



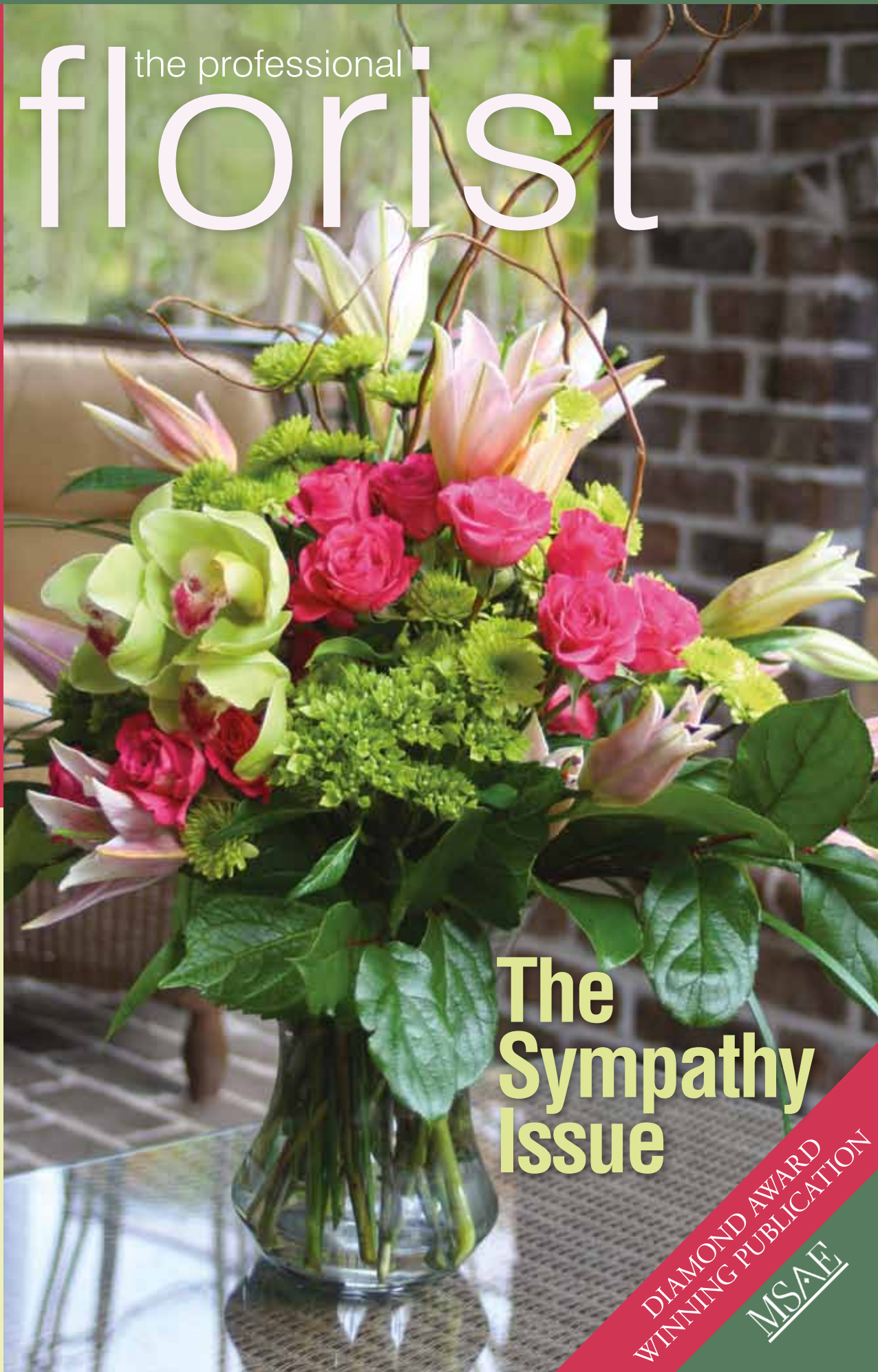
Volume II 2010

**MFA Election
Results**

**An Industry
Inspiration**

**Sympathy
Flowers
from Your
Wholesaler**

the professional florist



The Sympathy Issue

DIAMOND AWARD
WINNING PUBLICATION

MSA·E

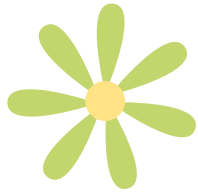
A woman in a black dress and plaid shawl is holding a large black and white umbrella and a basket of flowers in a cemetery. The basket is filled with yellow lilies, purple flowers, and pink lilies. She is standing next to a dark wooden fence. The background shows trees and a cloudy sky.

IN TIMES OF
Sympathy

#92
Everlastin' Basket



Syndicate Sales
FLORAL INDUSTRY LEADER
Manufacturer | Importer | Distributor



the professional florist

Volume II 2010

Cover image
courtesy of Syndicate Sales

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Michigan Floral ASSOCIATION

1152 Haslett Road, P.O. Box 67 Haslett, MI 48840
(517) 575-0110 • (517) 575-0115
rod@michiganfloral.org
www.michiganfloral.org

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MFA is not responsible for the statements or opinions published in the *The Professional Florist*. These represent the views of each author and are not necessarily the views of the association or its staff.



A Special Thank You to Photographer Al Cooley

In our Volume I 2010 issue, we forgot to credit photographer Al Cooley for all of the wonderful photographs featured in the "Nature's Creative Edge" article on pages 10-13. Al made four trips out to the site in order to get shots during different times of the day. Because the event was a scholarship fundraiser, Al volunteered his services at no charge. Al owns Squareshooter Photography, 3931 Ravines Drive, Allendale, MI. 49401. (616) 856-0088. www.myspace.com/squareshooter. If you would like to purchase a disc with all the Nature's Creative Edge photos, please contact the MFA office.

The Changing World of Sympathy

BY ALICE WATEROUS, AIFD, CF, MFA PRESIDENT



Sympathy expressions are in a state of change. Where does that leave the average florist? “Celebrations of Life,” shortened visitations at traditional services, an increase in cremations... all of these changes in the sympathy business impact the floral industry.

