

The  
Professional

# Florist



Volume II 2019

EXHIBITS



**Honoring Aretha with Flowers**

**Sympathy Trends**

**Creating Lasting Memories**

**Funeral Industry Insights**

**FloraCraft Member Profile**

**Anatomy of a Rose Parade Float**

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## LEADERSHIP REPORT

# Honor Those Special People with Gifts to the Michigan Floral Foundation

BY ROD CRITTENDEN, MFA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/CEO, WUMFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**T**HANK YOU to the following individuals who made contributions to the Michigan Floral Foundation in 2018:

**Jeanette Ballien** - Saginaw, MI

**Jackie Burrell AIFD, CF** - Petoskey, MI

**Janice Curran** - Grand Rapids, MI

**Teresa Cytlak** - Three Rivers, MI

**Bob Friese AIFD** - Fruitport, MI

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**Alice Waterous AIFD, CF, PFCI** - Grand Haven, MI

Many of these gifts were made in honor of a person's birthday or special anniversary; others in memory of a loved one or dear friend at the time of their passing. And still others gave in honor of someone as a way of saying thank you, or to make a professional gesture to let them know they are special by acknowledging them in this extraordinary manner.

After a donation is received an acknowledgement letter is sent to the person or family member being honored. Each donor is sent a copy of the letter, along with a donation receipt for tax purposes.

**The MFF Mission Statement reads:** The Michigan Floral Foundation 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 Foundation is an IRS recognized 501(c)3 organization. Every contribution to the MFF is tax deductible. Donations may be mailed directly to Foundation headquarters, 1152 Haslett Rd., Haslett, MI 48840. When making a donation please make sure to indicate the purpose of the donation. You can also donate online at [www.michiganfloral.org](http://www.michiganfloral.org).

Click on MI Floral Foundation tab in the top menu bar and scroll to the bottom of the page.

The Michigan Floral Foundation also has Named Funds available for those wishing to support the mission with their name attached to a fund within the Foundation.

Named funds can be established with a minimum donation of \$15,000. This can be a one-time donation or 50% the first year, 50% the second year, or 33.3% each year over three years. Named funds can also be established with the minimum of \$15,000 worth of life insurance naming the MFF as beneficiary.

When the time is right please take a moment and consider a donation to the Michigan Floral Foundation, to help "advance the floral industry, its members and the communities they serve."

## Welcome New MFA Members

### Hidden Drive Greenhouse, Inc.

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# Making a Memorial Memorable

BY LISA VANDERMEER

LUDEMA'S FLORAL, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 2018 MFA DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

When a customer comes in your shop to order a sympathy arrangement do you throw a book at them or see it as an opportunity to be creative? I hope it's the latter. Being able to personalize an arrangement for a specific event like a wedding or party is easy so why should we do any less for a funeral? Use this time with your customer to get to know the deceased so that you can create something that would be a fitting memorial. For this arrangement, I imagined my customer telling me about their outdoor loving grandfather that liked simple things and wasn't fussy. I chose a vase that looked like a stump and filled it with a wide variety of foliage including Grevillea, Huckleberry and miniature Pittosporum, then used simple white Hydrangeas and blue Thistle as an accent. Including natural elements like Fascinated Willow and Sugar Cones tie the look together and add interest. ☺



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# Analogous Color Theme with Texture!

BY CINDY CHING AIFD, CF

This beautiful sympathy spray, a masterpiece of texture, uses an analogous color theme of yellow, yellow-orange, orange, orange-red, red and burgundy. The use of different forms of flowers and foliage is what makes this design a fabulous example of great texture. Leatherleaf, emerald, fatsia, ivy, lycopodium, Italian ruscus combined with pussy willows, pincushion proteas, leucadendron, anthuriums, roses, calla lilies, hypericum berries and wax flowers complete the total look.



Arrangement by Robbin Yelverton AAF, AIFD, CF, CAFA, PFCI, Blumz ...by JRDesigns , Detroit, Ferndale, and Holly, MI.

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for complete information.

Next CF Testing is June 16, 2019

Hope to see you test on June 16!



Kimber Wasden CF



Amanda Hammond CF

## CF's Compete in Art Bloom Contest

Three Utah florists who became Certified Florists through the Michigan Floral Association program competed in the 2018 Art in Bloom contest held at the Eccles Community Art Center in Ogden, Utah. The winner was Alma Filipovic CF. Amanda Hammond CF and Kimber Wasden CF also took part. All work at Harmon's Grocery, West Valley City, Utah.



Alma Filipovic CF

# Creating Memories with Sympathy Flowers

BY HELEN MILLER AIFD, CF, FLOWERS & SUCH, ADRIAN, MI

**R**esearch shows that flowers are a critical part of the bereavement process. However, because of the rising cost of traditional funerals, grieving loved ones are choosing lesser expensive services such as one day, memorial, and cremation.

It is important florists inform their clients that flowers provide the opportunity to create meaningful lasting memories. Flowers not only brighten and warm a funeral or memorial service but can have a soothing impact, reflecting and honoring the personality of the deceased.

Another way the funeral climate is changing is that floral customers are requesting meaningful keepsakes be incorporated into floral tributes and plant designs. These keepsakes are something that a family member will cherish now and in the future. Figurines, wind chimes, religious symbols, afghans, picture frames, and lanterns are some of the popular items. These items also add revenue for your shop.

While the florist's primary goal is to please our clients, it is also important to remember the funeral home directors who handle our floral tributes. These arrangements need

to be sturdy, secure, and well designed. Products such as floral cages help make designing and handling easier. They work very well for cremation urns, tributes and half couch casket pieces.

Finally, with the rising cost of funerals, customers are seeking a good value for their money. Many times, a family will ask what happens to the flowers once the funeral is over. Start a program to go back and collect flowers that the family does not wish to keep. Repurpose the flowers into smaller vases to send to nursing homes and your local hospice center. Attach a card with a little note from your store.

This service is uplifting and brings the joy of flowers to others. It gives value and increases the use of flowers and plants at a funeral. It also creates goodwill and lasting relationships with your clients. These gestures keep you in the top of the minds of funeral directors and let them know you care. Your warmth and caring will make a difficult time easier for a grieving family and will build your shop's reputation as a business that is creative, cares, and exceeds expectations. 



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## SYMPATHYFEATURE

# Honoring Aretha With Flowers – Diary of a Funeral

BY NORMAN SILK, BLOSSOMS OF  
BIRMINGHAM, BIRMINGHAM, MI

In the weeks and months preceding Miss Franklin's death, we were aware of how ill she was. At one point she gave a much smaller party than usual and didn't decorate her home as we had done many times before. At the beginning of 2017 she suddenly moved to her city apartment on the Detroit River.

My partner, Dale Morgan, called to tell her he was making a delivery and she cautioned him not be surprised when you see me, "I have the big C". At that visit they laughed and talked about life and what was happening in the world but not about her health. That was the last time he saw her. Over the next few months she personally called and ordered flowers for herself and others just as she always had done, as recently as two weeks before her passing.

For her it was always the same, two dozen pink roses, or sometimes two vases with one dozen pink in one and one dozen yellow in the other, never red. She always asked for bowls of floating gardenias as if we always had them on hand. We tried our best but sometimes they had to be white orchids as gardenias were getting harder to find locally.

She was very generous to friends and acquaintances and frequently sent funeral flowers locally and all over the country. I want a "big basket of white flowers" was the request, sometimes a wreath. Out of town florists in smaller towns often questioned the price: "How am I going to make something that large" and "Is this THE Aretha". During the summer months she began ordering flowers for herself at Sinai-Grace Hospital and Karmanos Cancer Center where she was registered under an assumed name. She always had flowers around her.

