



KENNETH QUINN

PRESIDENT, WORLD FOOD PRIZE FOUNDATION

WRITTEN BY JOHN RUAN III

I have known this great humanitarian and creative visionary—Ken Quinn—for nearly 20 years. He has been an inspiration to me and countless others in devoting his life to public service and to making the world a better place. Ken has forged a marvelous legacy of which our state, nation and the world can be proud.

The stars aligned over Washington, D.C., in 1999 when my wife, Janis, and I invited Ken to become president of the World Food Prize Foundation and accept the challenge of building this international prize into the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.”

He accepted that challenge, and with his creative spirit, amazing devotion and tireless efforts, the organization has grown into the internationally recognized institution it is today. Under Ken’s leadership and guidance, the World Food Prize has truly achieved, and exceeded, Norman Borlaug’s and my father’s visions.

His accomplishments at the World Food Prize are countless and remarkable: creating a three-day International Symposium, which annually draws hundreds of individuals to Iowa from more than 60 countries; holding a magnificent Laureate Award Ceremony at the Iowa Capitol, which welcomes dignitaries and leaders, scientists

and scholars from around the world; and the commissioning and placement of the Borlaug statue in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol, among others.

My favorite of his many achievements has been the transformation of the historic Des Moines Public Library building into the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, an architectural treasure that draws thousands of visitors from across Iowa, the United States and the world.

I have always known Ambassador Quinn to be a true statesman and advocate for Southeast Asia. I witnessed firsthand his great renown in the region when Ken served as our guide and resource as Janis and I chaired a trip to Southeast Asia for the Chief Executive Organization in 2012. His efforts culminated in a fantastic voyage up the Mekong River with an international group of 90 CEOs. He made the experience so memorable for all of us. We were immensely proud to be with Ken as we discovered the respect and admiration that others had for him and as we learned of the many lives he had touched throughout his career. He is truly a “rock star” diplomat. I am honored to call Ken Quinn my dear friend and colleague.

John Ruan III is chairman the World Food Prize Foundation, of Bankers Trust and of Ruan Transportation Management Systems Inc.