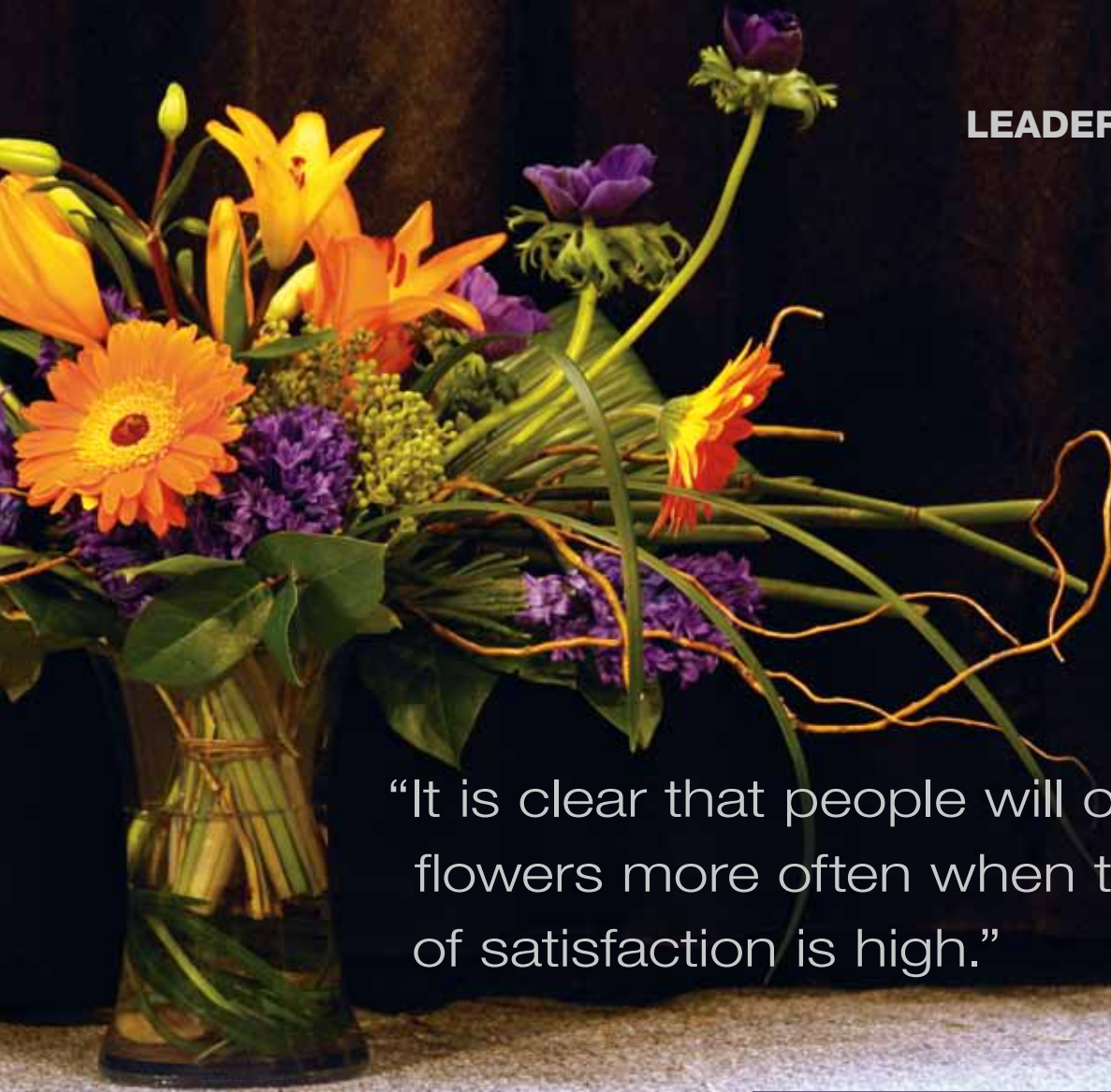
In the end, the question is, how do we as a society address the subject of death?

Expressing grief and honoring the deceased are normal, healthy responses. Whether a family chooses traditional or very individualized services, florists are making the adaptations to serve the bereaved.

A major impression was made years ago in our family by the way a loss was handled.

Long before “Celebrations” became popular, a relative who had willed their body to science was later honored with a gathering of family and friends. The problem was that there really didn’t seem to be an appropriate time to express grief. Celebrating the life of someone who has passed has its place, but to some extent, I wonder if we are sometimes denying reality and causing people to feel that there is something wrong with the grieving process.

“When we shorten the sympathy rituals too much, we rob others of an opportunity to express their grief.”



“It is clear that people will order flowers more often when their level of satisfaction is high.”

A few years later, when my father died, he also had willed his body to science, not wanting a funeral. We did not honor that wish, and have never regretted it. With the help of our funeral director, the medical school was still the recipient of his remains, but we had a traditional service allowing family and friends to have a time and place to say goodbye. We made that decision because we felt our children needed to understand death rather than just have grandpa disappear. The thing we hadn't anticipated was the flood of folks from Dad's assisted living facility who came to express their loss. I learned from our experience that when we shorten the sympathy rituals too much, we rob others of an opportunity to express their grief.

A big part of those expressions today are highly personalized floral designs. As the public sees these creative offerings, their opinion of sympathy flowers becomes more favorable. It is clear that people will order flowers more often when their level of satisfaction is high.

The florist who continues to grow by attending programs and classes like those offered at the Great Lakes Floral Expo and by MFA member wholesale companies will be able to thrive in this changing world. ✨

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Joliet Junior College
Donna Theimer, AIFD
1215 Houbolt Ave.
Joliet, FL 60431

MFAELECTION

Tellers Committee Counts Your Vote

BY HEIDI ANDERSON, EDITOR

The annual Tellers Committee Meeting was held January 11, 2010, to count the ballots for the 2010 Michigan Floral Association Board of Directors election. MFA Executive Vice President Rod Crittenden, MFA Treasurer and Hyacinth House co-owner Jim Schmidt, and longtime floral industry leader Lucille Belen met at the Ingham County Rehabilitation Center in Okemos, MI., where Lucille was recovering from a fall.

“We were very happy that Lucille was willing and able to participate despite her recuperation,” Schmidt said. “No matter what she meets with us every year to count the votes.”

The results were reported to MFA’s Immediate Past President, Jeanette Gaudreau-Ballien, owner of Gaudreau the Florist in Saginaw, MI. Results were kept in confidence until the winners were announced.