As news of her failing health became public, we followed with sadness, and on the morning of Monday it was reported that she was in grave condition. We assembled her favorite flowers, three dozen pink roses and bowls of gardenias and dispatched it to her apartment with our best wishes. We hope she was able to see them in her final hours.

We weren't sure what was going to happen; lots of discussion at the shop about a large funeral with very important people attending. Would the family bring in a staff of outsiders to organize it? Would we be selected to do the flowers or would they bring in someone famous, not



Lying in state at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

knowing our relationship with her as a friend and customer?

Plans were announced for several days of events leading to an invitation only funeral. Without any order, I began ordering pink and lavender roses, knowing the delivery time was still days away. I knew Miss Franklin's niece, Sabrina Owens was the person in charge.

Although I had never met Sabrina, Miss Franklin sent her bountiful flower arrangements and gift baskets often. I had her email so decided to email our sympathy and ask how I could help. She emailed back asking me to call her. I called, expressed our profound sympathy and I asked what she had in mind.

I was unsure what to suggest for a larger than life figure of international importance. Sabrina's answer was "Well she never sent a dozen roses it was always three dozen". That was my direction, make it fit for a queen. At first, I imagined a casket spray of pink roses and gardenias. After talking with the funeral director, I learned the casket was gold plated, "like a gold brick", and would be fully open. Because Miss Franklin would be lying in state in the grand rotunda of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the arrangements needed to be BIG.



## SYMPATHYFEATURE



Floral tributes from all over the country

The decision was for two stacked arrangements, a heart of roses from the grandchildren, a wreath from her sons and an abundant tribute from her other family members as a group. A ring of flowers at the base of the casket tied it all together. The funeral director arranged for a background of sheer white fabric behind and under the casket.

The funeral director asked that flowers be delivered Monday to the private family visitation at the funeral home. We designed two arrangements with long stem pink roses and white hydrangea in large glass pedestal vases. The setting was an intimate version of the museum setting, a white background, and two vases of pink roses.

At 6:00 a.m., Tuesday morning, the funeral directors and Miss Franklin's body arrived at the front door of the museum. We arrived: two designers, myself and a driver with two truckloads and an SUV full of flowers. Unloading on the rotunda level but still hundreds of feet from the entrance, we loaded carts with flowers, prepped containers and began designing on site.

Large containers of Oasis® stacked three high with risers between the layers created huge arrangements nearly eight feet tall on gold mirrored pedestals. In total we used over 4,000 roses that week. The grand arrangement flanking the casket consisted of many varieties of pink roses accented with lavender roses. The family arrangement was lavender roses and lavender Phalaenopsis orchids. The heart and wreath were made at our design center.

The funeral director attended to last minute details as we designed around the open casket. We had to be finished by 9:00 a.m. when the doors opened. We finished just in time, cleaned up and removed our drop cloths just as the public started to arrive. Each morning at 6:00 a.m. our staff went to the museum, added water, removed faded blooms and made sure everything was perfect.

On Wednesday we were instructed to arrive at 10:00 p.m. to remove flowers. We arrived with two trucks at 9:00. To our surprise thousands of people stretched in a line for two blocks around the entire museum. Finally at 11:00 p.m. the last person paid their respects. The atmosphere outside was respectful but celebratory of a great life; people wore Aretha T-shirts, and sang her songs.

We anticipated that we could begin breaking down but now the casket was closed and the press began taking pictures. After nearly two hours they finished. We dismantled the setting, discarded flowers and moved select pieces to be viewed again at the funeral. As maintenance people were cleaning up, we left at 2:00 a.m. and returned to the store.

The next morning, we had a truck full of new arrangements which were designed for the service at Greater Grace Temple. The arrangements were pink roses and natural purple hydrangea in large rounded arrangements on pedestals.

The church, located on the far west side of Detroit, is huge and holds 4,000 people. The casket was at the base of the steps to the stage like an altar. We had to keep the flowers low so as not to obstruct the view of the stage. The casket would still be open at the church so no casket spray.

We decided on five large arrangements; two flanking the casket and one directly behind so it looked as though it was



This arrangement from her family was set on one of the pedestals.

## SYMPATHYFEATURE

a spray. The family pieces were spread to the side. Two large arrangements on pedestals flanked the main aisle where the family would enter. Although we had gold pedestals for the church setting we needed gold pedestals at the entrance. I decided to rent gold sequin tablecloths to drape the pedestals. We again used hundreds of pink and lavender roses. Each location had new unique arrangements.

The flowers for the funeral service were designed on site Thursday afternoon into the evening. While we were making the arrangements, performers were rehearsing just a few feet away. The day of the funeral, Friday morning very early, a staffer added dozens of gardenias to the arrangements before guests started to arrive and made sure everything was perfect.

When we returned to the design center from the church tour on Thursday, orders were pouring in. Diana Ross wanted to send a blue rose under a glass dome, Mariah Carey wanted a white cross. They were designed and delivered the night before the service and displayed in the lobby with dozens of other tributes. Florists from all over the city proudly created designs that were unique and special from celebrities all over the country.

On Friday we were invited guests at the funeral. Performers and speakers took to the stage one after another. The Clintons, Rev Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and many other dignitaries were seated on the stage along with a choir of over 200 and a full orchestra.

The program which began about 11:00 a.m. continued without a break all afternoon. One of the last performers was Stevie Wonder. He performed the Lord's Prayer on his harmonica as well as other songs. Aretha's grandchildren spoke lovingly along with numerous friends and family. Jennifer Holiday ended the program at nearly 7:00 p.m.

The following day we sent a driver to break down the setting. Only the empty containers remained. Guests had taken all the flowers. I imagine there are hundreds of roses pressed in books as a memory of Aretha Franklin's funeral. 

A heart from her grandchildren



The wreath from her sons



Mariah Carey's tribute

## SYMPATHYFEATURE

# Expressing The Loss of a Loved One Through Floral Artistry

BY EDWARD SMITH, COUNTRY LANE FLOWERS, HOWELL, MI

**W**hen a family loses a loved one, it is devastating. At that point, the family may not be able to focus on the floral tribute, funeral home arrangements, or visitation and services. Make this process as easy and effortless as possible for the family.

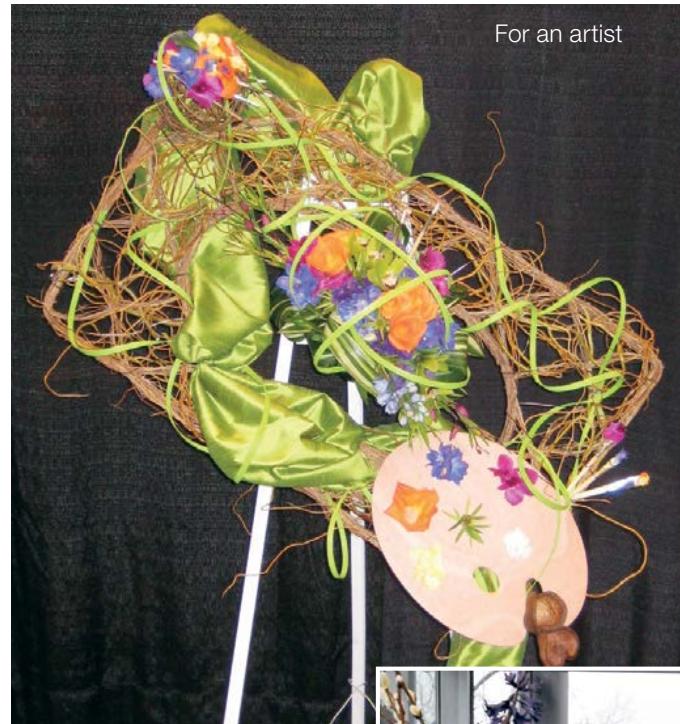
When the bereaved family arrives at your shop, greet them warmly and treat them as if they are your family. Introduce yourself and seat them at the consultation table, offering them coffee or water and try to make them feel welcome. Initiate a conversation with them regarding their loved one to build rapport and let them know you truly care.

