

Loras grad, ambassador honored

White House names
Dubuque native as 1 of 11
'Champions of Change.'

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Former Dubuque Ken Quinn, president of the Des Moines-based World Food Prize Foundation, was one of 11 people recently honored as a "Champion of Change" by the White House.

The 11 people were honored for strengthening food security. Each week, the White House selects a group of champions, from educators to entrepreneurs to community leaders.

"Today's champions are examples of the groundbreaking work being done to tackle hunger at home and abroad," said Kathleen Merrigan, deputy agriculture secretary, in a news release. "These individuals are making improved



Ken
Quinn

access to healthy food a reality for millions of individuals in need."

Quinn, a Loras College graduate and a former U.S. ambassador to Cambodia, said the event "was wonderful."

He cited the group's diversity, all engaged in some aspect of food, confronting hunger in both the United States and abroad.

"Looking around the room I thought, oh my heavens. Number one, it is such a rich mixture of people from all different parts of American society, and gosh, what an honor for someone like me to be included in the mix," he said.

Quinn, whose foreign service career spanned 32 years and included serving on Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff, recalled an anecdotal conversation with Norman Borlaug, World Food Prize founder and "Iowa's greatest hero," who also

dealt with hunger internationally.

"He first learned about hunger in the streets of Minneapolis when he was going to college," Quinn said, "and seeing homeless people with no food and sleeping on the streets. There is food insecurity and hunger in America, and sometimes it's out of sight as well for many of us. This was an important reminder of this."

At World Food Prize Foundation, Quinn heads the annual Iowa Hunger Summit slated for Oct. 16 in Des Moines. It celebrates Iowa's great successes in fighting hunger and poverty and to unite in further action against both.

"One of the messages at the Champions of Change event is that there is food insecurity and hunger in our country," Quinn said. "The numbers can be very surprising. Sometimes it's young kids and sometimes senior citizens. We have to be mindful of the importance of trying to ensure,

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as best as we can as a society, that there is enough food — nutritious food — for everyone. That's the goal. Part of the challenge is just having people aware that there is a really specific need."

Quinn believes Iowa's farmers — whether small or large — have "a very strong motivation" to ensure a steady food supply.

"They are sincerely engaged and want to provide as much good and nutritious food as possible to help feed the world," he said.