

AUGUST 2025

# TEXAS

*in Bloom*



# The Texas State Florists' Association is excited to bring a one-of-a-kind floral showcase to East Texas this fall.

Everything's coming up roses through the looking glass in a floral themed wonderland, featuring a skill-building floral design workshop, Alice in Wonderland-inspired tea, admission to the enchanting Tyler Rose Garden and Museum and a presentation by world-renowned floral designer Deborah De La Flor AIFD CFD PFCI. Join your floral friends at the Tyler Rose Garden Center on Wednesday, Sept. 24, for an experience you won't want to miss!

## REGISTRATION IS OPEN AND THERE ARE OPTIONS!

Each feature is designed to inspire and educate, offering a unique blend of professional education and community engagement!

Stroll the Tyler Rose Garden Center, Museum and Rose Garden, enjoy a delightful tea-time boxed supper, and experience a Product Gallery with either the Wonderland Pass for TSFA members or the Curious Guest Pass for non-members. TSFA members save on registration for all TSFA classes and events! Be sure to Escape Down the Rabbit Hole with a hands-on design workshop add-on!



TO REGISTER AND  
BOOK HOUSING  
Scan QR code or visit  
[tsfa.org/roses](https://tsfa.org/roses)



### Wonderland Members Pass (TSFA Member Rate)

**\$55**



### Curious Guest Pass (Non-member Rate)

**\$85**



Add-on

### Escape Down the Rabbit Hole

Floral Design Workshop

**\$95 TSFA Member • \$125 Non-member**



### The Playing Cards Group Tickets

Special rates are available for student groups.

Email [tsfaadmin@tsfa.org](mailto:tsfaadmin@tsfa.org) for details.

TSFA has secured a special conference rate of \$116 (single/double) plus tax and applicable fees for those attending the Texas Floral Showcase. Rooms are in the TSFA room block Sept. 22-25, based on availability. To secure this rate, register before the Sept. 8 deadline or before the block sells out.

Hilton Garden Inn

220 East Grande Boulevard • Tyler, Texas 75703



# Texas in Bloom

AUGUST 2025 | VOLUME LI | NUMBER 7

## FROM THE *President*

Dear Fellow TSFA Members,

As I write this final letter as your President, my heart overflows with gratitude for the incredible journey we have shared over the past year. If you were not in League City the weekend of June 27-29, 2025, you missed something truly spectacular! What an outstanding Texas Floral Expo! This incredible event stands as a shining testament to the strength and unity of our floral community, reinforcing my belief that TSFA continues to flourish because of extraordinary individuals like you. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Chair Marisa Guerrero AIFD CFD TMF for spearheading this monumental task. Marisa and her entire team created an experience that will be remembered for years to come. The energy, creativity and professional excellence were truly extraordinary. EXPO ... Secrets was the largest educational event associated with TSFA's annual meeting in numerous years – a remarkable achievement that displays the growing strength of our organization. Lynn Lary McLean AAF AIFD PFCI TMF, TSFA Events Coordinator, deserves special recognition for her invaluable assistance to Marisa. Lynn's expertise and dedication were instrumental in bringing this vision to life. To our volunteers who said "YES" when asked to procure fresh flowers, secure hard goods, assist designers, organize workrooms, direct deliveries to the proper locations, and tackle the massive project of cleanup and move-out, you are the heart and soul of TSFA. This association would not exist without your generous spirit and tireless efforts. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! Let not I forget our Texas Floral Education Underwriters – a very strong group of exceptional floral businesses that help bring this type of education to you. Without their support, we would not be able to present world-class programs like those we all witnessed in League City. THANK YOU! You will find more comprehensive coverage of the Expo, complete with photos and event highlights, in upcoming issues of the *TEXAS in Bloom* magazine.

Looking ahead, our momentum continues to build with an exciting calendar of educational opportunities. Members of the TSFA Education Committee traveled to Corpus Christi for the annual Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas (ATAT) Professional Development Conference, where classes and workshops were held July 21-24 for high school floriculture and agriculture instructors throughout our state. Next, TSFA offers an Industry Training Class for Level 1 and 2 on Aug. 6-7, a Fundamentals Class on Aug. 8-10 and a TMF Certification Class on Aug. 22-25 at the TSFA School of Floral Design in Leander. On Sept. 24, a regional event at the Tyler Rose Garden Center will feature Deborah De La Flor AIFD CFD PFCI presenting "Everything's Coming Up Roses!" with an optional hands-on workshop. Level 1 and 2 Certification Classes for teachers will be held in Lubbock on Sept. 30-Oct. 1 and in Huntsville on Oct. 7-8. As you can see, we have a busy end of summer and a beginning of the fall season ahead.