Ask the family to share details about their loved one; find out if they had specific hobbies or interests that could be incorporated into the design. For example, if the loved one was a gardener, their favorite gardening hat or gloves could be used. For an outdoors man, their personal rod and reel or antlers could be incorporated. Be sure to let the family know that you can incorporate these special items into the design making it more personal.

At times, family members may disagree on what the final design should look like. When this happens, a designer must learn to be a very good listener and take ideas from both sides so they can be made into one cohesive look. It takes patience and negotiation to bring them together to agree on the final concept. Once the family has agreed, determine if the flowers are readily available and offer to show them the color scheme that will be used.

My suggestion to anyone that does sympathy work is to be patient, listen and be respectful to the family during this difficult time so they can tell that you are designing the best possible floral tribute for their loved one.

(All designs from the Great Lakes Floral and Event Expo) 



**SYMPATHYFEATURE**

# Key Insights into the Funeral Industry

*The following is an excerpt from "Funeral Directors & Flowers, Insights into Floral Tributes in the Funeral Industry", a study from the Floral Marketing Research Fund in collaboration with the American Floral Endowment. The survey is a guide to floral tributes in funeral services, consumers' reactions, and feedback to improve relationships with floral retailers.*

*Forty-one continental U.S. states were represented, plus participants from the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Ohio had the most responses (16), followed by Pennsylvania (15), Michigan (11), Illinois and New Jersey (9). The other states had fewer participants. Seventythree percent of respondents were male. Sixty-six percent of the sample had more than 20 years of experience, 14% had 16 to 20 years of experience, 8% had 11 to 15 years of experience, and 12% had less than 10 years of experience. Most businesses (64%) employed less than six people and were independent/single location businesses. Thirty percent of the businesses were serving a city/community with less than 10,000 people, 41% were serving a city/community with 10,000 to 50,000 people, 14% were serving a city/community with 50,000 to 100,000 people and 15% were serving a city with more than 100,000 people.*

## Recommendations to the industry

1. Funeral directors regard flowers/plants as the most important non-human source of comfort to the bereaved. Flowers/plants soften the atmosphere and provide warmth, color and beauty to the funeral setting. A majority of clients talk about, touch or smell flowers/plants after funeral services, which mean they are very important to clients. These messages should be promoted to consumers using educational or reminder advertisements, which can potentially encourage the use of flowers/plants at funeral services.
2. Since clients talk about the floral tributes, it is very important that the flowers and plants are high quality and visually appealing. Floral retailers can include discrete brand logo/contact information on the card so people who like the display can order floral products from them in the future. High quality floral tributes can generate word of mouth advertising which is free and highly trusted by end customers.
3. Floral tribute designs should be very stable to withstand being touched by memorial attendees. Additionally, the flower/plant selection should be robust to withstand the touching (and transportation). If the floral tribute falls apart after being touched or moved, it would not reflect well upon the floral retailer, funeral director, or sender of the tribute.
4. Floral retailers can offer fragrant floral tribute options. However, they need to be aware of the physical setting of the services in order to not overdo the fragrant flowers. For instance, if the setting is fairly small, one fragrant arrangement or one or two fragrant flowers mixed into the arrangements are adequate for the area.
5. The majority of clients (67%) do not know or only sometimes know the types of flowers they want for the services. Floral retailers can provide services to help those who do not know what they want. Having information about the legends/stories/meanings of different flowers can be of great help to clients when they match different types of flowers with the theme of the service (or personality of the deceased). This is also an opportunity for floral retailers to educate consumers about the value of flowers at memorial services.
6. Electronic devices (e.g. iPad) with photos of product options, prices, color availability, fragrance options, flower types, and small add-ons (photo holder, memorial charm, memorial quotes, etc.) would be an easy means of having an up-to-date, easy to use catalog. Printed materials also serve to communicate product options to clients. Since floral tributes often provide visual benefits, having high quality images is very important in promotions.
7. Nearly 70% of attendees at the service/visitation show interest in knowing the name of the flowers. Floral retailers should provide the flower names/descriptions on the card so they are readily available for people who are interested.
8. Floral retailers can encourage the use of floral tributes by promoting the benefits of the products. Beneficial promotions should be given to funeral directors, the bereaved and families and friends of the bereaved to educate them about the emotional/physiological (comfort, calming, etc.) and physical benefits (atmosphere, ambiance) of floral tributes.
9. It is important that the floral tributes are high quality so they hold up throughout the memorial services and in clients' homes. Product stability also needs to be considered so the tributes can withstand transportation and handling. Both quality and stability serve to build the floral retailer's reputation through improved customer satisfaction.
10. To address changing memorial trends, designing and promoting personalized floral tributes are one way of entering the 'celebration of life' market. For example, a floral arrangement of the deceased's favorite sports team colors or an arrangement designed to hold photos of the deceased can be used to celebrate the life of the deceased. 

# The Power of a Background

BY GARRETT SKUPINSKI, CF



**J**ust like the power of good lighting can change a photo from messy and amateur to pristine and professional, the background of your photo is also a key element to great social media images. A messy work table, unorganized wall of product or just filth can ruin that perfect wedding bouquet or amazing design.

It's not required, but having a good solid colored background that can roll, popup or unfold can create opportunities for you and be a lifesaver for those customers that ask for a image of their purchase. These also are great backgrounds for images that can be used for future website designs or marketing.

Natural permanent backgrounds such as building walls and hedgerows around the shop can be the perfect go to for your social snaps. A beautiful brick wall or lush woodland never hurts with a beautiful arrangement focused in the foreground.

A little harder, but when you focus your design perfectly you will get the magical blurred background. Be careful as you don't want your lunch or messy desk to show through the fuzzy background.

What is your go to background when snapping a shot of your favorite designs? Do you find particular backgrounds get more attention than others? Always consider the background and how it adds to your floral images. 🌸



Colored Background



Messy Background



Solid Background

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## MEMBERPROFILE

# SMALL BUT MIGHTY... The FloraCraft Success Story

BY BARBARA GILBERT, Editor

**T**he state of Michigan is home to many outstanding American companies, among them Fortune 500 firms General Motors, Kellogg, and Ford to name a few. Although not as large as others, FloraCraft has been recognized both locally and nationally in the business community.

The Ludington, Michigan company made news late last year when Lee Schoenherr, owner and chairman of the board, announced that full time employees would share \$4 million dollars. Approximately 200 employees including those in the Arkansas office and Pomona facility will receive monies based on length of service. It will be distributed as a cash bonus and a contribution to 401k accounts. Employees with over 40 years of experience, will get more than \$60,000. Senior level executives will not participate in the bonus.

Company president and CEO Eric Erwin commented "Lee has always wanted to do that. He has always given back to the community and wanted to do something for the employees who allow him to do that. Two things contributed to making this possible, investments that have helped the overall success of the company and changes in the tax law."

One of those investments was the Plex enterprise operating system put in five years ago. Erwin explained, "The investment in Plex allows us to better optimize our production processes and methodology, ultimately being more efficient." This bent toward mass market production tripled inventory and helped gain shelf space in large retailers. Now during a year they have 3,500 SKUs in production.