The three-person Tellers Committee has been meeting for 11 years. Lucille Belen was the longtime owner of Belen’s Flowers in Lansing for more than 70 years

and served on the Lansing City Council. She operated the very successful Belen’s Floral School for 30 years. MFA still uses the format she created for its 5-day basic course at the Professional Education Center. ✿

MFA Executive Vice President Rod Crittenden presents a beautiful orchid to Lucille Belen on her 97th birthday, on December 28, 2009. Lucille has devoted her life to the floral industry and pioneered educational formats still used today.



MFA Board of Directors Results



REGION 4 DIRECTOR

Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, CFD, MFA president, owner of A Waterous Floral Consultant LLC, in Grand Haven, MI, was elected to serve a three-year term as Region 4 Director.



DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Bob Patterson, owner of Patterson Flowers in Big Rapids, Reed City, and Cadillac, MI, was elected to serve a three-year term as Director at Large.

Henry Mast Greenhouses, Inc. has been in the MHI since 1993 and is very pleased with the surplus premium returns and the superior customer service. "Not only do we recognize the tremendous growth on our return - which takes thousands off our premium, we are also pleased with the many benefits of the MFA and the MHI Fund."

Tim Stiles, President
Henry Mast Greenhouses, Inc.
& Masterpiece Flower Company
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SYMPATHYFEATURE

Fantastic Floral

One small shop's big success with

BY MARTIN VAN TIL, AIFD

In these economically challenged times, it is important to fill every order with creativity and value. This is especially true for floral tributes, where our work is displayed for a multitude of people, side-by-side with our competitors. We know all-too-well that business can grind to a screeching halt, and just when we decide to re-stage an entire display area, we get slammed with a large funeral.



This very thing happened to us October 2009. We were in the middle of an extensive interior remodeling (new cooler, new service counter, ceilings, flooring, etc.) A very well known doctor and a local businessman were both killed in a tragic plane crash. The orders started pouring in. Both services were at the same time, with only one day of visitation and the funerals the next morning. We realized immediately that the only way we could get all the orders delivered on time was to optimize the way we do things, starting with selling the right mix of flowers, plants and silks. Because most of the orders were higher-end and some were double orders (for each service), we diplomatically asked the customers to let us choose what to send and promised something tasteful.

Creative License

Rather than sending plants with cut flowers added, we suggested the simplicity of a tropical or blooming plant in a ceramic

A funeral wreath made of green trichyllum, bells of Ireland, Eskimo roses and green button mums.

pot. It was very important that the customers did not micro-manage every order. We needed creative license in order to make sure they would get the best possible value for their budget. We could not be bogged down with explaining to each customer what we would be sending. This is where Susan, our front-and-center person, really 'wowed.' She was instrumental in making suggestions without too many promises. It's always a balancing act trying to please the customer without making things too complicated for the designers. As a manager and designer, I go by a 'less is more' philosophy. I like to create



SYMPATHYFEATURE

Tributes

two prominent funerals



“I think sometimes floral designers get so focused that we forget we can delegate many of the repetitive tasks to our support staff and still get the professional look our customers have come to expect.”

designs that have a greater perceived value. A good clean look will always set us apart from our competitors. I also steer clear of overly thematic or cutesy designs. A little restraint can go a long way.

Put to the Test

Our design room had 150 orders stacked up, waiting to be delivered. With only two designers, our small workroom was put to the test. I started by having Miguel (our delivery and all-around assistant), match containers to order tickets and blocking them in. Because some of the orders were for both services, we did them at the same

A colorful spring mix evokes feelings of walking through a garden.

SYMPATHYFEATURE

time, kind of a carbon copy, which really cut down on production time. Although I would oversee everything that went out, I didn't need to be involved with every order. My sister, Debbie, happened to stop in and I put her to work. She shined plants, made sure the cards were correct and helped customers. Sometimes just having support staff can really make an impact on keeping everything going in a positive direction.

Having to create flowers for both families was the first task at hand; one family requested a very outdoor autumn look, while the other wanted to reflect the family's Irish heritage. Both caskets were closed, so we simply did a double casket saddle of rich fall colors with textures of fresh cattails, millet, seeded eucalyptus, solidago, lilies and roses. For the other, my only directive was to use mostly greenery in the form of a large wreath, (cost was not an issue). I used green trichyllum, bells of Ireland, Eskimo roses and green button mums. The bells of Ireland circled the wreath inside and out, looking like Celtic knots. The monochromatic color scheme emphasized its simplicity and textural quality.

Just when we were starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel, we received a call from a shop in Chicago requesting two large wreaths from Harpo Studios (Oprah Winfrey's company), verifying that we could still deliver them. Of course

I said yes! I put Miguel and Debbie to work filling basic greenery and filler flowers. I then finished with focal flowers and other accent flowers for a very finished, clean look. I think sometimes floral designers get so focused that we forget we can delegate many of the repetitive tasks to our support staff and still get the professional look our customers have come to expect. A well-organized shop and work area are essential in keeping your production moving and able to sell what you have and make it look as beautiful as possible in a short amount of lead-time. Maximize the look while minimizing the time and effort it takes to achieve it! ✿

Martin Van Til has worked in the floral industry for more than 30 years, owning his own shop until 1995, when a kidney transplant forced him to take a break. Martin worked as a freelancer throughout Michigan, including designing weddings on Mackinac Island and doing display work for several wholesalers. Martin has participated in numerous classes and MFA programs and has served on the Regional FTD Board. For the past two years he has been part of the design team for the Meadowbrook Christmas Tour. He also participated the last three years in the Nature's Creative Edge Benefit Event, which is featured each year in The Professional Florist and Flora magazine. Martin was the recipient of the 2008 Retail Employee of the Year award from MFA. He was inducted into AIFD in July of 2006, in Washington D.C. He currently manages Flowers by Josie in Gaylord, MI.