Now, it brings me immense joy to congratulate TSFA's newly elected and returning members of the board of directors for 2025-2026:

- President – Marisa Guerrero AIFD CFD TMF.
- 1st Vice President – Amy Neugebauer AIFD CFD PFCI TMFA.
- 2nd Vice President – Tom Wolfe, Jr.
- Retail Directors – Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF | Dawson Clark TMF | Tricia Won AIFD CFD EMC.
- Grower Director – Jimmy Klepac.
- Wholesale Director – Jeff Floyd.

These outstanding leaders bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and unwavering commitment to our association. I have complete confidence that they will serve TSFA exceptionally well in the coming year, building on the solid foundation we've established together. As I transition to the role of Immediate Past President, I look forward to supporting their vision in continued service to our association.

This past year has been filled with incredible opportunities to represent TSFA on both national and state levels. From attending the Society of American Florists (SAF) annual meeting in Miami – including an eye-opening tour of the Port of Miami, where the majority of our beautiful cut flowers arrive from international growers – to attending the CalFlowers Fun 'N Sun bi-annual meeting with inspiring tours of two California growing operations, each experience enriched my understanding of our industry's vast network. The educational visit to Washington, D.C., for SAF's Congressional Action Day was particularly meaningful. Standing alongside fellow floral professionals as we met with representatives and senators to advocate for topics about our floral industry reminded me of the power we possess when we unite for common causes. Every committee meeting, whether conducted in person or through Zoom, every high school grading certification, and every online educational session has been a privilege to attend on your behalf.

It has been my honor and privilege to represent the Texas State Florists' Association with pride and dedication throughout this remarkable year. Every experience, every meeting, every opportunity to speak on behalf of our members has been a profound honor. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for this extraordinary opportunity to serve. The memories, friendships and professional growth I have experienced will remain treasured gifts that I carry forward. Together, we have strengthened TSFA's position as a leading voice in the floral industry and I am confident that our brightest days still lie ahead. Remember our mission statement: "Cultivating Member Success and a Strong Floral Community". Let us continue to band together for TSFA!

With heartfelt appreciation and endless gratitude,  
Ed Fimbel CFD TMFA  
President Texas State Florists' Association



TSFA President  
Ed Fimbel CFD TMFA

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### TSFA BOARD

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Grower Director Jimmy Klepac

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Publisher and Managing Editor | TSFA Executive Director Michelle Karns CAE  
Editor | Lynn Lary McLean AAF AIFD PFCI TMF  
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Education and Certification Coordinator | Alyssa Russell  
Production | Pixels and Ink  
Contributing Writers | Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF, Ed Fimbel CFD TMFA,  
Ken Freytag, Cheryl Vaughan CFD PFCI TMF and Tom Wolfe, Jr.

## Presents a Fresh Take on the Texas Floral Showcase in Tyler!

Mark your calendars and don your favorite tea-party attire. It's encouraged, but not required!

"Through the Looking Glass, Everything's Coming Up Roses!" will transform the Tyler Rose Garden Center into a remarkable floral event on Wednesday, Sept. 24.

This showcase blends beloved TSFA traditions with innovative experiences crafted specifically to inspire and reinvigorate your passion for floral artistry.



### Escape Down the Rabbit Hole to Discover a Floral Fantasies Workshop!

Engage and create! The day begins with an exclusive hands-on workshop! Escape down the rabbit hole to discover the Floral Fantasies Workshop from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Whether you're a seasoned florist seeking fresh ideas, a budding floral designer ready to take the next step on your educational journey or a high school floral design teacher aiming to enhance your students' skills, this workshop provides valuable insights and creative techniques you can immediately apply. It is an exceptional chance to learn new approaches, build industry connections and indulge in creative floral expression.



### Wonderland Rose Stroll and Elegant Tea

Explore, discover and socialize! At 3:30 p.m., the garden gates swing open, welcoming you into a whimsical world of floral beauty and discovery. Meander through the picturesque paths of the Tyler Rose Garden, explore the rich legacy inside the Texas Rose Museum (entry included with your ticket), and cast your vote in the "Madly Marvelous" Tablescape Competition, featuring stunning creations from former Texas Designers of the Year. Your vote decides who earns the coveted title of "Royal Court's Favorite"!