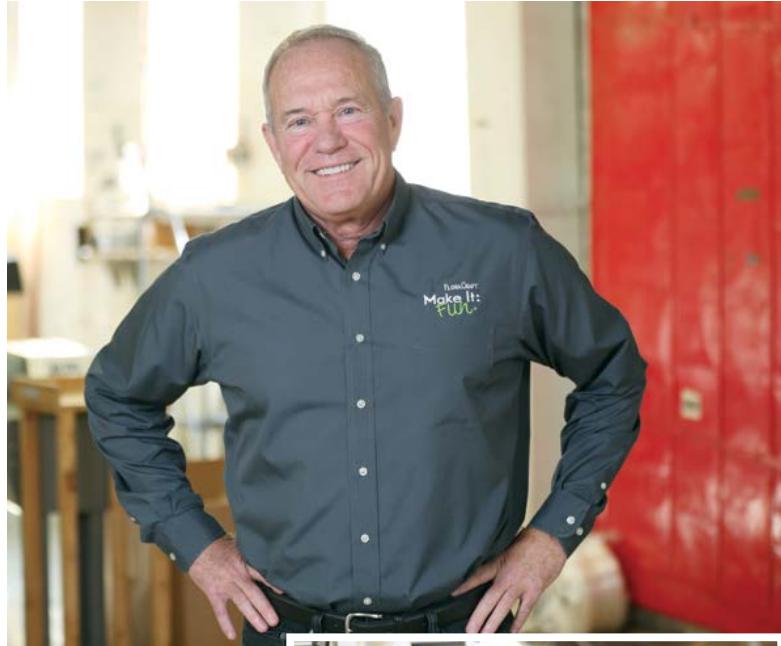
Erwin became the president and CEO in December 2017 succeeding long time president and CEO Jim Scatena. He is responsible for leading the day to day operations and will continue to take the lead in marketing and product innovation.

In line with their motto, We Make It: Fun® for our employees and customers, the company is noted for supporting local education, sports, and the arts in the Ludington community.

As part of its community support, it hosted the 7th annual Santa's Workshop at its Ludington headquarters last December. The event featured hands-on activities and crafts, along with a visit from elves and Santa. More than 500 children and families enjoyed fun and games at the workshop.

Additionally, FloraCraft is committed to reducing its environmental impact by recycling more than 98 percent of its foam fabrication scrap. This scrap material is then collected and reused in other FloraCraft products or sold to companies who utilize recycled materials.

Former Governor Rick Snyder acknowledged the company's contribution to the state during his administration when he toured the FloraCraft plant and declared "FloraCraft means



President and CEO  
Eric Erwin

so much to the City of Ludington, not only do they employ over 200 people, they mean a lot to the atmosphere of the city. They're really a company that gives back, that inspires people to do more."

But to start at the beginning:

Located in Ludington, Michigan, population 8,000, FloraCraft is the world's leading manufacturer of craft and floral foam products. Founded after

WW II, the family owned business began when Leonard Schoenherr and Park Allensworth founded Foliage Company of America in 1946.

In 1948 Allensworth split off to found American Foliage Co. in Canton, OH. Leonard's nephew Lee Schoenherr continued to work for the original company.



Chairman Lee Schoenherr

## MEMBERPROFILE



Working in the factory

The years 1960-1974, were pivotal for two reasons. American Foliage expanded by buying companies in Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Ohio and in 1974 Lee Schoenherr bought the company from his uncle. Expansion continued with more companies in Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey and Indiana.

After he became the sole owner of CustomFoam Crafts in 1986, he merged both companies into the new FloraCraft firm in 1990 and proceeded to buy up his competitors. The new name positioned the company in both the floral and craft industries.

While FloraCraft is Michigan-based it now has facilities in Arkansas, California, and Mexico. In 2014 the company was chosen Supplier of the Year by Walmart. It has a long connection with Dow Chemical which began as fabricators of Dow branded Styrofoam®. (an interesting fact: Styrofoam was originally used as a flotation device on Navy ships during WWII).

Products include various floral foams, containers, tools and accessories, wire, and bouquet holders as well as those geared to the craft market. During the last Christmas season FloraCraft launched Hershey KISSES foam starter kits.

Bestsellers are green foam to the floral market and white Styrofoam to the craft market.

Erwin noted, "We believe our green foam sales both wet and dry will, at current rates, equal our total white foam sales."

FloraCraft has been a Michigan Floral Association member as Erwin says 'forever'.



Artesia® Floral Wet Foam

They participate in the Great Lakes Floral and Event Expo by donating product, as a sponsor of the annual design contest and in the trade fair as an exhibitor. Tim Timinski, FloraCraft business development manager, has served on the MFA board as regional director and vice president. Each year in conjunction with MFA they sponsor three Certified Florist scholarships, continuing their strong interest in education.

As to future plans, Erwin announced that there will be a big announcement in the near future about an innovative new product. "We continue to expand to allow more creativity in our products and services." 

## WEDDINGTRENDS

# 2019 Midwest Wedding Trends

The following was compiled by Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, CF, PFCI, Blumz...by JRDdesigns, Detroit/Ferndale, and Holly, Michigan. He reached out to retailers, wholesalers, and event planners in various cities including Grand Rapids, Traverse City, and the metro Detroit area to determine what brides were asking for this year in Michigan and rest of the Midwest.

### What flowers and floral colors are trending for 2019?

The colors that we are being asked for the most continue to be blush, marsala, taupe, navy, plum and deep reds. A bit of peach and apricot is also showing up. Flowers and plant materials are centered around lots of texture with peonies, dahlias, open roses, succulents, proteas, air plants, lisianthus and hydrangeas leading the pack.

Foliage is still a really big component in designs. Designs are slightly smaller than we have seen in the past year or so, but foliage a major element. Silver dollar eucalyptus, olive branch, seeded eucalyptus, dusty miller, magnolia, salal (lemon leaf) and ruscus are heavy hitters. There is also an interest in plumed grasses, such as pampas and fountain grasses as well as other dried/preserved grass elements.

### Are brides still favoring the rustic look or is there a return to more formal looking arrangements or another style?

Rustic is still big in the Midwest, but we are seeing it paired with elegant elements, more refined and thankfully much less burlap. The "Boho" look of unstructured, flowing, draped, loose garden influenced style is taking its place. This style lends itself to the more relaxed and less formal settings that continue to be requested. Whether a "barn", "naked" loft, or renovated warehouse, this look works great.

### How about centerpieces for the reception tables? Are they uniform or a mix of styles? Does one centerpiece dominate or a collection of smaller pieces?

Collections seems to be the most popular table centerpiece option. Mixed looks with garlands are still a large presence. This is especially noticed in the continued prominence of farm tables. The use of a combination of mixed shape budvase/bottles, footed compotes and candles in a "tablescape" remains very popular. Raised arrangements often are incorporated to give dimension to the room. Devices used to elevate designs are simple shapes such as larger candle sticks and clear glass vases. Elaborate silver/gold candelabra use has taken a back seat.

### What do bouquets for the bride and her attendants look like in 2019?

Bridal bouquets that are very textural, more casual in style, yet still large and expressive are still the norm. Foliage in many forms is still prominent. Silver dollar and seeded eucalyptus mixed with olive foliage, salal and bold leaves such as aspidistra really add dimension and volume to the bouquet. An up-tick of using brooches has made a recent reappearance adding a touch of bling to the bouquet. Maids' bouquets have definitely taken a step back, downsized, more simple and compact. Less foliage and fewer varieties of flowers are being used in attendants' designs.