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Creative Comfort

BY TONJA VANDER VEEN, AIFD, CF

Fresh flowers for funerals can sometimes fall to the wayside. With monetary donations on the rise, we are seeing less and less flowers at funeral services. We need to make our work stand out to make people want to send flowers. It is a great comfort for a family to walk into a funeral home and see flowers and know that others are thinking of them in their sorrow. We need to put our best foot forward. Don't send flowers that are ready to die the next day. Your work will be on display – along with your competitions – for all to see for several days, and what better advertisement than to have your work still looking great long after the service? Family members can then enjoy the flowers at home. Add things to the arrangement that a family member can keep after the flowers are gone; this is a reminder of the person that they lost. In this arrangement, the feathered spheres could be used at home as decoration in a bowl for a table or shelf. Ask the family to bring something in that you can add to the flowers. Remember: florists send 'thinking of you,' 'with deepest sympathy,' 'sorry for your loss,' 'our thoughts and prayers are with you,' all without a single word. We send it with the best product on the planet... flowers. *

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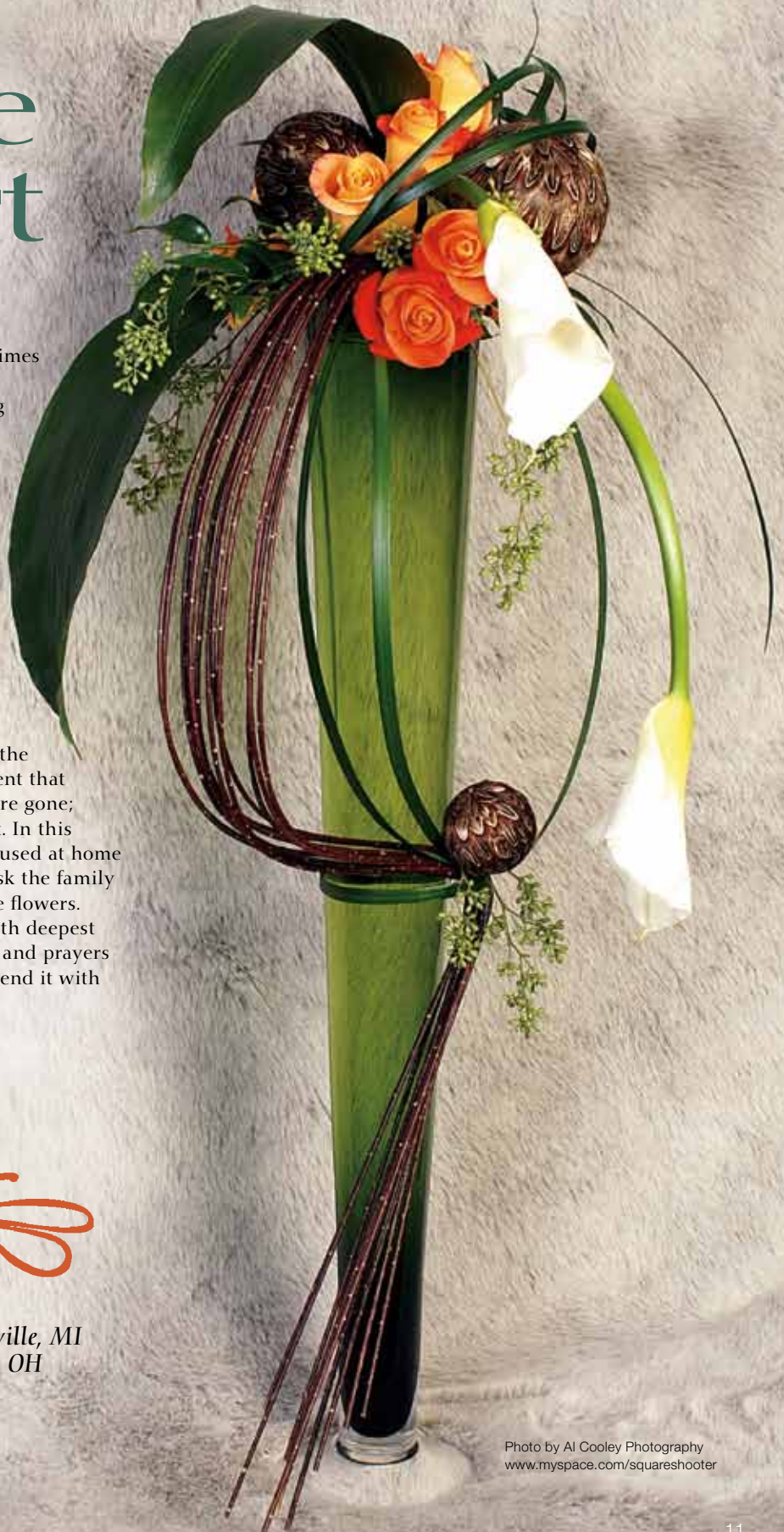


Photo by Al Cooley Photography
www.myspace.com/squashooter

SYMPATHYFEATURE

Sympathy Work

Quality communication is the key to

BY JOHN KLINGEL, AAF, AIFD, PFCI

It has become increasingly challenging for me to answer the question, "what is new in trends for sympathy designs?" Personally, I don't feel much has changed in what the consumer is seeking when ordering flowers for their dearly departed. It still remains to be the most sentimental time for customers regarding flowers. Time after time, I would hear my clients in the con-



sultation area reminiscing about the deceased; based on that I would recommend that they bring in some mementos that we could include in the arrangements.

This is an Opportunity

Be realistic when suggesting price ranges for your work. I found customers are far more apt to complain about a modest price point design, especially when they had the impression the arrangement was going to be bigger or fuller. One rule in my shop was to get an actual measurement of size and write that on the order. Everyone knows how tall three feet is. And if a consumer indicates



– Revisited

SUCCESS

to you that they want an arrangement that really stands out, urge them to purchase an easel design.

I'm still surprised when I hear of florists who do not put cards with their shop name and phone number on the designs they send to the funeral home. This is an opportunity to advertise your work to the public, especially when a customer has given you "creative license." Take advantage of the situation and sell artistry while promoting your talent to the public.

In certain markets, keepsakes are very popular... afghan throws, iron crosses, plaques, wreathes, poly box-wood cross and figurines give additional value to the arrangement. NAPCO has added a line of giftware suitable for just this sort of occasion. Certain items are specifically suitable for pets, a new market for florists to tap into. If the florist can offer something new and creative that is also lasting, it gives the consumer more options.

Be Prepared

Professionalism should be observed at all times, and that includes the delivery process. The funeral home my shop worked with was always complaining about local florists, usually the same ones, who could never seem to get the flowers there on time. Funeral directors will gladly work with and recommend stress-free florists.