As you wander, be sure to experience the enchanting "Curiouser and Curiouser: Floral Artistry Exhibit", showcasing imaginative, exhibition-style floral installations crafted by flower shops and floral artists. This creative gallery is sure to spark inspiration and highlight the artistry at the heart of our industry.

Then, take a moment to unwind at "The Mad Hatter's Elegant Tea," where exquisitely curated tea boxes await, filled with savory sandwiches, delightful scones and sweet confections. Sip on hot or iced teas at whimsically styled stations, surrounded by fellow floral friends in a relaxed, storybook setting.



### Floral Wonders and Whimsy Bar

Create and inspire! Be sure to visit a new, interactive highlight — the "Floral Wonders and Whimsy Bar," hosted by Alan Masters AIFD CFD PFCI TME. Create charming, wearable floral accessories. This interactive station offers delightful, hands-on fun and provides practical ideas to integrate into your business or classroom.

# EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSES

## with Deborah De La Flor AIFD CFD PFCI

Learn from the best! At 6 p.m., the event reaches its peak with the main stage presentation, "Everything's Coming Up Roses," featuring renowned floral designer Deborah De La Flor AIFD CFD PFCI. Her captivating demonstration promises to inspire and equip you with fresh, practical ideas and techniques that can be directly applied to your floral designs or educational resources.



### White Rabbit's Marketplace

Discover and connect! Throughout the afternoon and evening, explore the "White Rabbit's Marketplace," a whimsical product gallery where you will discover innovative products, valuable resources and engage with Texas Floral Education Underwriters. This unique marketplace is ideal for identifying trends, securing new suppliers and gaining valuable business insights.



### Twilight in the Rose Garden

Connect and reflect! As evening falls, unwind during "Twilight in the Rose Garden," from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This relaxed networking opportunity is perfect for reconnecting with old friends, forging new relationships and exchanging floral insights. The marketplace will remain open until 8:30 p.m. for continued exploration.

### Wonderland at a Glance

- 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.** • Escape down the rabbit hole to study hands-on with Deborah De La Flor.
- 3:30 p.m.** • The key opens the garden gate to experience all that awaits!
- 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.** • Experience one or all!
  - The Mad Hatter's Elegant Tea Party.
  - White Rabbit's Marketplace.
  - Floral Wonders and Whimsy Bar.
  - Madly Marvelous Tablescape.
  - Curiouser and Curiouser Floral Artistry.
- 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** • Everything's Coming Up Roses with Deborah De La Flor.
  - White Rabbit's Marketplace.
- 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.** • Twilight in the rose garden.
- 8:30 p.m.** • The key closes the garden gate in exchange for memories and moments.

The Tyler Showcase is thoughtfully curated for TSFA members, educators and students, offering fresh, interactive experiences to inspire and energize the floral community. Join TSFA for an unforgettable day of floral artistry, creativity and professional growth in the Rose Capital of Texas.

TO REGISTER FOR THE  
SHOWCASE AND TO  
BOOK HOUSING  
Scan QR code or visit  
[tsfa.org/roses](https://tsfa.org/roses)





**FORMER TEXAS DESIGNERS OF THE YEAR ARE INVITED  
TO SHOWCASE THEIR STYLE DURING THE**

# *Madly Marvelous*

## **TABLESCAPE COMPETITION**

One thing I've learned about the floral industry – especially in Texas – is that we don't just create beauty ... we honor legacy. This year, as part of the Texas Floral Showcase at the Tyler Rose Garden Center, we're doing something both magical and meaningful! We are inviting former Texas Designers of the Year to step back into the spotlight for a competition like no other.

Welcome to Madly Marvelous Tablescape Competition – a professionally judged and fan-favorite floral competition where creativity meets celebration, storytelling meets structure, and florals take center stage.

The goal? To feature the best of the best. These designers have proven themselves over the years with creativity, technical skill and artistic vision. Now, they get to bring all of that – plus their own personality – to a beautifully curated tabletop design inspired by an Alice-in-Wonderland-inspired theme.

Here's what makes this so special! This isn't just about ribbons and bragging rights, though yes, there will be prizes! It's about honoring those who helped to

expand design awareness – flower by flower, design by design. It's about inviting the public and our fellow floral professionals to experience the artistry and storytelling that lives within a single table. It's also about illustrating all that is possible with foam, florals, and one's imagination.