### How about boutonnieres for men?

The groom and his groomsmen continue to keep their boutonnieres simple. Most are casual, very textural, some with minimal to no floral presence; only foliage and "berries" such as brunia, hypericum, seeded eucalyptus or craspedia. However, the groom needs to be reminded that the tradition of wearing a boutonniere was to symbolize that the bride had said "yes" by returning a simple bloom from her bouquet. This flower was placed in the button hole of the jacket lapel, hence the French word "boutonniere" meaning button hole.

### Any comment about the importance of such floral statement pieces as floral walls and installations over tables?

Of course, this particular component of the wedding is directly affected by the budget. Is the look popular? Absolutely. Is it attainable for all? NO. Hanging installations, with abundant foliage and some floral presence, seem to have surpassed the flower wall in popularity. We are seeing them above head tables, altars, dance floors, etc.

### What non-floral elements such as vegetables are popular for decoration?

We are seeing a bit of a reduction in the request for succulents with fruit or pods gradually taking their place. Pomegranates, artichokes, geometric shapes/objects, larger tillandsia and berried items are frequent go-to items. 

# The Future Is Bright

*Editor's note: The following is a story by the late Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford, AAF, AIFD, PFCI. It reminds us of her unfailing optimism and love for the floral industry and is as relevant today as it was when she wrote it several years ago.*



## CHANGES, CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**T**hroughout our lives and in business we have the choice of looking through a lens that is either positive or negative. Our changing world, changing ways, and changing work can be bright if we polish our glasses and are open to the possibilities. Change can be our greatest friend. Change is inevitable. Change can be exciting, vibrant and stimulating. No matter what our circumstance or age, as that familiar song goes, we should accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES - CHANGING ROLES

Recently, while driving down the highway, I noticed a billboard sign that said: Roles and Role Changing. It caught my eye. Although the ad was not relevant to my needs, it was a reminder that role changing is the natural progression of every life. Any career or lifestyle necessitates role changing or we become stagnant.

We're like actors in a play. We may act in a short or long drama, but whatever the circumstances give an impeccable performance. Sometimes we create the spin and sometimes we're swept away by the spin. I especially like the John Steinbeck quote: "We don't take the trip, the trip takes us." What's your next role?

## LUCKY FOR US – THE POWER OF FLOWERS

If we remain positive, wherever we go or whatever we do, opportunities arise. Ideas pop up that can inspire us and direct us to new avenues we may not have imagined. Early in my career in the industry, I discovered an added revenue stream for my business by giving floral presentations for meetings and conventions. The timeless appeal of the power of flowers could be interwoven with a variety of interests and audiences.

As my assistant Sandy and I drove through a small town in Iowa, a group of women were heading for work in a poultry processing plant. We stopped for the light and as the ladies were crossing, Sandy commented, "Well, lucky for us we work with flowers and we're not picking chickens." We were not degrading the work of picking chickens, but were only celebrating our good fortune at being in a more fragrant profession. Sandy's comment was the inspiration and idea for a program I developed, called Lucky for Us.

## MOVING ALONG

Moving along with the flow of an ever-changing world requires us to remain innovative and open to new ideas. Every aspect of life and business now depends on the interconnected cyber systems and technology that exists. Lucky for us, the unique and powerful effect of "Flower Power" continues to deliver an unrivaled and marvelous effect on human emotions.

Consumers in all walks of life have become increasingly aware of the value of our industry's products and services. Fashion, home and architectural magazines would be dull and uninteresting if colorful flowers, spectacular foliage and lush potted plants were not featured on the pages of their publications. Special events and weddings increasingly

demand floral décor no matter what the culture or economy. Our personal futures and the future of the floral industry look brighter than ever as we:

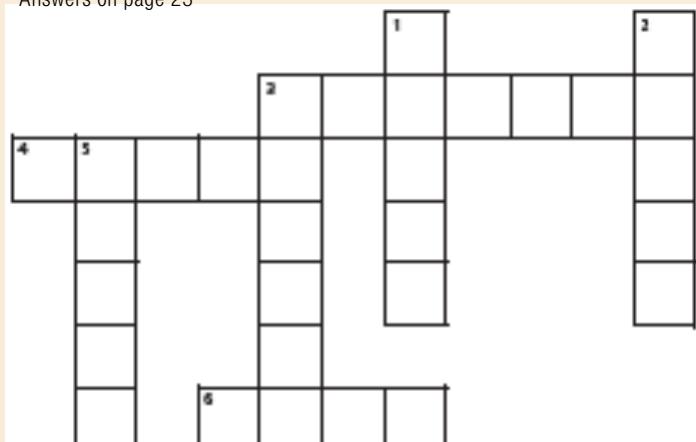
- Explore Changes that are inevitable, exciting, vibrant, and stimulating.
- Review Choices that cause us to discover more about ourselves and to develop more in ourselves.
- Envision Opportunities for empowerment for each other, that create a belief in people and abilities.

*Wherever you go, whatever you do, be in love.  
-Rumi, Persian Poet.*



## Flower Power Crossword Puzzle

Answers on page 23



### ACROSS

- 3 Petalless plant
- 4 Easter flower
- 6 Number one selling flower in the world

### DOWN

- 1 Produces one single flower and then dies
- 2 An edible flower
- 3 A panda's favorite food
- 5 September's birth flower

## TABLETALK

# Fashion x Floral

BY DEREK WOODRUFF AIFD, CF, PFCI and  
KATE WALSKI CSEP



are fortunate to be able to predict many incoming trends based on these other industries.

As floral and event professionals, if we keep a keen eye on trends that are coming into focus, we will also understand those that are on their way out. Today, we are taking a look at up-and-coming trends by focusing on the fashion industry.

This tablescape is inspired by the 2019 spring fashions. The bright colors and bold patterns pair well with a fun petal palette. Although muted tones and neutrals will still be strong for another few years, they will start to fade out as consumers tire of the same old, same old and start to look for more exciting avenues.

The floral selection on this table includes Spray Roses, Pincushion Protea, Asiatic Lilies, Hypericum Berry, Crown Asters, Bird of Paradise and Tulips in bold oranges, coral, creams, and a hint of yellow.



Fashion trends influence more than just flowers in our industry, however. Consider event décor: patterned table linens, candle holders, containers, chargers, and flatware. These elements all gain momentum based on what's happening in other industries. Paired with a bright flower palette, the gold container here ties it all together just like the fashion trends.



Gold is still strong as a metallic accent to bright and bold colors in the fashion world. Just as a pair of gold shoes can be worn with a flirty dress, our gold container pairs well with this bold, bright yellow Ikat printed linen. Other trends that can be translated to event floral and decor are tassels and fringe, which are reflected in our treatments of the coral napkins pictured here.



Another trend we noticed is the return of clear purses and bags. It is easy to play with this popular accessory as a metaphor by using glass chargers and small, clear vases, which can be embellished with metallic marker and used as place settings. The reflective nature of clean, clear water in a transparent glass vase will always be on trend, but what you pair with it will make it bold.

The fashion industry is a great place to look for new trends. When floral and event professionals keep an eye on other industries like fashion, home design, and food, we can expand our design potential and stay ahead of our competition. With cooperation of our industry's growers, manufacturers, and importers, we can impact the world of floral design to be right on trend. 

*Photos by Lux Light Photography, Traverse City, Michigan.*

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## DESIGN TIP

# Helping Survivors Through That First Christmas

BY TONJA VANDERVEEN AIFD, CF, DESIGNING DREAMS FLORAL AND TUXEDOS,  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI, 2018 MFA ACADEMY WINNER



Throughout the year customers and family members pass away. We create funeral arrangements and give them our sympathy. But, that first year after losing a loved one is usually the toughest. You have all the "firsts": The first Mother's Day, first Father's Day, Thanksgiving or a birthday without that loved one. That can be very difficult.

