

MAY 2026

# TEXAS

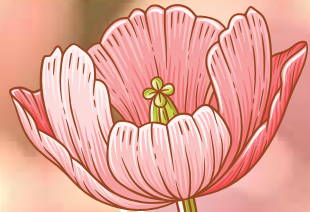
*in Bloom*

CIRCLE

FULL

TAKE ROOT • GROW

BLOSSOM • BLOOM

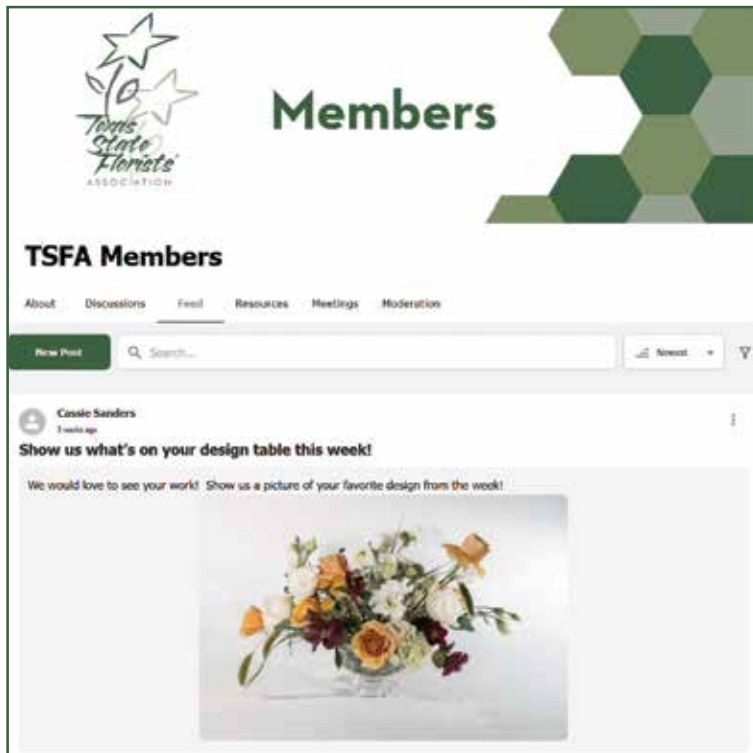


# MEMBERSHIP IS EVEN MORE VALUABLE WITH THE NEW TSFA CONNECT DIGITAL FORUM

TSFA is pleased to introduce TSFA Connect, a convenient way for you to interact with other TSFA members online – anytime. This digital forum is free for members and includes discussion boards, quick access to the member directory with e-profiles, embedded resources, new microlearning modules and much more!

Similar to the social media sites with which you are already familiar, TSFA Connect includes a newsfeed and space for you to start or add to ongoing discussions. You can ask questions, share your latest designs and exchange resources.

This is also where TSFA will host live events and webinars, committee meetings and periodic member updates. Watch for more information about these opportunities to be shared soon.



## IT IS EASY TO PARTICIPATE

1. Log in to the TSFA Info Hub using the Member Login button at the top of the [tsfa.org](https://tsfa.org) website.
2. Use your email address and password to log in.
3. Select Community from the navigation bar on the left.
4. Click on the community of your choice and start posting!

For best results, consider updating your member profile in the Info Hub so your e-profile reflects the most current information. We look forward to seeing you online!

## NEW WEDDING BOUQUETS AND FLOWERS TO WEAR WORKSHOP

Create several stunning bouquets in this 1.5-day workshop while boosting your creativity and skills at the TSFA School of Floral Design on Aug. 26-27. Lunch on Tuesday is included! Members save \$100 off the \$699 registration fee. Space is limited, so reserve your seat today.

- Refine your spiral hand-tied skills.
- Practice using new mechanics while designing a bespoke bouquet.
- Gain proficiency with the mechanics used in classic cascade bouquets.
- Sharpen your skills in preparation for unexpected floral requests from brides.
- Discover the latest trends in flowers to wear.

TO REGISTER  
Scan the QR code  
or visit [tsfa.org/school](https://tsfa.org/school)

# Texas in Bloom

MAY 2026 | VOLUME LII | NUMBER 5

## FROM THE *President*



TSFA President  
Marisa Guerrero  
AIFD, CFD, TMF

As we move into an exciting season for our industry, I want to personally invite each of you to join us at the Texas Floral Expo this June at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, Texas. This year's event is shaping up to be something truly special, with exceptional programming designed to inspire, educate and elevate your business. We've worked hard to bring in top industry leaders, while keeping the overall cost reasonable, ensuring that every member has access to high-quality education and meaningful connections.