Personalization is one of the top trends in sympathy work. Here, John Klingel has incorporated photographs of the deceased into the floral design. Encourage customers to bring their special photos or objects to be integrated into sympathy designs.

The number '9' has been crafted out of wire and a floral arrangement designed into the center. If the deceased was an avid sports player, his or her number could be included in the design. If not a number, ask the customer about the deceased's hobbies and passions.

“Beautiful flowers
should play a vital role
at all important stages
of one’s life.”



Customers may not always think about tropicals and high-style designs. Suggest a vast array of options instead of just the standard spray. This design is sure to stand out in a sea of sympathy arrangements.



SYMPATHYFEATURE

“Funeral directors will gladly work with and recommend stress-free florists.”

Largely, because of the dramatically weakened economy, I feel most florists are looking for creative approaches to get more sympathy work. One answer can be to give the customer ‘more bang for their buck.’ To do that, the florist has to shop wisely for the best price and sell more space in their arrangements since ‘size does matter!’

In the January 2010 issue of *Florists’ Review Magazine*, Stan Pohmer’s article “The State of the Industry,” acknowledges “industry leader, Mr. H. Clay Atchison III of McAdams Floral in Victoria, Texas, for creating a Web site and a marketing template that other florists and SAF are supporting in an industry campaign to get back a fair share of sympathy business our industry has lost.” If you haven’t read this informative article, pick up a copy of the magazine.

It’s no surprise that the increasingly popular trend of cremation is gaining steam. In Florida, more than 65 percent of the funerals are using this form of disposition or interment. The general public often becomes confused when society breaks with tradition. Should they send flowers when a body isn’t present? And if so, what types of flowers and styles of arrangements? These are questions that florists need to be prepared to answer intelligently. Suggest that, “beautiful flowers should play a vital role at all important stages of one’s life.” Flowers are always appropriated and often a designer’s most creative work is used with a cremation urn, box, or just a photograph.

I think consumers also are interested in purchasing designs that are multifunctional. My father passed away in 2005, and several thoughtful friends sent vase arrangements. One arrangement in particular went from his service to a house warming party my niece was hosting two days later, after that the same design was used at another event for a friend of hers. I informed the sender how well utilized their arrangement was.

I think the trend in sympathy work today is to focus on how



Here, John has used babies breath as the focal of the design, rather than just the filler. Florigene carnations make a nice base and add a nice splash of purple to the design. Find out the deceased’s favorite colors and flowers and use that information in your design.

Photos are from a sympathy panel John Klingel presented at MEA’s Great Lakes Floral Expo.

you can better assist your customers when they do call. Quality communication is the key to success. Work to do the best job you can for your customer and advise them honestly, so when they see the flowers you sent – the flowers that represents them – everyone is pleased and they are likely to call back. ✿

John Klingel started his career in the floral industry at his hometown florist. Thirty-three years later, he has owned a retail flower shop and taught students from around the world, presenting design and business programs in most of the 50 states. His currently is director of the South Florida Center for Floral Studies in West Palm Beach, FL. In addition to winning the prestigious Sylvia Cup at the Society of American Florists Convention in Palm Beach, John also is the recipient of Florida State Designer of the Year and Palm Beach County Designer of the Year. Visit www.centerforfloralstudies.com for more information.

WHOLESALE CONNECTION

Sympathy Flowers

Wholesalers support florists in their time of need

BY SARAH HAMILTON



Sympathy flowers are a very important aspect of the retail floral business; on average, 29 percent of a florist's business consists of sympathy flowers. Since sympathy flowers are such a large percentage of sales, florists must be particularly sensitive to the families' needs and go above and beyond for customers when creating floral arrangements for funerals.

Clay Atchison of McAdams Floral, Victoria, TX, creator of In Lieu of Flowers Web site, www.inlieuofflowers.info, said it is important to be in tune with a family during the planning process of a funeral for many reasons, but most importantly for the emotional support that flowers can bring during a trying time.

When a loved one passes away, family and friends come together and share in their love for the person who has passed. People have many different ways of demonstrating their love during the time of death; some people bring food, while others make donations to a charity, but sending flowers is the most comforting expression of love and sympathy at this difficult time.

Assist in the Grieving Process

According to the American Floral Endowment Research, flowers assist in the grieving process in many ways during a funeral:

- They add warmth to the funeral space
- Flowers brighten moods and comfort survivors
- They add a diversion from the sadness and death
- Reading the sympathy cards that come with flowers create conversation among the people attending the funeral

Your Best Resource

While families and friends find comfort and support from the flowers that people have sent for the deceased, the florist finds help and support from their wholesaler when preparing for a funeral.

"Family members come to me looking for specific flowers that their loved one liked and that they want at the funeral to remind them of the deceased," said Atchison, "It's my job, as a florist, to help provide that flower. When I find out I have a funeral, I usually have 24 hours, maybe less, to get the family the specific type of flower they want. This is where my relationship with my wholesale distributor is critical. If I didn't have reliable local wholesalers, I wouldn't be able to complete many funeral orders."

The support that wholesale distributors provide retail florists gives them the assurance that they get most everything they need at anytime on short notice. The wholesaler can get what the florist is looking for very quickly, which is especially important in the rushed time of the funeral process. It is not unusual for the wholesaler to meet their customers at the wholesale house at non-business hours to provide for a funeral.

"In the past we used to receive simple floral arrangement requests," Atchison said. "Now with the increased usage of the Internet, people are looking at specific flower arrangements online. Today, many orders are for very specific types of flowers and arrangements; it has made my job as a retail florist more difficult."

With the state of the economy, Atchison does not keep as many flowers in his cooler as he used to.

"I don't know how florists do it when they buy direct, I sometimes have such specific request that I wouldn't be able complete an order for a funeral without the assistance of a wholesaler because I never keep that type of flower in my cooler," he said.

Wholesalers also allow florists to buy in smaller quantities. Seventy percent of the product sold by most wholesalers is by the bunch. Most direct shippers have minimum orders. Even though florists are buying in smaller quantities they are choosing from a wider assortment.

The other benefit that florists receive from buying from their wholesaler is, when in a pinch and preparing for a funeral, the wholesaler is able to provide the hardgoods that florists need to be able to build funeral arrangements. The wholesaler can provide hardgoods such as cages, baskets and casket saddles.