We started a new tradition in our shop. When a customer comes into the shop to order funeral flowers, we write their name on a list. This list contains all the people who, throughout the year, have lost a mom, dad, sister, brother, son, daughter, etc.

We keep that list going until the week before Christmas, and then send a small arrangement or bud vase with a note saying "Thinking of you as you celebrate your first Christmas without your brother, mom, dad, etc. (you fill in who they lost that year)."

We started this a few years ago when my mom died and had to go through the "firsts" without her. I wanted to find a way I could help someone else going through the first Christmas. And what better way than with flowers!

The best thing about sending these flowers is that we have been just as blessed as the person receiving them. The saying "It is better to give than to receive" is proven every time we send these out. 

## Hillcrest Garden Joins Kennicott Brothers

**H**illcrest Garden Inc. has joined forces with Kennicott Brothers Company which has acquired certain operating assets of Hillcrest. Operations will continue as usual to serve florists in northern New Jersey and the greater metropolitan area of New York City.

The number of wholesale distribution facilities under the Chicago-based Kennicott umbrella now total 17 locations, servicing florists in 13 states. The addition of Hillcrest continues to build on the company's plan of growth and market expansion.

Founded in 1936 by Eric Levy Sr., Hillcrest Garden Inc. started in Park Ridge, NJ, as a grower-wholesale operation selling flowers to retail florists off route trucks. In the early 1970s, Leonard "Len" Levy took over the business as the operation began to grow rapidly. In 1994, Hillcrest moved into a building over 44,000 square feet in Paramus, NJ, expanding its product offering into supplies and plants. Brothers Eric Levy Jr. and Larry Levy will remain in management at the Hillcrest location.

Kennicott Brothers president Gustavo Gilchrist commented "This will be a great marriage of two companies which share similar values and cultures. We look forward to merging our strengths to provide additional value to our customers, suppliers and owners who are current employees, as members of our ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan)."

## Hiawatha Names New Sales Manager

**C**orey Layman has been named the new sales manager at Hiawatha Evergreens.

Layman's background is in the packaging industry. After working at a Washington company for 23 years he took a sales position at another packaging firm in 2016 and one of his first visits was to Hiawatha. When Mark Thompson retired earlier this year, Hiawatha asked if he was interested in the position. He started in August 2018.

In discussing his new job, Layman exclaimed, "I am excited about all the new projects we are working on. While we will always be known for the high quality Christmas items we have provided for years, we are striving to bring more of our fresh Northwest green products into the mix year-round. Wedding garlands have really been a great non-Christmas product for us and we are looking to supplement that line with an even wider range of items in the near future."



## Viva Las Vegas... 2019 AIFD Symposium Set for July 6-11

**T**he American Institute of Floral Designers National Symposium "Awaken" will take place in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 6 - 11, at the Paris Hotel and Casino.

The five-day event will include not only main stage and hands-on education sessions but also newly added enhanced education programs and a Las Vegas Market experience.

Among the scheduled events are:

- Renowned designer Gregor Lersch discussing Displacements...Creating Asymmetrical.
- Kevin Ylvisaker AIFD, presenting Battle of the Principles & Elements with a cast of 15.
- Winter Fantasia, the harmonious use of rustic and elegance with natural elements presented by Lana Chernyavsky AIFD.
- Denise Gehrke AIFD, who will look at sympathy designs in a whole new light in Forever Remembered.
- Harijanto Setiawan giving a twist to wedding and event floral design in WTF! What The Flower!
- Shonda Cunningham AIFD and Galina Mihaleva showing attendees how to bend the rules of floral and fashion turning the two art forms into one.

The hands-on education sessions will be taught by Sharrai Morgan-Faulkner AIFD, Fun With Foliage; Bill McKinley AIFD, ICPF, Partners in Motion: Line & Rhythm; Sharon McGukin AIFD, PFCI, Design a Trendsetting Bridal Bouquet in Floral Mesh, and Wendy Andrade AIFD, Unique Techniques With Wire.

Full details are available online at <https://aifd.org/2019-symposium-awaken/>. Registration is open to all floral designers and early registration is encouraged.



## ON THE ROAD AGAIN



Pictured here is the Aoyama Flower Market, a Japanese shop that you can only get to it by buying a train ticket into the Kyoto train station. It sits three floors underneath the station, where they sell a wide range of flowers and a variety of bouquets.

# A short tour of Japan



The lisianthus Delft Blue is a new variety bred by Takii Seed that was shown in both Japan and Europe.

Other interesting attractions are Rokuon-ji, a Zen Buddhist temple in Kyoto, and Fushimi Inari-taisha, known for its red gates.

*Pictures and copy provided by Allison Zeeb, cut flower product development manager, national cut flower product promotions, American Takii Inc., Salinas, California, who was in Japan at the Lisianthus Open Day Trials.*



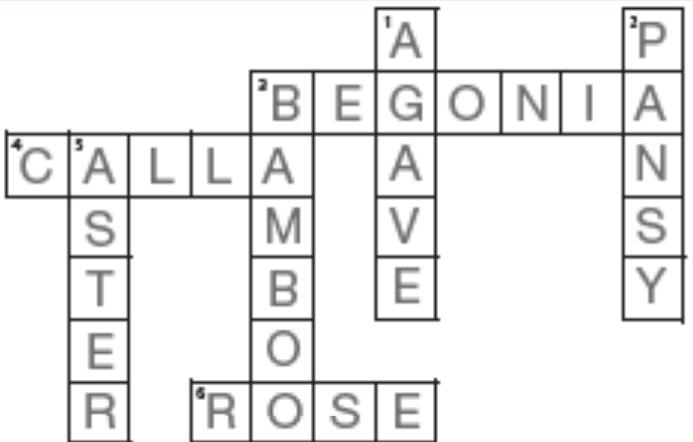
# In Memoriam

**Mel Schwanke**, AAF, past president of the Society of American Florists and SAF Floriculture Hall of Fame honoree has died at the age of 92. He served as the executive director of the Nebraska Florist Society for over 50 years and executive director of the Nebraska Missouri and Kansas Florist Association convention. He also helped to create the American Florist Endowment. He is survived by his widow Joey, and children Jo Heinz, Cindy McKown and J Schwanke, four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

**David Austin**, 92, known as the "Godfather of the English Rose" has died. He bred more than 230 roses during his long career concentrating on developing more color and a group called English Roses. His first English Rose was Constance Spry, launched in 1961. The world famous horticulturist was rewarded for his outstanding contributions with an OBE in 2007. His son, David Austin Jr. is managing director of the family company,

**Terri Thompson**, wife of long time Hiawatha Evergreens general manager, Mark Thompson, has died at the age of 65. She often appeared at industry events with her husband before his retirement. She is survived by her three children, Tricia, Casey and Brian, seven grandchildren, two step grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a step great-grandchild.

## **Flower Power Crossword Puzzle**



# INDUSTRY INFO

## World Floral Expo Set for Dallas, Texas

The 2019 World Floral Expo will be held at the Dallas Market Center, March 20- 22. International flower growers and other floral suppliers will display their products and services to the US floral business community. Products from Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Colombia, Holland, Thailand, Canada, and the USA will be shown.

## **Michigan Teleflora Unit Gets Award**

The Michigan Teleflora Unit was honored at the recent meeting of Teleflora Unit presidents held in California. An award of excellence was presented for the unit's dedication to Teleflora and the florists of Michigan.

## **IFE Set for Miami June 18, 19, and 20**

The International Floriculture Expo will return to Miami, Florida, June 18-20, at the newly redesigned Miami Beach Convention Center. IFE connects high-volume buyers with exhibitors offering an array of products and services specific to the global floral market. Industry members will include retailers, wholesalers, supermarkets, event planners, and designers, among others.