The top three designs will be determined by our panel of professional judges. Following judging, guests will wander while sipping tea and vote on their favorite table. Once the votes are tabulated, the Royal Court's Favorite will be crowned!

This competition is going to be spectacular. It's going to be filled with color, creativity, a surprise or two and, "How did they even do that?!" moments. Most importantly, it's going to reflect what TSFA is all about: artistry, education and community.

So, to all former winners – we see you and are cheering you on! We can hardly wait to be a part of the madly marvelous magic you bring to the table.

With love and floral flair,  
Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF

FORMER TEXAS DESIGNERS OF THE YEAR  
VISIT TO LEARN MORE AND TO BE OUR GUEST AT THE  
TEXAS FLORAL SHOWCASE WHEN YOU RSVP TO ENTER  
THE MADLY MARVELOUS TABLESCAPE COMPETITION!



# DO YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET!

## WE COULDN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOU!

### TEXAS FLORAL EXPO 2025

#### BILL DORAN COMPANY

The Houston location received all fresh product for the Texas Floral Expo and the Texas locations contributed additionally to assist TSFA in completing procurement requests.

#### TAYLOR WHOLESALE FLORIST

This Houston wholesaler the supplies for the Texas Floral Expo!

#### TEXAS FLORAL EDUCATION AND PRODUCT PARTNERS

Thank you to the following Texas Floral Education Underwriters who underwrote presentations and generously provided the requested product support.

- **Accent Decor** underwrote the Stars of Texas programming an interactive, hands-on workshop with Chris Collum-Williams AIFD CFD TME, as well as the Stars of Texas table decor by Fabian Salcedo.
- **BloomNet** underwrote International Insights and the Advanced Hands-on Workshop with Brenna Quan AIFD.
- **FTD** underwrote the Sunday luncheon presentation and hands-on workshop with J. Keith White AIFD.
- **Porch View Home** and the **Texas Floral Education Underwriters** underwrote the Saturday luncheon presentation and the marketing workshop presented by Charlie Gropetti AIFD.
- **Smithers-Oasis** underwrote International Insights and the bilingual sympathy hands-on workshop with Rocio Silva AIFD CFD PFCI and Frank Feysa AIFD CFD PFCI.
- **South Central AIFD Chapter** and **Texas Floral Education Underwriters** underwrote the A.I. workshop with Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TME.
- **Syndicate Sales** underwrote a hands-on workshop by Derek Woodruff AAF AIFD CFD PFCI CF.
- **Teleflora** underwrote the Saturday breakfast presentation, featuring Hitomi Gilliam AIFD.

#### TEXAS FLORAL EDUCATION PARTNERS

Thank you to the Texas Floral Education Underwriters who additionally underwrote one or more business sessions.

- **BloomNet** underwrote two business sessions with Renato Cruz Sogueco AAF PFCI.
- **DETAILS** underwrote a business session with Corrine Heck PFCI.
- **Flower Clique** underwrote a business session with Vonda LaFever AIFD CFD PFCI and Lori Wilson PFCI.

#### TEXAS FLORAL PRODUCT PARTNERS

These Texas Floral Education Underwriters provided products for the Texas Floral Expo in support of educational programming and events.

##### PLATINUM LEVEL

Bill Doran Company  
- Texas Locations  
CalFlowers

##### GOLD LEVEL

Rio Roses

##### SILVER LEVEL

Choice Farms  
Esprit Miami  
Klepac Greenhouses, Inc.  
North Pole Peonies  
Southern Floral Company  
Wolfe Wholesale Florist  
Zoom Roses

##### BRONZE LEVEL

Alexandra Farms  
Floral Supply Syndicate  
Taylor Wholesale Florist

#### TEXAS FLORAL PRODUCT CONTRIBUTORS

These companies provided an array of product to complete procurement requests for the Texas Floral Expo. Texas wholesalers who are Texas Floral Education Underwriters offer many of the flowers offered through these companies.