Marketing Plan

Clearly, sympathy flowers are very important to the floral industry. Atchison has developed a marketing plan to help retail florists keep funeral flower business. About 70 percent of florists agree that they plan to make efforts to increase their sympathy sales in the coming years. On page 17 is a brief outline of Atchison's marketing plan. It's broken down into seven steps. For more details, visit www.inlieuofflowers.info. ✿

Sarah Hamilton is the director of marketing at WF&FSA, a dynamic business organization dedicated to providing members with the information, services and support they need to remain competitive in today's constantly changing market. The association offers a wide variety of programs and activities to support its mission of enhancing networking and business opportunities for all floral wholesale distributors and suppliers.

Sympathy Marketing: IN LIEU OF FLOWERS EDUCATION

1. Visit with Funeral Directors

- Bring literature
- Suggest alternative languages that funeral directors can use in place of "in lieu of flowers" – say instead "Should friends desire contributions can be sent to..."

2. Advertise/Promote Business using:

- Branding – create marketing materials that make your shop 'The' funeral florist in town
- Funeral Web sites for retail shop
- Print ads
- Church bulletins
- Online banners
- Radio and TV ads, funeral home newsletters and e-mail

3. Quality Design Marketing

- Offer add-on to sales that are significant to the family
- Offer unique designs
 - If the deceased was a fisherman, include a faux fish in the floral display or fishing lures

4. Sales Marketing

- Personalize the sales
 - Teach employees to ask questions about the deceased
- Use an order form – forces sales staff to ask the right questions
- Staff Sales Sheet
 - Assist sales staff on how to sell

5. Florist-to-Funeral Home Marketing

- Partnership program – be proactive and solicit work from a funeral home
- Partnership follow-up letter – follow up on the partnership meeting

6. Goodwill Marketing

- Christmas gifts for funeral directors/employees
- Birthday cards for funeral directors
- Develop a relationship with seniors

7. Salesroom Display Marketing

- Showroom Marketing
 - Have a space specifically designated for family of the deceased
 - Have several selection guides
- Owner Marketing
 - Make personal deliveries to funeral homes yourself
 - Always take a minute to talk with sales staff
- Other Marketing Ideas
 - Send a yellow rose in an upgrade vase to place on the registration table
 - One-year anniversary of the deceased send a single yellow rose to the closest immediate family member



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INDUSTRYINSPIRATION

After the Flood

One florist's amazing and inspiring story

BY CYNDI ECKER



Sometimes what seems like absolutely the worst thing that can happen to your business can be the best thing that happens to your business. I never in a million years would have wished for the flood that destroyed my business of 65 years in June 2008. But now that it did, and I survived it, I can say – at great risk of being escorted to the shrink by anyone listening – that we are much better off for having endured it.

Our business was among 29 in the state of Iowa destroyed in that monumental flood. I can still remember standing in the shop – after not being able to access it for two days after we evacuated – and thinking, “Oh, my God.” The depth of the destruction was unbelievable: about 11 inches of water on the main floor of the shop, three times that in our processing area, four feet in the greenhouses. Our basement, of course, was filled. We lost 90 percent of our inventory and equipment. I wasn't sure we would ever be able to reopen.

But we did – in about 48 hours. Thanks to the kindness of countless volunteers from our community who got right into the muck to clean up the

It was a very Merry Christmas 2009 in the new-and-improved shop.

Mucky floodwaters filled the cooler and knocked over buckets of fresh flowers.



INDUSTRYINSPIRATION



The new Borgen cooler in place! The old built-in cooler, installed in 1960, took two days and “almost an atomic bomb” to get out, but Cyndi’s crew got it done.

The new inside wrap cooler had to be brought in through the front windows. The center pane was removed with literally an inch to spare on each side. The crew wiggled it through the narrow opening.



The greenhouses took a hard hit when floodwaters rushed in.

“I made it through, one step at a time, rebuilding each and every aspect of the store. Looking at my shop today, I can say that every hurdle or challenge ended up being an opportunity for the business.”

INDUSTRYINSPIRATION

debris, scrub, clean, bring food, lift spirits and provide encouraging words. I was open for business – and to the idea of starting fresh.

It was tough going – just me in the shop for three and a half months. I still have my arsenal of signs that made serving customers solo possible: “I’m in the back room putting flowers away,” “Call me on my cell phone,” “I’m having breakfast.”

I made it through, one step at a time, rebuilding each and every aspect of the store. Looking at my shop today, I can say that every hurdle or challenge ended up being an opportunity for the business: our display cooler was destroyed, and with its death went about half of our energy consumption. Now a much smaller and more efficient one does the job. As we were redoing the floors, we jacked up the sales counter and shifted it to where the cooler had been. The openness created by the cooler’s removal opened our eyes to a new way of using our space: without barriers between the customers and the designers. Plenty of other florists have done this deliberately; but our accidental discovery has proved no less beneficial. We can design and talk to customers at the same time, and the days of dashing from the design bench to the front of the store when the



The basement of the shop was completely flooded.

Mud and muck coated green plants and everything else in its path.



INDUSTRYINSPIRATION



Outside the shop, a giant pile of ruined products sits as high as the sandbags.



Here, the old cooler has been removed from the center of the shop and the space is waiting to become the new location of the front counter.

The front counter in its new place. "What a difference flowers and plants made to the sense of mess that continued every day," Ecker said.



door opens are over. From our showroom to our work area to our front windows, each piece of the shop we built back became stronger. And we owed it all to the mess Mother Nature made of our shop.

The recession is like a flood of sorts. It has left businesses wobbly; still standing, but not doing much else. Although my shop has not suffered much as a result of this recession, I know what it feels like to watch something you've built get destroyed and wonder, "what now?"

My answer: first, remember that the flower shop is a critical part of a community. When you stop and look at how many important events flowers play a role in – births, weddings, grand openings, homecomings and funerals – you see that we are more than providers of a product.

Second, forget about the big picture and zoom in on your own shop and the little things you have power to change and do well. Believe me, you can't control the weather, whether it's meteorological or financial, but you can decide how you're going to ride out the storm and shake off the muck. ✨

Cyndi Ecker owns Ecker's Flowers and Greenhouses, Inc., in Waverly, Iowa.