On June 18 the meeting will begin with a day of education followed by two days of exhibits featuring cut flowers, containers, greens, plants, supplies, and accessories.

# Farm Bill Approved, Updates PVPA

The \$867 billion farm bill approved by Congress last year includes an update to the U.S. Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA) that will protect and encourage floriculture innovation. The bill also strengthens the

Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and includes provisions that encourage more data-based analysis in pesticide registration decisions.

The news is a victory for the Society of American Florists, along with AmericanHort and the American Seed Trade Association. The groups have lobbied together for language to amend the PVPA, a 1970 law enacted to protect intellectual property of breeders of certain agricultural products, including some flower varieties. The bill, which could take up to a year to go into effect, also has amended the PVPA to protect asexual reproduction.

## Winner Announced in Flower Love Video Contest

The Floral Marketing Research Fund in partnership with American Floral Endowment has announced Gabriel Hostetler as grand prize winner of the 2nd annual #FlowerLoveVideoContest. Industry members and non-industry members submitted videos promoting the use and giving of fresh flowers.

Hostetler's video "Flowers=Happy" won a close race taking the \$4,000 first prize on the final day of voting. He declared, "I spent \$150 on flowers for this video when I only had \$175 in my bank account because I believed in the vision of this video." GT Manley and James Astle each received honorable mention and \$500.

Nearly 60 videos were submitted to this year's contest. The top 10 finalists were chosen by a selection committee made up of industry members who scored based on commercial appeal, creativity, and how much the video highlights fresh flowers in a positive way. The top 10 videos were then voted on by consumers, industry members and people on social media. Nearly 3,000 people voted.

WUMFA

# Anatomy of a Rose Parade Float

BY HEATHER RUPP CFD, MARIANI PLANTS, CALEDONIA, WI

If you would have told me a few years ago that I would become a professional florist, I probably would have laughed at you in disbelief. As a horticulture student studying at Gateway Technical College I was lured into an SAIFD meeting with pizza (because if you haven't heard, free food is how you get college kids to volunteer or do anything).

Keep in mind I was recently honorably discharged from the Marine Corps. Now I'm not going to lie, I was not sure if I had a future in the floral industry because I didn't know PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) would affect me the way that it did. I was very afraid of my peers finding out so hid it for as long as I could. When it finally came to the surface, I was overwhelmed by the support received from the floral industry. I was invited back to the Rose Parade for a third time and can honestly say that the flowers and people in the floral industry have saved my life over and over again (without even knowing it). This year was different though, I didn't have to hide anymore and it helped restore the confidence that I was lacking.

Arriving at Rose Parade 2019 I could feel all the tension fading away and it was liberating to be around people that I didn't have to hide my injuries from. It was an amazing team. Each one of us helped offset the others weakness with our strengths and it balanced out almost perfectly. I was on the tree team led by Cindy Pham and my teammates were Clay Honeycutt, Ritchie Cael, Auston James Hale, Xavier Klein, and Dylan Gurney.

On the second day we began working on our main project, the UPS Store float. Their entry, Books Keep Us On Our Toes, built by Fiesta Parade Floats was 55 feet long and 37 feet tall. We began processing thousands of beautiful dendrobium orchids that would be used to cover Olive the dancing ostrich. There was also the oncidium orchid Sharry Baby, a hybrid that smells like chocolate.

The marketing team in charge of the UPS float said Olive was the culmination of its annual participation in the Toys for Tots Literacy Program (begun in 2008), where they handed out thousands of books to encourage adults to read with their children. This shifted my attention to the children and I started watching the process through their perspective. I was lucky enough to receive two volunteers to assist with the thousands of insertions that we would make over the next four days.

View of the wing

On the third day we covered Olive's entire chest and underside with kochia. Let me tell you, I very much so

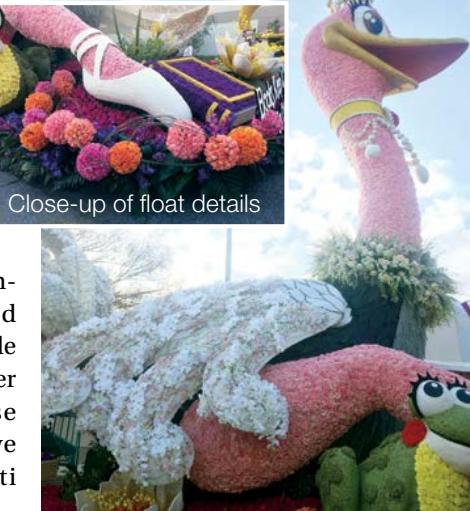
appreciated having volunteers hand me pins and material as I was bent upside down and backwards on her underside making those insertions. From there we moved onto gluing the ti leaves to her body.

At one point our team leader had to remove her shoes and crawl out onto her back so we could finish without damaging the float with scaffolding. Then we moved onto the wings where we had to cover the front and back side with orchids. It was at this time that we realized we were going to become carpenters, engineers, and conduct some experimentation to find a way to secure the orchids to the wings and cover our mechanics. This translated into an all-nighter and we spent the last 12 hours making pins and securing thousands of orchids. In addition to the 10,000 white dendrobium orchids and other materials, 30,000 pale pink Mizuky carnations were used to create Olive.

In the last hour they pulled Olive out of the garage and lifted the wings. We had all hands on deck frantically trying to finish the underside before the judges came through. I remember wishing we had more time and feeling overwhelmed. This is when I looked down and saw Olive through a child's eyes.

I'll never forget how I felt watching a three year old ask her mom to lift her up so she could get a better view and how she squirmed with excitement. The float worked because the little girl told her mom that she wanted to dance and read a book just like Olive.

Words can't describe how I felt as I was standing there early morning for the judging process with my son and learned that Books Keep Us On Our Toes was awarded the Sweepstakes trophy. The judges deemed it the most beautiful in design, floral presentation and entertainment. There were 46 floats and our hard work had paid off. 



Close-up of float details



Olive, the dancing ostrich

The UPS Store float

Books Keep Us On Our Toes

Fiesta Parade Floats

The UPS Store

Floral artist Heather Rupp

Floral designer Heather Rupp

# Memories



1. More hats.
2. Recognize this man or the plant he is wearing?
3. There go the brides.
4. What's the buzz!
5. Harold May, May's Greenhouse, Eau Claire.
6. Otto Schroeder from Green Bay, right, accepting an award from FTD president Mickey Battenelli.
7. Award recipients at the 75th anniversary celebration in 1994.

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## Welcome New WUMFA Members

### Wildflowers Floral Studio

Michelle DeWildt  
N8002 Ashley Road  
Portage, WI 53901

### Curate

Ryan O'Neil  
1120 S. 6th Street, Suite 100  
St. Louis, MO 63104

### Student

Dawn Pasch  
Gateway Technical College

# Color and Elegance Mark Sympathy Trends

BY GAYLE SCHMIDT, OFFICE MANAGER, ALFA FLOWER SHOP, MILWAUKEE, WI

**E**nough traditional color schemes and fan-shaped displays are still dominant in sympathy design, bold colors and elegant styles are emerging as new trends in funeral work, with more people wanting something unique and creative that stands apart from other pieces.

Families are oftentimes drawn to natural elements such as birch or grapevine and branches, lotus pods, and even succulent plants. We have incorporated these materials in much of our sympathy work. Frequently, these pieces are ones that receive the most attention and compliments from people attending a service.



Asking questions about the deceased's interests and hobbies is one of the tools we use to add significant and special elements to the family's flowers. Items such as golf clubs, fishing lures, antlers, playing cards and musical symbols have all been used in some of the sympathy arrangements we have made.