Alpha Fern Company  
Arnosky Farms  
Austin Flower Company  
CamFlor, Inc.  
Fern Trust, Inc.  
Floral Chain Group  
Glad-A-Way Gardens  
Green Point Nurseries  
Jet Fresh Flower Distributors  
Mayesh  
Mellano & Company

Montecarlo Gardens  
Pristine Wholesale Floral  
Regional Farms  
Resendiz Bros. Protea Growers  
Rosaprima  
Salter's Evergreen Supply  
San Antonio Flower Company  
Schusters of Texas  
Uniflor



# A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT IS RECOGNIZED BY TSFA

Presented by Cheryl Vaughan CFD PFCI TMFA

Renato Cruz Sogueco AAF PFCI is a man of many talents and passions – first and foremost a devoted husband and father. He’s also a writer, technologist, organic farmer, golfer, fisherman, foodie and pianist.

His love for gardening runs deep – passed down from his grandmother and mother, and now shared with his son. Each year, he plants a garden from seed, often sharing his harvest with friends and family. He raises his own tilapia and has even gone so far as to set up a pool on his balcony to create the perfect environment for them.

He holds degrees and experience in both psychology and journalism, which help him connect with floral professionals and craft compelling narratives across platforms. A nature enthusiast and self-proclaimed “SaltLifer,” he’s just as comfortable with a fishing rod or pickleball paddle as he is behind a computer.

He can wield a drill or a reciprocating saw with surprising precision. But his real playground is in the world of tech. From computers and video gear to phone hacks and DIY devices, if you need a part or fix, he either has it – or he’ll research it and send you the exact Amazon link to buy it, which he has done for many of us in TSFA.

His love of flowers and plants led him to the Society of American Florists early in his career, merging his love for flowers and a way to launch a career in the non-profit space. As SAF Chief Information Officer, Sogueco provided marketing, technology and government relations for flower growers, suppliers, wholesalers and retailers.

Today, he continues to educate and advocate for florists helping contribute to their success.

TSFA Past President and 2023 TSFA Achievement Award Recipient Cheryl Vaughan AIFD CFD PFCI presents the 2025 TSFA Achievement Award on behalf of Texas State Florists’ Association to Renato Cruz Sogueco AAF PFCI.







Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

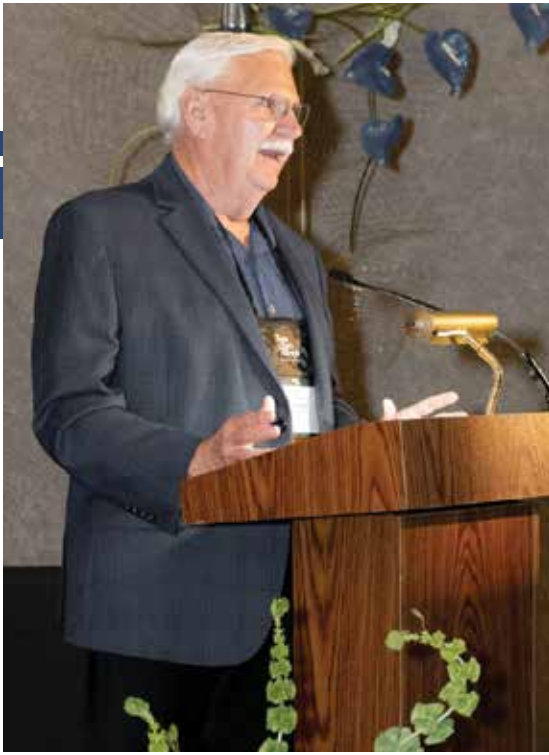
As BloomNet Vice President of Digital Strategy and Education, his primary role is to serve member florists by helping them build web traffic and engage customers. He develops innovative solutions focusing on search engine optimization and marketing, social media, content marketing and mobile strategy. He serves as lead educator on new technology, digital marketing strategy, consumer and demographic trends at the Floriology Institute and on the new online learning platform, Floriology Now.

The recipient has always been there for me as I have peppered him with business questions. He mentored me while applying for my PFCI, and was also there when I went to my very first SAF conference. I was the only one there from Texas and didn't know that many people. He hung out with me and made sure I felt comfortable. I will always be grateful for his knowledge, mentorship and friendship. It was my honor and pleasure to present the Lifetime Achievement award to Renato Cruz Sogueco AAF PFCI.

TSFA President Ed Fimbel CFD TMFA presents Renato Cruz Sogueco AAF PFCI with the Achievement Award plaque designating Cruz as the 2025 Recipient.



Sogueco expresses appreciation to TSFA for this recognition.



TSFA Past President, Ken Freytag inducts Mark Knox AAF TMF into the TSFA Hall of Fame.