This year, we're bringing back something many of you have asked for – a chance to simply have fun together. The Color Pop Party will be a highlight of the weekend, complete with hors d'oeuvres, drinks and dancing. It has been far too long since we've gathered in this way, and we are excited to create space for our community to relax, reconnect and celebrate together.

As we prepare for Expo, I also want to remind you of the importance of staying engaged with your membership. Please be sure your dues are current. If you are one of our valued Underwriters, we ask for your continued commitment and support. Both membership renewals and Underwriter commitments must be completed by May 15 to be included in the 2026 Membership Directory.

Our organization continues to move forward because of the dedication of our members and partners. Thank you for being part of this journey. See you at Expo,

Marisa Guerrero AIFD, CFD, TMF  
TSFA President

Texas State Florists' ASSOCIATION  
PRESENTS

# BLOOM

2026 TEXAS FLORAL EXPO

- 2 MEMBERSHIP IS EVEN MORE VALUABLE

---

- 4 TSFA ANNUAL MEETING

---

- 5 ARE YOU READY TO REGISTER?

---

- 6 2026 TEXAS FLORAL EXPO SCHEDULE

---

- 8 TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

---

- 9 BLOOMING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

---

- 10 FORMATIVE DESIGN OBJECTIVES

---

- 11 VISIT THE PRODUCT GALLERY

---

- 12 BEYOND THE BIO WITH BRANDY FERRER

---

- 13 BEYOND THE BIO WITH SUSAN PILAND

---

- 14 BEYOND THE BIO WITH FABIAN SALCEDO

---

- 15 BEYOND THE BIO WITH CASSIE SANDERS

---

- 16 BEYOND THE BIO WITH REBECCA SULLIVAN

---

- 17 BEYOND THE BIO WITH CHERYL VAUGHAN

---

- 18 PLAN YOUR STAY

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS STATE FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION  
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# TSFA ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

The TSFA Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026, from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. during the Texas Floral Expo.

The TSFA Election will continue throughout the day until 5 p.m. on Saturday, June 20, 2026.

The TSFA Nominating Committee presents the slate of officers and directors for your consideration.



## PRESIDENT

Marisa Guerrero AIFD, CFD, TMF

Marisa Guerrero has relished a lifetime living in and learning about the floral industry. As Vice President of Debbie's Bloomers, in El Paso, she is a second-generation florist known for her enthusiasm and involvement in the industry. Having served on the boards and committees of numerous industry organizations, including TSFA, AIFD South Central Chapter, AIFD Foundation and West Texas New Mexico Florists' Association, she looks forward to continuing her service to TSFA and many more opportunities to strengthen the foundation of the floral industry.



## SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Amy Neugebauer AIFD, CFD, PFCI, TMFA

Amy Neugebauer began working at The Blooming Idea in 2010. She received the Jim Orr Volunteer Spirit award in 2016. Neugebauer is a certified AIFD evaluator and has served on numerous committees and held multiple TSFA Board of Directors positions, including Retail Director, Second Vice President and First Vice President. Neugebauer has chaired two Texas Floral Showcases and is a Vice Chair of the TSFA Education Committee.

## RETAIL DIRECTOR (ELECT ONE)



Dan Hinson

Dan Hinson is president of Maisel-Hinson Mainland Floral, Inc., operating Window Box Florist, Flower Box Florist, The Empty Vase of Houston and Mainland Events by Dan. After more than 25 years in leadership roles – including service in the U.S. Marine Corps, accounting and commercial construction – Hinson entered the floral industry four years ago. He brings strong operational leadership, financial insight and a passion for helping retail florists grow stronger businesses across Texas.



Clay Honeycutt AIFD, CFD

Clay Honeycutt was born and raised just outside Dallas. A creative at heart, he pursued a career in floral design starting just over 10 years ago. Over his career, he has worked as a retail designer, wholesaler and high school floral design teacher. He recently purchased his first flower shop in Rockwall, Texas. Honeycutt's passion for education and the floral industry is at the forefront of everything he does!



Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI

G. Alan Masters of LaPorte, Texas, has been in the floral industry for 41 years. He has served on a number of boards, including the Allied Florists of Houston, where he worked his way up to president; the South Texas Teleflora Board; and the AIFD South Central Regional Chapter Board, where he also served as president. Masters has been a designer, a creative director, a manager and an owner, as well as an educator in floral design.

