



Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association

P.O. Box 662, Lyndonville VT 05851

Phone: 802-227-2775

www.VermontMaple.org

Contact:

Allison Hope, Executive Director

allison@vermontmaple.org

802-222-6132

link to photos: <https://bit.ly/mapleawards24>

Vermont Maple Recognizes Outstanding Members

Awards Presented at Vermont's Annual Winter Conference Week

Lyndonville, VT, January 27, 2025 -

The Board of Directors of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) presented the 2024 Annual Maple Awards as part of the Vermont Maple Conference Week sessions held on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at the Vermont State University, Randolph campus. Annual Awards include Outstanding Sugar Maker Award, Vermont Maple Person of the Year, and the Sumner Williams Lifetime Achievement Award. These award recipients exemplify the best of Vermont maple and the VMSMA Board is honored to recognize their contributions and achievements.

Outstanding Sugar Maker Award: The Stewart Family of Stewart Maple, Cuttingsville VT

The VMSMA Board selects a Vermont sugar maker, individual, or family who sets a good example for other sugar makers to follow in cleanliness, food safety and production practices. In addition, nominees for this award help the maple industry by participating in county and statewide fairs to promote and educate future sugar makers and the general public on the benefits of pure Vermont maple syrup.

The Stewart family embodies the spirit of this award through their forward-thinking approach to both family and business. They demonstrate exceptional teamwork, Mark, Gina, Elliott, Tanner, Alyssa and their extended family—all playing integral roles in the operation. Their collaboration spans from working in the woods and building a new sugarhouse to effectively leveraging social media to promote and sell their branded retail products.

Elliott and Tanner stand out as inspiring examples for the younger generation of sugar makers. The family's innovative practices, such as their annual tapping in November/December to capture the earliest sap runs, have become well known and respected in the industry, showcasing their willingness to embrace new techniques.

By combining strong family values, innovative strategies, and a dedication to promoting Vermont maple syrup through education and outreach, the Stewart Family sets a high standard for sugar makers statewide.

Congratulations to the Stewarts for their remarkable contributions to the Vermont maple community!

Vermont Maple...the Official Flavor of Vermont!



Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association

P.O. Box 662, Lyndonville VT 05851

Phone: 802-227-2775

www.VermontMaple.org

Vermont Maple Person of the Year: Jason Gagne, Swanton VT

This award is presented to someone whose work benefits the entire maple industry and who may or may not be a sugar maker themselves.

Jason has been a cornerstone of the VMSMA Sugarhouse Certification Program, dedicating countless hours to promoting food safety education and certification of sugaring operations at Maple Schools and Conferences. His efforts have been instrumental in advancing industry standards and ensuring quality across Vermont's maple community. In addition to his work with Certification, Jason's dedication shines through in his contributions to VMSMA's booth at the Big E in Springfield, MA, where he consistently steps up to support Vermont maple. From providing syrup and trucking supplies to volunteering in the booth and delivering additional syrup when needed, Jason has proven to be an invaluable asset.

As a representative of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association, Jason exemplifies the commitment, passion, and teamwork that strengthen the industry. His efforts have not only benefited individual sugar makers but have also elevated the reputation of Vermont maple as a whole. Congratulations to Jason Gagne on this well-deserved recognition!

Sumner Williams Lifetime Achievement Award: Robert "Ted" Young, West Glover VT

This award, previously called the "President's Award" was renamed in January 2000 in memory of Sumner Williams, then assistant director of the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center. Sumner was a sugar maker, a researcher, an educator and a true friend to the maple industry. The Sumner Hill Williams Memorial Cup is presented each year to honor an individual for outstanding service and dedication to the maple industry.

Ted Young's legacy is deeply rooted in the Vermont maple community. Over the years, he was a tireless advocate for the industry, actively contributing to both his local organization, the Orleans County Maple Producers Association (OCMPA), and the state organization (VMSMA). Ted held multiple leadership roles in both groups, consistently offering his time, expertise, and energy. He also served as one of the sugarhouse coordinators for the Orleans County Fair, ensuring that maple syrup and its traditions were prominently represented. Ted's generosity and kindness left a lasting impression on everyone he met. Known for his willingness to share his knowledge, Ted openly explained the techniques behind his award-winning maple cream, embodying the spirit of collaboration and community that defines the maple industry.

Ted's passing in February 2024 marked the loss of a cherished friend to Vermont maple. However, there is solace in knowing that he was walking his beloved maple lines when he left us—a poignant reflection of his lifelong dedication to the craft. The Vermont maple community will always remember Ted Young as an essential figure whose contributions shaped the industry and whose warmth and generosity inspired those around him. This award is a tribute to his enduring impact and extraordinary legacy.

Vermont Maple...the Official Flavor of Vermont!



Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association

P.O. Box 662, Lyndonville VT 05851

Phone: 802-227-2775

www.VermontMaple.org

###

The Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA), founded in 1893, is one of the oldest agricultural organizations in the United States and represents over 1,000 members. The VMSMA helps to promote and protect the branding of pure Vermont maple products and to serve as the official voice for Vermont sugar makers. Our members take great pride in maintaining a prosperous maple industry and a working landscape that future generations will enjoy. Vermont sugar makers produce over 3 million gallons of maple syrup annually (about one half of the production in the United States). More information at www.VermontMaple.org.

Vermont Maple...the Official Flavor of Vermont!