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KCFB welcomes new directors to the board

By Amy D. Fienen

Kings County Farm Bureau's board of directors has welcomed two new directors: Julie Martella and David Kahn. The unique skillsets and personal knowledge of the local ag industry each one brings to the table will benefit the organization and its members.

JULIE MARTELLA

Julie Martella never aspired to be a full-time farmer, but when her husband, Jason Martella, passed away unexpectedly in 2017, the former elementary school teacher found herself faced with the task of keeping their farm going alone. While raising the couple's two daughters, Merribeth and Allison, she learned how to drive a tractor and got her pesticide applicator license. For three seasons, she ran the farm until an injury forced her to lease it out. Without the farm to keep her busy, the grief she'd been too busy to deal with caught up with her.

Martella started working with a widowed life coach who helped her not only deal with her grief, but showed her how to use it for good.

"I've been given a very unique charge in this world; I can use my experience to help people," she said. "I have allowed my grief to transform my life."

As a speaker for Soaring Spirits International, Martella travels around the country speaking to fellow widows on the struggles of widowhood and how to cope with them. Her website, navigatingwidowhood.com, includes links to her weekly blogs and podcasts, as well as resources and information on her coaching and mentoring services. During the 20 years she spent farming with her husband, farming became near and dear to her heart. Martella is excited to see how she can help connect people with their food and the farmers that grow it as a KCFB director. Additionally, she's excited to bring more diversity to an industry that's traditionally been male dominated. "Women aren't an anomaly in agriculture anymore, and we shouldn't be treated as such," she said.

DAVID KAHN

Born and raised in Hanford, David Kahn is a partner in Kahn, Soares & Conway, the law firm co-founded by his dad, Jan Kahn. Kahn completed his undergrad studies at the University of Oregon and went on the graduate from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego.

He hadn't planned to spend his career at Kahn, Soares & Conway, but a summer internship turned into a permanent position. His practice focuses on agriculture law, natural resources and water law, corporate and business law, and real estate law. With the implementation of SGMA, much of his work has been with water associations, water districts, irrigation districts, mutual water companies, water advocacy groups, and groundwater sustainability agencies.



Julie Martella

David Kahn

Civic organizations Kahn is involved with include the Kings Regional Health Foundation, the Hanford Education Foundation, the Kings Economic Development Corporation, the Kings County Bar Association, and Sound N Vision.

Kahn and his wife, Emily have three children: Grace, 14; Tucker, 12; and Tate, 9. All three kids are soccer players, as is Kahn, who plays on an indoor adult team.

He is looking forward to seeing how his expertise in ag and water law can serve KCFB during these times when water continues presenting a number of challenges.

"Agriculture is the backbone of our community and my practice, and I thought this was the best way to give back to agriculture and the community," he said.