MFA SUPPORTERS

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Spotlight On MFA Supporters: Syndicate Sales

MFA would like to thank the companies who consistently make our association a success. In our award-winning magazine, *The Professional Florist*, we will showcase companies that go above and beyond in supporting the MFA. Through advertising, product donations, support at the Great Lakes Floral Expo and so much more, these stellar companies make the MFA possible. Thank you for all you do!

Our Editor, Heidi Anderson, talked to David Clark, vice president of sales and marketing at Syndicate Sales.

What is your company all about?

Syndicate Sales is a family-owned-and-operated company that manufactures and distributes products for the floral industry. The company began in 1946 when Del Demaree Sr., introduced a water tube made of translucent plastic with a rubber cap that allowed easy insertion of flower stems. He named it the Aquapic®. In 1952, Del Demaree Sr. and his wife, Fern, founded Syndicate Sales and the manufacturing company Demaree Molded Plastics, in the city of Kokomo, IN. Demaree Molded Plastics began manufacturing Aquapics and other assorted floral plastic products for distribution to wholesale florists. In 1955, Syndicate Sales and Demaree Molded Plastics were incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana. In 1963, the companies were reorganized under the sole name of Syndicate Sales, Inc. Del Demaree Jr. was named president in 1967 and became its chairman in 1995.

Today, Syndicate Sales is a manufacturer, importer, and distributor of more than 1,500 items to the floral industry with customers in 48 states, Canada, South America, Central America, the Caribbean islands, Europe, and Japan. Brand names such as Aquapic®, Aquafoam®, Aquaplus the Difference is Clear®, Aquahold®, Garden Collection®, Hoosier Glass®, Bouquet Mates® and Everlastin® Baskets are known throughout the industry as products that represent the highest of quality, second to none. With its subsidiary Hurryin' Hoosier Transport (The Big Green Truck), Syndicate Sales is the leader in customized distribution and delivery to its customers in 48 states and Canada. With 250 team members and roughly 1,000,000-square-feet of manufacturing and warehousing space in Kokomo, Syndicate Sales continues to be an innovator in the floral industry.



David Clark, vice president of sales and marketing at Syndicate Sales.

MFASUPPORTERS



*Syndicate Sales Chairman,
Del Demaree, Jr.*

What is your mission statement?

Our mission statement is to creatively help our customers be more successful. We believe that if our customers are successful, we will be also.

Do you have any special sales or an open house coming up?

Syndicate Sales is always involved in opportunities to showcase our products and educate the wholesale and retail floral customer. Whether it is a state association show, wholesale show, or education seminar, you will find our products and team members participating throughout the year in the Michigan region.

What do you offer MFA members?

We are proud to offer the widest variety of hard goods to the floral industry. Whether the need is as basic as a Candelite cardette or a brick of Aquafoam, or as trendy as new colors in glass and plastic containers, Syndicate Sales has it all in one location. With service weekly throughout the U.S., MFA members are able to spend their time focused on the customer and not worrying about availability of hard goods.

In addition, programs such as ROLO (Retail On-Line Ordering) provide the retail florist real time, easy access to new products, staple favorites and specials. All an MFA member has to do is sign up at www.syndicatesales.com. You can order anything in the Syndicate catalog whether your supplier has it in stock or not. With the "Big Green Truck," every product we manufacture is only a week away.

Syndicate Sales is committed to the success of the retail florist. We are involved in multiple educational opportunities in the region and will continue to develop innovative programs and products with the retail florists in mind.

Are you carrying any new items?

Syndicate has introduced several new products over the last year. These new introductions include our newly enhanced Foam Mate Casket saddles and spray bars, the 4105 footed gathering vase, the 4175 Romanesque vase, the Aquafoam cake kit, and the Aquafoam Toppit, just to name a

few. All of our new products are easily accessible online at www.syndicatesales.com. Bookmark the site as we are constantly providing first looks at new products and programs.


Any current news or new information on your company?

Syndicate Sales is excited to celebrate a significant accomplishment by 22 of our Hurryin' Hoosier Drivers (The Big Green Truck). Each of these drivers has achieved more than one million accident-free miles. Of these, we actually have six who have achieved two million accident-free Miles and five who have achieved more than three million accident-free miles. A typical number of drivers accomplishing this one million mile feat in a fleet our size is four to five in total. What an accomplishment! They truly are one of our greatest assets.

Do you have any advice for MFA members in these tough economic times?

In tough economic times two key factors rise to the surface for all of us: efficiency and value. We must all find efficient methods to deliver not only our products but also our services, which add value to our customer's business. Providing a true value to the customer with focus on service is paramount to success.

What's new on your Web site?

Check out ROLO (Retail On-Line Ordering). Every case ordered through the ROLO program earns ROLO Reward points that are redeemable for great rewards. It's easy to register and even easier to order through ROLO. You will get first looks at new products, find specials offered through your local wholesale florist, and earn rewards such as TVs, computers, and a whole host of other valuable rewards. Just go to www.syndicatesales.com to register today. 

David Clark has a BBA degree from SMU Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and has been with Syndicate Sales for more than 13 years. He began working with sales, and is currently V.P. of Sales and Marketing. He has served on several floral industry committees, and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Bona Vista and the Kokomo/Howard County Chamber of Commerce here locally in Kokomo, IN. He enjoys coaching, golf, horseback riding and spending time with family. He is married and has three children.



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SAVETHEDATE

2010 Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame Awards Banquet

Honoring Frank DeVos, Thursday, October 28, 2010



Be sure to save the date for an evening of fun and fellowship as the Michigan Floral Foundation presents its second annual Hall of Fame, to be held at Eastern Floral and The Goei Center in downtown Grand Rapids, MI. Anyone interested in attending should contact the MFA office at (517) 575-0110 or e-mail rod@michiganfloral.org. Don't miss this exciting event from your MFA!



Frank DeVos

About the Michigan Floral Foundation

The Michigan Floral Foundation (MFF) has been established to support and advance the floral industry; its members and the communities they serve. The Foundation meets this responsibility through educational opportunities and community enrichment activities. The MFF will periodically honor outstanding members of the floral industry who have mentored and inspired their fellow industry members. The Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame has been established to record the contributions of

those so honored. The Foundation will support and encourage educational opportunities between the public and design professionals approved by the MFF board of directors. These programs will be available at a reasonable charge to non-profit community organizations. The Foundation also will make available financial assistance to those seeking to become a Certified Florist, such as providing matching funds when candidates purchase their study materials. The board of directors will furnish applications upon request. Grants will be awarded on a one by one basis in accordance with funds available for distribution. ✿

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Chairwoman's Report: The Future of Floral Certification

Learn the latest advancements
to help you become certified!