## MARK KNOX AAF TMF IS INDUCTED INTO THE TSFA HALL OF FAME

Presented by Ken Freytag

The TSFA Hall of Fame Award was established in 1996 to recognize businesses, organizations and visionary leaders who have made a significant impact on the floral industry, TSFA and the generations of florists they have inspired along the way.

It was first presented to Rocky Pollitz AAF AIFD PFCI, whose legendary career included roles with FTD, Teleflora, AFS and Redbook. Previous honorees include numerous Texas Floral Education Underwriters, the TSFA Past Presidents and the Texas Floral Endowment. Individuals listed in the Hall of Fame include industry leaders like Mark Nance AAF, Janet Justus, Victor Giorgini and Lynn Lary McLean AAF AIFD PFCI TMF as well as TSFA's own Carole Sayegh.



TSFA President Ed Fimbel CFD TMFA presents the 2025 TSFA Hall of Fame Inductee with the official plaque. Master of Ceremonies Marisa Guerrero AIFD CFD TMF acknowledges the recognition.

During the Texas Floral Expo, attendees celebrated floral excellence and longstanding support to TSFA by honoring an individual whose love for floral artistry began at only 7 years old, inspired by a white calla lily spray. In 1949, Mark Knox AAF TMF launched his career while working his way through college at the University of North Texas. After more than 75 years in the floral business, the passion and dedication of the 2025 Hall of Fame inductee, along with his wife Jane, helped build a legacy that has shaped the Texas floral industry. Above all, Mark and Jane are wonderful parents and raised a remarkable family.

It was my pleasure to induct into the TSFA Hall of Fame Award one who has spent a lifetime serving and mentoring others, leading businesses and organizations, building community and advancing our profession. A school teacher for several years, Mark's influence can be seen in the classroom, in the shop and in every floral professional who has been fortunate enough to learn from or work alongside him. His commitment to supporting future generations of florists has left a lasting mark on TSFA and on the floral industry across Texas and beyond.

It is with heartfelt appreciation and great pride that we induct Mark Knox AAF TMF into the Texas State Florists' Association Hall of Fame, in recognition of a lifetime of achievement and a legacy that will continue to bloom for generations to come.



## ABOUT MARK KNOX AAF TMF

- Born in Ponder, Texas.
- Worked his way through school as a part-time floral designer, with his first job dating 1949.
- Graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees in art from the University of North Texas.
- After time in the U.S. Army, Knox moved to Odessa in 1956 to teach art to junior high students.
- While teaching, he met the late Jane Knox, his wife of 57 years.
- Together with Jane, Mark opened Mark Knox Flowers in 1960.
- Today, Mark Knox Flowers is considered an Odessa staple for over six decades.
- WesTexas New Mexico Florists' Association (WTNM) commissioned Knox to create the Silver Rose Pin awarded to each recipient of the Silver Rose Award.
- Jane and Mark later purchased Flowerland in Midland.
- A founder, Knox was instrumental in establishing The Florist Federal Credit Union that has proudly served the floral community since 1969.
- Served as president of WTNM in 1980.
- Received the Silver Rose Award in 1980 in honor of his exemplary service to WTNM.
- Instrumental in developing the Certified Florist Program for TSFA in 1980. Today, this program is known as the Texas Master Florist Program.
- The Certified Florist Program was also developed as an offering to state associations as the Professional Certified Florist Program, with states designating master florists at the successful completion of the program.

- Served as president of TSFA in 1982.
- Received the TSFA Achievement Award in 1983.
- Served as president of Florists' Transworld Delivery (FTD).
- Recognized across the nation for his dedication to the floral industry with numerous awards.
- Served on the Odessa Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.
- Received the Citizen of the Year Award from the Odessa Chamber of Commerce.
- Served in leadership roles for Permian Basin Rehab Center, Odessa Rotary Club and the Ellen Noël Art Museum.
- Jane and Mark Knox were named 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year by the Odessa Chamber of Commerce.
- Presented the Humanitarian Award by the Odessa Heritage Foundation in 2025.
- Proud father of four children and has seven grandchildren.
- At 94 years young, Knox can be found in the flower shop most days of the week sharing advice along the way and continuing to make a difference!



**"Flowers are a very important part of our lives from the beginning to the end. I guess I was just meant to be a florist."**

TSFA President Ed Fimbel CFD TMFA shares a moment of celebration with TSFA Hall of Fame Recipient Mark Knox AAF TMF.



