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ACTE Announces Retired Minnesota Farm Business Management Instructor as National Award Finalist

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announces Clifford Vrieze, a retired farm business management instructor from Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Truman, Minnesota, as the winner of the 2015 ACTE Region III Lifetime Achievement Award. The ACTE Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the contributions and distinguished accomplishments of members who have been identified with the work and purposes of the Association for Career and Technical Education over an extended period of time.

Over a 30-year career in farm business management (FBM), Cliff Vrieze has assisted more than 175 farm owners to establish successful family businesses. His program, which increased annual profit per farm by \$9,000 on average, has been expanded and replicated across the region. With Vrieze's reputation as a leader in FBM firmly cemented, he went on to contribute significantly to the CTE field at large. As president of the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE), Vrieze invested the organization in scholarship and teacher mentor programs as well as new positions for a professional development coordinator and executive director/lobbyist. As president and treasurer for Minnesota Association of Career and Technical Education (MnACTE), he coalesced affiliate organizations underneath MnACTE to strengthen the association as a voice for all CTE in the state. His staunch advocacy on behalf of CTE has resulted in increasing funding for postsecondary FBM programs in Minnesota by \$1 million biennially and establishing a permanent local levy authority for secondary CTE.

Beginning in the early 2000s and moving into his retirement, Vrieze continued to champion opportunities for students through his work with various scholarship and grant committees. His eight-year term as board member on the Minnesota Agriculture Education Leadership Council (MAELC) included five years as a Governor's appointee, for which he oversaw the distribution of over \$2 million in grants and scholarships to CTE programs and students.

Vrieze's many accomplishments have been recognized with Minnesota and American honorary FFA degrees, induction into the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame, selection as an outstanding mentor by Minnesota Agri-Women, honors from the Alumni Service by University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Sciences and his selection as the 2004 ACTE Teacher of the Year. "I can think of few people that are more deserving of this honor than Cliff," says NAAE Executive Director Jay Jackman. "His dedication to our profession is unlimited."

Vrieze is one of three finalists for the 2016 national title. The national winner will be announced at the [ACTE Awards Banquet](#), a dinner and award presentation recognizing the best CTE educators in the country. The event will take place on Thursday evening, November 19, during ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Awards Banquet is sponsored by Express Employment Professionals, Kuder, CareerSafe, Certiport, and Stratasys. For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, [visit our webpage](#).

About ACTE

The [Association for Career and Technical Education \(ACTE\)](#) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, guidance counselors and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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