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Robert Mondavi Winery Corporation Fraudulently Acquired Trademarks & Monopolized Historic Napa Legacy

The Robert Mondavi Winery Corporation fraudulently acquired trademarks "ToKalon" & "ToKalon Vineyard" and monopolized one of the most famed and revered legacies in Napa Valley. The true legacy of H.W. Crabb and the famed ToKalon property that he planted over 150 years ago is not solely owned by one beverage giant – but is shared by many in Napa Valley.

“The legacy of the iconic ToKalon property and the wine and viticulture pioneer H.W. Crabb represent a specific place within Napa Valley and a unique history that is well documented and not owned exclusively by one corporation. It is truly fraudulent to misrepresent that famed legacy and that unique history for one corporation to own their exclusive use,” stated Jeremy Nickel, The Vineyard House.

To trademark "ToKalon" & "ToKalon Vineyard" the Robert Mondavi Winery Corporation fraudulently claimed that “ToKalon” had little historical or geographic significance while knowing that it did. In a November 30, 1987 affidavit supporting their trademark application to the United States Patent & Trademark Office the Robert Mondavi Winery Corporation claimed:

Prior to the turn of the 20th Century, there was a winery in the Napa Valley which used the name "Tokalon". Upon information and belief, that winery was sold off in parcels during the first fifteen to twenty years of the 20th Century and use of the name was discontinued. Accordingly, although the name has some historical significance, it has no current meaning or significance in the wine industry.

The affidavit is fraudulent because the Robert Mondavi Winery Corporation knew that “ToKalon” was indeed significant and that it had meaning and significance in the wine industry, especially as the geographical name of a specific vineyard. The Robert Mondavi Winery Corporation commissioned a study by wine historian William Heintz that confirmed the importance of the “ToKalon” name and property. In a letter from wine historian William Heintz on March 8, 1979 and addressed to Tim Mondavi at the Robert Mondavi Winery, Heintz offers to prepare a report on the history and legacy of H.W. Crabb’s ToKalon and summarizes Crabb’s importance within the state’s wine history.

Crabb was one of the pioneers in viticulture and wine making in California in the last century and his name deserves the same ranking as Agoston Haraszthy!!! At one time he had 400 varieties of grapes in his vineyard and he distributed cuttings freely about the state. He talked constantly of the need to upgrade California's vine quality which would lead to better wines. He wanted to make wines to match those of Europe. About 1885, he began selling most of his wine in glass--rather than in bulk. And he set up distributorships in Eastern United States. This took courage for most of the wine was then sold to large wholesale agencies in San Francisco who did the retailing. Few winemen in that period were pioneers in not only viticulture, but wine making and marketing.

In a subsequent letter from William Heintz to Tim Mondavi at the Robert Mondavi Winery and dated March 7, 1980 that accompanied the completed report Heintz authored at the request of the Mondavis and titled "The Vineyards and Wine of H.W. Crabb, Oakville, Ca. and His ToKalon Label" Heinz references the extensive information that is available on the importance of the "ToKalon" name.

Dear Tim:

Enclosed you will find my study of the wine label known since 1886 as "To-Kalon" and owned by Henry W. Crabb. There were dozens of sources for reference in preparing this summary and I hope I have been succinct enough, yet detailed enough for your uses.

"Growing up in the Napa Valley I learned the importance of preserving and protecting our unique heritage and history that help to make Napa Valley such a special place from my father. He instilled in me the importance of place and history and the people who lived that history. It has been my lifelong passion to preserve that history for future generations so that they can better understand the pioneers like H.W. Crabb who helped to forge the early history of the Napa Valley that we all love so much," stated Nickel.

H.W. Crabb's ToKalon property began with an initial purchase of 240 acres in 1868 and expanded with the acquisition of 119 acres in 1879 and 168 acres in 1889. At ToKalon, Crabb helped establish Napa Valley as a premier wine region through his experimentation with varietals, production of high-quality wine, and vine cutting sales. As a pioneering viticulturalist and winemaker, he was respected for his technical expertise and shared his extensive knowledge through lectures and articles. At the time of Crabb's death in 1899, the 527-acre ToKalon property was regarded as one of the most significant vineyards in Napa Valley.

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