When a family is grieving the loss of a loved one, ordering flowers is usually one of the final things to be addressed because it is often difficult to discuss flowers at a time when they are burdened with so much, financially and emotionally.

This is why we take great measures to make sure the family feels comfortable when sitting down with one of our talented and caring designers. We are extremely thorough in recording every detail, ensuring we make exactly what the family envisions.

Sometimes we are not able to meet directly with family members of the deceased because they decide to order flowers through the funeral home. Using our floral selection guides, the directors are able to show the family some of the arrangements we have to offer. Under their guidance, the family is able to customize any of the selections so they can get exactly what they want.

Working with funeral directors is an integral part of the flower-ordering process, as the majority of our funeral orders



come directly from the funeral director. Oftentimes it is the only connection we have with the family, so it is extremely important that our funeral directors communicate the floral vision of the family.

We consider ourselves very fortunate to be such a busy shop and are proud to be considered one of Milwaukee's most trusted florists. While wedding, event, and everyday flowers are a large part of our business, sympathy work dominates the work that we produce. We hope to continue to create unique, elegant and bold designs for our loyal customers well into the future. 



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# WHERE'S THAT FROM?!

BY NEVILLE MACKAY, CAFA, PFCI, WFC, MY MOTHER'S BLOOMERS, HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA



**W**hen you go to a grocery store, you can see where the strawberries or grapes come from, as they are usually clearly labeled. I find it interesting when buying a little box of raspberries in December, for example, to know where these little treats came from. As a culture, we're becoming more aware of what we consume, whether it's something we eat, wear or slather on our bodies.

Have you ever wondered where our flowers come from, how they grow, and what they've gone through to get to our design benches? Well, as floral folks, we really should do what we can to find out, as consumers are wondering; many using their dollar power to dictate where we source what we sell.

We've all had THAT bride who needs to know where every little petal comes from for ethical and environmental reasons...until of course there's a bloom she "needs" and we are to do whatever necessary (kill someone if need be) to get them in for her.

I, as you know, travel a bit, so get to see first hand where a lot of what we use comes from. I had the opportunity to go to the Agriflor Show in Ecuador several years ago, and also visited several flower farms. Let me tell you about this experience in a little more detail.

First, know Quito, Ecuador, is far away, and Spanish is spoken there (English also, but know how to get to the bathroom; you'll thank me). Also, this beautiful country is made up of volcanoes and mountains, so be aware of the different elevations as it can play havoc with your breathing. The food is good, so don't pack a jar of peanut butter and there are lots of choices. This is a diverse and incredible country, one full of beauty, culture, history and of course flowers!

Every year either Ecuador or Colombia hosts a floral expo to show what is grown in South America. Let me tell you, these folks know how to put on a floral display. At Agriflor, there were many farms represented, all of whom had incredible displays of their floral offerings. Honestly, to see walls made with thousands of roses, or an entire drink bar made with roses under glass, was extraordinary.

I've been in this business for hundreds of years, and this was impressive. I spoke with many growers who were proud to show off what they have. I also got to see and chat with Joey who runs Alexandria Farms, and of course enjoy all those beautiful Garden roses they grow. Here's the thing, you know how a dog gets when he sees something dead and he wants to roll about in it? Well, that was me at this place...I

felt a bit bad for Joey as he wanted to chat and I was constantly distracted by the floral beauty around me.

Now, I went to several farms as well, which was quite the experience. The coach ride to the farms is filled with scenes of tropical plants leading to cacti and then pine trees as we go further up, volcanoes as we cross the equator, one that is snow-capped year-round and has a glacier, the only one on the equator, and loads of natural beauty. But if you're a little afraid of heights, don't sit in a window seat, just saying. Oh, and I mentioned before about the breathing issues from the altitude, that's another thing. Apparently, there's a "tea" you can drink that helps, but I decided to embrace my shortness of breath as part of the total experience.

One farm processes 75,000 roses every day. Yup, every day...about 50 million a year, with three to five million that are tossed for sub-par quality. Imagine that, right? Oh, and I walked through a three hectare calla farm that made my brain hurt. It's hard to wrap your head about what goes on. From the time they are cut to the time we get them often takes well over a week. Between the miles of roses, acres of callas and endless rows of alstroemeria and other blooms, I was in floral heaven. It was like floral porn!!

Look, I would love to tell you about how some farms cap rose buds to prevent the blackening of the petals from the sun, or others who are using beneficial insects and such to prevent disease, but I would have to write a book. I saw roses that were eight feet tall bound for Russia and also how roses are colored to make rainbow roses, which was mind-bending.

I am thankful for the experience and look forward to another trip.

Agriflor 2019 will be held in Quito, Ecuador, September 30 to October 2, at the Centro de Exposiciones.



# Fantastic Education Sessions!

## Steps to Certification

Wednesday, June 5, 2019  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Members \$149 • Non-Member \$199**  
**Instructor: Cindy Ching AIFD, CF**

Do's and Don'ts for Testing • Methods and Mechanics for Hands On • Insight and Answers  
Includes all flowers/supplies. Lunch included in registration. Class enrollment limited to 12.

**You must bring your own tools (knife, pruner, scissors and wire cutter).**

## Introduction to Basic Floral Design Five Day Course

April 7-8, 2019, Sunday and Monday  
April 14-15, 2019, Sunday and Monday  
April 22, 2019, Monday  
**9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Member \$1000 • Non-Member \$1250**  
**Instructor: Cindy Ching, AIFD, CF**

This comprehensive course will introduce beginning students to the exciting field of floral design. Principles and elements of design, proper mechanics of construction, care and handling of fresh materials and use of color are the focal points. For those desiring to become a Certified Florist, this class is a great first step. Time will be divided between lecture and hands-on design. Students will have completed designs to take home each day. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction time with no exams. Limited enrollment of seven ensures each student receives personal attention.

Includes all flowers and supplies. Lunch on your own.

**Bring your own tools (pruner, scissors, wire cutter). A floral knife will be provided.**

## Intermediate Floral Design Five Day Course

June 2-3, 2019, Sunday and Monday  
June 9-10, 2019, Sunday and Monday  
June 17, 2019, Monday  
**9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Member \$1250 • Non-Member \$1500**  
**Instructor: Cindy Ching, AIFD, CF**

This course builds upon the foundation of the basic design course. The focus will be on the information presented in the Certified Florist (CF) Manual with the goal of preparing students to take the CF examination. Students who do not wish to take the CF exam will still be welcome. Time will be divided between lecture and hands-on design. A sample test will be given on each topic. You will take home your designs. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction time. Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no exams. Limited enrollment of six ensures each student receives personal attention. Includes all flowers and supplies. Lunch on your own.

**Bring your own tools (pruner, scissors, wire cutter). A floral knife will be provided.**

**Go to [www.michiganfloral.org](http://www.michiganfloral.org) for complete course information.  
Download registration forms, or call Cindy (517) 575-0110.**

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– Experienced floral designer for established shop. Previous floral shop experience required. Able to manage customers, floral inventory, and POS computer systems (FTD Dove). Experience in all aspects of everyday and holiday floral design including wedding design. Motivated to learn, team player. Email resume and cover letter to [joe@thevg.com](mailto:joe@thevg.com).

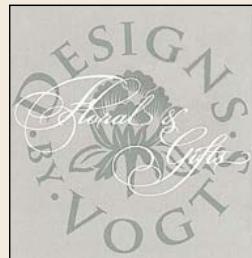
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### For Sale –

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*To provide education and professional partnerships to advance the industry and position our colleagues at the forefront of the floral industry.*

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