



2021 Inductee

Reggie Brown

Industry veteran **Reggie Brown's** leadership and tenacity have had a profound and lasting effect on the tomato industry in Florida and beyond.

Brown's family is well-known in Alachua County for its multigenerational Brown's Farm and legendary roadside produce stand. Despite a career that has taken him all over the world to advocate for growers, Brown's roots have remained with his family's operation.

After graduating from the University of Florida (UF) in 1969, Brown served two years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He returned to UF to earn his master's degree in agriculture, and then spent 12 years as a UF/IFAS Extension Service agent in various capacities. After a 10-year stint at the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association as marketing and membership director, Brown was named executive vice president of the Florida Tomato Exchange. At the same time, he also led the Florida Tomato Committee and the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange.

In those roles, he would become the face of the Florida tomato industry, leading on numerous fronts including unfair Mexican trade practices, tomato food safety and the effort to retain the use of methyl bromide as a crop-protection tool.

For years, Brown was on the forefront in fostering fair trade for the tomato industry and in resolving trade disputes. His effective leadership began before the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and continued well beyond to ensure that Mexico adhered to negotiated suspension agreements designed to balance unfair trade practices.

With great foresight, Brown saw the federal government moving toward food safety regulations. Years before the Food Safety Modernization Act became law, he successfully worked to gain consensus among growers, regulators and other stakeholders to develop statewide food safety standards for Florida fresh market tomatoes. Those efforts became the benchmark for the development of the national produce safety guidance.

As chairman of the Crop Protection Coalition, Brown was the voice of the industry nationally and internationally. He served on the delegation to the Montreal Protocol Treaty negotiations for 10 years during the phase-out of methyl bromide, a decades-old component of pest management for many Florida crops, strongly protecting the interests of growers.

Now, Brown's induction into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame brings him full circle, as he led the Hall of Fame Foundation for years as its volunteer president, preserving the legacies of so many outstanding Florida agricultural pioneers and leaders.