BY KATHY PETZ, AAF, CF, PFCI, CF CHAIRWOMAN



Did you know that Michigan has one of the largest numbers of Certified Florists in the United States? We do... and we are very proud of that fact! In January we had our last complete test based on the first manual; we had great participation and inducted new candidates at the 2010 EXPO. We will have inducted 175 Certified Florists.

Speaking of January, in addition to the CF testing, we also held our first evaluator training for the hands-on portion of the new CF materials. Cindy Ching, AIFD, CF, aided by MFA President Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, provided a great training day, and we welcome the following new Certified Florist Evaluators:

- Cindy Ching, AIFD, CF
- Loma Fowler, CF
- Dick Gleason, CF
- Tracey Groom, CF
- Debbie Kordas, CF
- Peg Long, CF
- Kathy Petz, AAF, CF, PFCI
- Debbie Royal, AIFD, CF
- Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF

These florists are ready to evaluate candidates who want to test June 27 or October 24. We also are pleased to report that, with the able help of Dick Gleason, CF, and Macomb Community College, we are nearing completion of online testing and hope to offer this alternative for the written portion of the test soon. As I have mentioned in the past, this will help those who may be in a remote part of our state, or in another state that has adopted our program. Visit www.michiganfloral.org or call the MFA office at (517) 575-0110 to sign up for CF testing today! ✨

Kathy Petz is a national account director at Teleflora.

Congratulations to our Newest Certified Florists!

Jerry Baker, CF Wesley Berry Flowers, Commerce Twp., MI

Kathleen Elletson, CF Fraser, MI

Angela Farina, CF Rochester Hills, MI

Lindsey Filley, CF Warren, MI

Rachel Foley, CF Millington, MI

Tina Mitchell, CF Sterling Heights, MI

Marlanina Treier, CF Macomb Township, MI

Active Membership Requirements:

An active member must be a registered, established business operating in the floral industry. Active members are eligible to vote for elected MFA representatives, use all MFA services, receive member pricing on all Association functions, receive the informative *Professional Florist* magazine* and all other mailings.

Dues are based on the annual gross sales of your business:

- Up to \$499,999 \$250
- \$500,000 - \$999,999 \$400
- \$1 million - \$2,999,999 \$500
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Please check which of the following applies to your business:

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- Service Provider
- Supermarket
- Grower
- Floral School
- Garden Center

Associate Membership Requirements:

Associate Membership may be held by students or teachers of floriculture and ornamental horticulture, or by any individual working for an active MFA member. Associate members receive member pricing on all association functions, the informative *Professional Florist* magazine*, and all other mailings, but are NOT eligible to vote or hold elective office in the association.

Please check which of the following applies to you:

- Student**
- Teacher
- Employee of Active MFA Member

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All Student members \$50

* All membership dues include a *Professional Florist* subscription.

**Must include a photocopy of current active student ID card or enrollment confirmation letter from class instructor.

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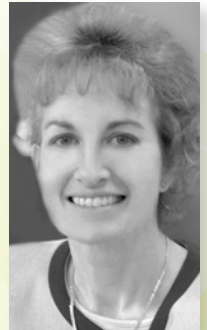
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Cindy Ching, AIFD, CF

MFA Professional Education Center - Haslett, MI



Cindy guides those who plan on becoming a Certified Florist. You'll get tips on how to prepare for both the written and design portions of the test. Students will spend part of the day reviewing the written test and then work in the design room learning what is needed to pass the exam, with the all-new CF sections to the written and hands-on! Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of what it takes to pass the prestigious national CF exam. Class will run from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with a half hour break for lunch, which is included in the registration fee. **Please bring your own tools.** ✿



INMEMORIAM

Dr. William Carlson

Dr. William Howard Carlson of East Lansing, MI., born August 20, 1941, in Kingston, PA., died January 20, 2010, at the age of 68. Dr. Carlson was a Professor Emeritus of Floriculture at Michigan State University for 36 years, where he earned the Distinguished Faculty Designation in 1995. During his tenure he published more than 35 scientific articles and 400 popular articles on the physiology of ornamental floriculture crops; taught more than 1,500 undergraduate students, 40 graduate students and 30,000 students in Extension courses and maintained a popular column in *Greenhouse Grower* magazine for more than three decades. Dr. Carlson established and served as the faculty coordinator for the Michigan Master Gardener program that trained more than 10,000 master gardeners. He was responsible for establishing the Horticultural Demonstration Gardens and was the past chairperson of the MSU Garden Consortium. Dr. Carlson also was the Project Leader for the Horticulture Extension and the faculty coordinator for the 150,000-square-foot Plant Science Greenhouse Research Ranges. He helped establish the Professional Plant Growers Association and had been a director of the Garden Writers Association and lectured to various garden groups throughout the country. Dr. Carlson earned many industry accolades, including the Hall of Fame from the Society of American Florists and the Marc Cathy Award from the American Horticultural Society. William was preceded in death by his brother, Victor Carlson, and his parents, Victor and Marie (Jensen) Carlson. Surviving are his wife, Barbara; sons, William (Mary) Carlson and Wayne (Danette) Carlson; grandchildren, Laura, George, John, Riley, Bailey and Colin; brother, Robert (Martha) Carlson; and sister,



Dorothy (Ron) Albee. Those desiring may make contributions to the charity of one's choice in memory of Dr. William Carlson.



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Help fund the MFA Scholarship program with a donation to the Silent Auction. All kinds of items are needed. Electronics, Tools, Sporting Equipment, as well as any floral related products. For more information on how to donate please call Peg Long (Saline Flowerland) at (734) 429-4458 or Jim Schmidt (Hyacinth House) at (800) 777-9945.

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MISSION STATEMENT: To provide education and professional partnerships which help to position Michigan Floral Association members at the forefront of the floral industry.

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When it comes to your bottom line, there's nothing pretty about drop-shipping. That's why Teleflora is 100% committed to helping Save the Florists. This includes guaranteeing 100% of our orders are hand-arranged and delivered by independent florists like you. Visit savetheflorists.com.

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