2024 Recipient Tom Wolfe, Jr. presents the 2025 Jim Orr Volunteer Spirit Award during the Texas Floral Expo.

## CASSIE SANDERS AIFD CFD TMF IS AWARDED THE **THE JIM ORR VOLUNTEER SPIRIT AWARD**

Presented by Tom Wolfe, Jr.

A year after receiving this award, I'm still very humbled and honored to be standing here. I have found my time with TSFA to be very rewarding, and I would encourage all of you to become a volunteer. It will help your business grow, it helps the industry, and it will help you grow on a personal level. Every one of you possesses a skill set that can benefit this association. Volunteering at any level, in any role large or small, makes an incredible difference. Whether you help in a class or a workroom, onsite for a high school testing or as an off-site grader,

whether you serve on a committee or as a member of the board, it takes an army of volunteers to advance TSFA throughout the year, and you get to work with some of the most amazing people who become life-long friends and even like family. TSFA kept us open for business during the pandemic, when we stood to lose everything. TSFA has created demand for flowers that never existed before and has brought new life into our workforce through our high school certification programs, so I think all of us can give a little back to an association that cares so much for our industry.

The Jim Orr Volunteer Spirit Award recognizes a TSFA member for extraordinary service to the association. The award was founded in 2012 in memory of one whose life reflected the true spirit of a volunteer. Jim Orr was a long-time member of TSFA at a time when the annual convention held a trade show with 1,000 or more in attendance. As a manufacturer's representative who traveled the state at a time when salespeople visited shops to showcase new products and sell their wares, Jim Orr voluntarily marketed TSFA along the way. His TSFA involvement was not at the board of directors level, and not one of a presenter, but one of a volunteer who all knew they could count on when there was a job to be done and done well. His fun was centered in an event that was always held the evening before convention and one that initiated those who had gained entrance in recognition of their volunteer spirit. The event was called Aesop, and I venture to say there are some who recall these spirited times. Jim Orr was centered in that spirit.

Today, it is my pleasure ... and yet it's difficult to do this year's recipient justice in describing her and her efforts, because she contributes in so many ways. She is a teacher, a mentor, a volunteer with amazing technical abilities, and she's not afraid to get her hands dirty. She has a calm demeanor and incredible resolve, a real servant leader.

If I read you her full resume, we would be here for the next hour, but here are a few interesting highlights.

- She was the 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year at her school.
- She was the 2024-2025 Teacher Leader on campus.
- She is certified as an archery instructor and as a Texas Hunter Education Instructor.
- She also has a Master's of Science in Agriculture.

She is already known and respected by many TSFA members. She has been an integral member of the TSFA Education Committee for several years, participating in testing events, grading online and in person and providing invaluable contributions to our advanced curriculum and virtual reality projects. She has taught classes for TSFA in Lubbock and at the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas conferences, where she is recognized as a leader among other agriculture and floral design teachers. In 2024, she was among those asked to provide input to the Texas Education Agency as they developed the new TEKS for floral design curriculum. She is also ran the work room for this year's Expo. On a personal note, she has



made my life infinitely better by creating a monstrously large and complex spreadsheet to aid me and the rest of the team in procurement for Expo.

In fact, we all like her so much that we decided to just go ahead and hire her as our TSFA Projects and Partnerships Specialist.

It was my honor to present this year's Jim Orr Volunteer Spirit Award to Cassie Sanders AIFD CFD PFCI TMF!

Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



Cassie Sanders AIFD CFD PFCI TMF expresses appreciation to those attending the Texas Floral Expo.

2024 Jim Orr Volunteer Spirit Award Recipient Tom Wolfe, Jr. presents 2025 Recipient with the designated plaque.

## CASSIE SANDERS JOINS TSFA STAFF

The Texas State Florists' Association (TSFA) is pleased to welcome Cassie Sanders AIFD CFD TMF as its new Projects and Partnerships Specialist. In her new role, Sanders will lead floral education projects, streamline processes and work closely with governmental agencies, school districts and the floral industry.

Sanders holds bachelor's and Master of Science degrees in Agriculture from West Texas A&M University. She launched Lubbock ISD's floral design program in 2013 and was recognized as Secondary Teacher of the Year for Lubbock ISD last year.

