food sector in Ontario. AALP boasts 460+ graduates and continues to offer opportunities for Ontario's aspiring agricultural leaders.

The Wm. A. Stewart Public Gala and Reception will take place at 6:30 pm at the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre 591 Wellington Rd, London.

Tickets for this public event are \$75 and are available online at <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/events> or by calling the Rural Ontario Institute at (519) 826-4204.

For more information contact:

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