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Monticello's Gabriele Rausse recognized for service to the Virginia wine industry

Monticello's assistant director of Gardens and Grounds, Gabriele Rausse, was recognized for his service to the Virginia wine industry during the fourth annual Virginia Wine Expo, held in Richmond, Va., on February 25.

Donna Pugh Johnson from the Virginia Agribusiness Council presented Rausse with the 2011 Distinguished Service Award. The award is presented to an individual for meritorious service to the council and the state's agribusiness industry.

"Over the years, we have honored many worthy individuals within the agribusiness industry," said Pugh Johnson. "But none has yet been referred to as 'the father' of an industry sector."

Rausse was recognized for the significant impact he has made working with vineyards throughout the Commonwealth,

including Barboursville Vineyards, which became the first commercial vinifera winery in the state. Rausse has served as a consultant and mentor to many individuals starting out in the wine industry. He has also served as an instructor for the University of Virginia's Travel and Learn Program, as well as Piedmont Community College's enology program. Rausse helped begin the wine competition at the State Fair of Virginia. In 1996, he was named Virginia Wine Person of the Year. He has also received the Gordon W. Murchie Lifetime Achievement Award.

One Agribusiness Council member noted, "Without Gabriele's hard work and dedication to push ideas forward, what we know now as a leading Virginia industry of wine would not exist. He is, in many ways, the 'father of the modern Virginia wine industry.'"