As an integral member of the TSFA Education Committee for nearly a decade, Sanders has participated in floral certification testing events, graded online and in person and provided invaluable contributions to TSFA's advanced curriculum and virtual reality projects. She has taught floral

design classes for TSFA in Lubbock and at the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas (ATAT) Professional Development Conferences. A frequent volunteer at TSFA conferences, Sanders served as the Workroom Coordinator for the 2025 Texas Floral Expo and is the TSFA Volunteer of the Year this year.

"TSFA is extremely fortunate to lean on Cassie's expertise as she assumes this key role," said TSFA Executive Director Michelle Karns, CAE. "Her dedication to TSFA is unparalleled, and her experience in education, paired with project management and floral design skills, makes her uniquely qualified to help TSFA meet the evolving needs of florists, teachers and students across the state."

Sanders began her role as Projects and Partnerships Specialist on July 1, 2025. Along with the TSFA Education Committee Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs, she instructed several classes for TSFA at the ATAT Professional Development Conference on July 21-25, 2025, in Corpus Christi.

## TSFA CONTINUES TO EDUCATE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS!

### TSFA EDUCATES AND PROVIDES RESOURCES DURING ATAT



Several members of the TSFA Education Committee and staff were in Corpus Christi for the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas (ATAT) Conference, where they presented multiple educational sessions. The week began with a dinner and design presentation featuring Donald Yim AIFD CFD PFCI, who was sponsored by Smithers-Oasis. TSFA presented eight additional sessions and staffed a booth in the exhibit hall. A variety of resources were provided to countless teachers who stopped by to receive updates and learn a little more about all TSFA has to offer! The Texas floral community had a robust presence at this conference, with several Texas Floral Education Underwriters and TSFA members also participating and donating product. TSFA is grateful to Southern Floral Company for their hospitality while allowing TSFA and others to use their space in preparation for the event.

### TEACHERS TO RECEIVE SOMETHING NEW IN THEIR INBOX FROM TSFA!



# Elements.

*Texas State Florists'*  
ASSOCIATION

### TSFA LAUNCHES NEW MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TEACHERS

As teachers and students prepare for the 2025-2026 school year, TSFA is putting the finishing touches on a new electronic newsletter for floral design teachers. This monthly publication will provide timely updates on certification testing, new educational resources, teacher training opportunities and much more. Watch your inbox in early August for the first edition!

# TSFA *School of* FLORAL DESIGN

## CLASSES ARE FILLING UP!

### DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE YOUR EDUCATION FORWARD!

The popular Fundamental Elements and Principles of Floral Design classes is sold out for August, with Texas Master Florist classes on Aug. 22-25 also filling quickly. This fall, TSFA will also offer Level 1 and 2 teacher trainings in Lubbock on Sept. 30-Oct. 1 and in Huntsville on Oct. 7-8. Register soon to secure your spot before the classes fill.



**TO REGISTER**  
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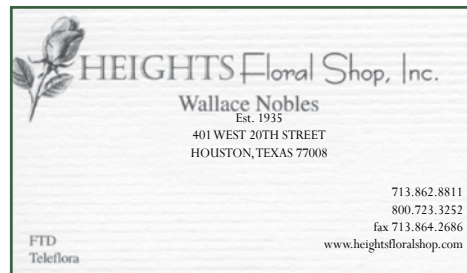


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# TSFA Calendar of Events

Flowers from the Expo! Thank You Texas Floral Education Underwriters!  
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## AUGUST

- 3 National Friendship Day
- 6-7 Industry Training – Level 1 and 2  
Certification in Leander
- 8-9 Fundamental Elements and  
Principles in Leander
- 22-25  
Texas Master Florist Certification  
Classes in Leander
- 27 National Just Because Day

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 Labor Day  
New Board of Directors Welcomed
- 7 Grandparents' Day
- 10 Suicide Prevention Day
- 10 Patriot Day
- 22-24  
Rosh Hashanah
- 24 Texas Floral Showcase in Tyler
- 30-10/1  
Teacher Training – Level 1 and 2  
Certification in Lubbock

## OCTOBER

- 1-2 Yom Kippur
- 7-8 Level 1 and 2 Teacher Certification  
in Huntsville
- 13 Columbus Day  
Indigenous Peoples' Day
- 25 Holiday Design Class in Leander
- 31 Halloween

THE **SECRETS** OF THE EXPO  
WILL BE FEATURED IN TEXAS IN BLOOM  
OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS!

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## SILVER



## BRONZE



please visit [tsfa.org](http://tsfa.org) for the most up-to-date list of underwriters and their links