Texas State Florists' ASSOCIATION  
PRESENTS

# BLOOM

2026 TEXAS FLORAL EXPO

ARE YOU READY TO REGISTER?!

## REGISTRATION MADE EASY AS 1 - 2 - 3

1

**“Everything Expo” Registration** – TSFA Member \$399 • Non-Member \$549  
Everything listed on the Expo Schedule is included, with the exception of the optional Hands-on Design Workshops and Master Classes. Register by June 5 to secure this rate.

2

**Hands-on Design Workshops** – TSFA Member \$95 each • Non-Member \$125 each  
• Transitioning Styles for Today’s Bride • TAKE ROOT with Susan Piland AIFD, CFD, TMF.  
• Wedding Florals in Motion • TAKE ROOT with Cheryl Vaughan, CFD, PFCI, TMFA.  
• Reimagining Time Tested Products • GROW with Brandy Ferrer AIFD, CFD, TMF.  
• The Art of the String Garden • GROW with Fabian Salcedo.

**Hands-on Design Workshops** – TSFA Member \$125 each • Non-Member \$175 each  
• Let’s Change the Tropic • BLOSSOM with Judy Janzen AIFD, CFD.  
• Wired and Inspired • BLOSSOM with Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI.

3

**MASTER CLASSES TO HELP YOU BLOOM** – TSFA Member \$195 • Non-Member \$245  
• The Sculpted Stem • Floral Design Meets Wearable Art • Ellie Grande AIFD, CFD, EMC.  
• Rooted Elegance • Woven European Floristry • Tricia Won AIFD, CFD, EMC, IMF, TMF.

REGISTER FOR THE EXPO  
IN ONE OF TWO WAYS

QR code will take you directly to "Everything Expo"



Visit [tsfa.org/expo](https://tsfa.org/expo)



2026 TEXAS FLORAL EXPO REGISTRATION

Texas State Florists' ASSOCIATION  
PRESENTS

# BLOOM

2026 TEXAS FLORAL EXPO

The educational programming is supported by the Texas Floral Education Underwriters.

## FRIDAY, JUNE 19

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

### Concurrent Hands-on Workshops

 **TAKE ROOT** with Susan Piland AIFD, CFD, TMF  
*Transitioning Styles for Today's Bride*  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

 **GROW** with Brandy Ferrer AIFD, CFD, TMF  
*Reimagining Time Tested Products*  
Underwritten by Smithers-Oasis

 **BLOSSOM** with Judy Janzen AIFD, CFD  
*Let's Change the Tropic*  
Underwritten by Accent Decor

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### PRODUCT GALLERY

Unopposed Exhibit Time  
• Shop.  
• Network.  
• Passport to Education.

2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Categories I and II


5:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.


### BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

### STARS OF TEXAS RECEPTION

7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

 **STARS OF TEXAS DINNER**  
**DESIGN PRESENTATION**  
*Deeply Rooted • Weaving the Cultural Tapestry of Texas Flora*  
Ellie Grande AIFD, CFD, EMC  
Tricia Won AIFD, CFD, EMC, IMF, TMF  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

 **TAKE ROOT** with Cheryl Vaughan, CFD, PFCI, TMFA  
*Wedding Florals in Motion*

## SATURDAY, JUNE 20

7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

 **BREAKFAST • TSFA ANNUAL MEETING**  
**DESIGN PRESENTATION**

*Take the Competitive Lead and BLOOM!*  
Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

### PRODUCT GALLERY

• Shop.  
• Network.  
• Passport to Education.


11:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.


### LUNCHEON • DESIGN PRESENTATION


*American Floral Trends® 2027-2028*  
J. Keith White AIFD  
Underwritten by FTD

2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### Concurrent Spotlights

 **TAKE ROOT** with Brandy Ferrer AIFD, CFD, TMF  
*Prep, Protect, Perform • Renewal Foam + Proper Processing*  
Underwritten by Smithers-Oasis

 **GROW** with Rebecca Sullivan AIFD, CFD, TMF  
*Design With Heart • Build With Intent*  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

 **BLOSSOM** with Cassie Sanders AIFD, CFD, TMF  
*Planting Seeds for Success • Building Relationships That Grow Your Workforce*  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Educations Underwriters

3:15 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.


### INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION


*The Leadership Perspective*  
Jody McLeod AIFD, CFD, PFCI, NCCPF  
Underwritten by TSFA

4:30p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

### Concurrent Hands-on Workshops

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

 **TAKE ROOT** with Cheryl Vaughan, CFD, PFCI, TMFA  
*Wedding Florals in Motion*

 **GROW** with Fabian Salcedo  
*The Art of the String Garden*

 **BLOSSOM** with Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI  
*Wired and Inspired • Expanding Sympathy Designs Into a Third Dimension*

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

### A COLOR POP PARTY IN FULL BLOOM

SCHEDULE • JUNE 19-21, 2026

Register  
now to

# BLOOM

PRODUCT GALLERY • 5 DESIGN PRESENTATIONS  
2 INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS  
6 HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS • 2 MASTER CLASSES  
TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

**TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION**  
Category III

7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

**INTERFAITH SERVICE**

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.



**MASTER CLASS**

**BLOOM** with Ellie Grande AIFD, CFD, EMC  
*The Sculpted Stem • A Master class where Floral Design Meets Wearable Art*  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.



**INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION**

*State of the Floral Industry • Trends, Challenges and Shared Opportunities*  
Kate Penn  
Underwritten by the Texas Department of Agriculture

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



**DESIGN PRESENTATION**

*Discovering the Heartbeat of Nature*  
Judy Janzen AIFD  
Underwritten by Accent Decor

Noon - 3:00 p.m.



**LUNCHEON • DESIGN PRESENTATION**

*Hanashi*  
Jody McLeod AIFD, CFD, PFCI, NCCPF  
Underwritten by Teleflora



3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

**Concurrent Spotlights**

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



**TAKE ROOT** with Susan Piland AIFD, CFD, TMF  
*It's a Wrap!*



**GROW** with Cheryl Vaughan, CFD, PFCI, TMFA  
*The Ripple Effect*



**BLOSSOM** with Fabian Salcedo  
*Featuring Kokedama in Everyday Stylings*

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.



**MASTER CLASS**

**BLOOM** with Tricia Won AIFD, CFD, EMC, IMF, TMF  
*Rooted Elegance • Woven European Floristry*  
Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



**SPOTLIGHTS**  
Included in Registration



**PRESENTATIONS**  
Included in Registration



**MEALS**  
Included in Registration



**HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS**  
**MASTER CLASSES**  
Additional Registration Required

TSFA is pleased to launch new **LAYERS OF LEARNING** during the Texas Floral Expo.

Concurrent Spotlights and Hands-on Workshops provide the following:

- Fundamentals for the novice to **TAKE ROOT** •
- Lessons for the designer who is determined to **GROW** •
- A step up for seasoned designers to **BLOSSOM** •
- Master classes provide higher learning for even the most experienced designer to **BLOOM** •

You are welcome to participate in any session to make the most of your Expo experience!

ARE YOU READY TO REGISTER?



TO REGISTER  
Scan the QR code or  
visit [tsfa.org/expo](http://tsfa.org/expo)



THERE ARE  
TWO WAYS  
TO ENTER



Scan the QR code.  
Review full circle all you  
need to know to prepare  
for the competition to  
become the next Texas  
Designer of the Year!

Visit [tsfa.org/designer-of-the-year](https://tsfa.org/designer-of-the-year)

## 2026 AWARDS MADE POSSIBLE BY



**June 5**  
Entry  
Deadline

**June 19**  
Categories  
I and II

**June 21**  
Category III

**June 21**  
Recognition

### THE FIRST PLACE WINNER RECEIVES

- Recognition as the 2026 Texas Designer of the Year.
- \$1,000 Cash Prize.
- Official Silver Texas Cup and First Place Ribbon.
- Up to \$1,000 to Represent TSFA at the SAF 2026 Sylvia Cup Competition.
- Celebrated as a Star of Texas and Presented a Crystal Star.

### THE SECOND PLACE WINNER RECEIVES

- \$300 Cash Prize.
- Second Place Ribbon.

### THE THIRD PLACE WINNER RECEIVES

- \$200 Cash Prize.
- Third Place Ribbon.

# BLOOMING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

## MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE TSFA DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Written by Rebecca Sullivan AIFD, CFD, TMF  
2025 Texas Designer of the Year

There are moments in a creative career that quietly shape your trajectory – and then there are those that redefine it entirely. Competing in the Texas State Florists' Association Designer of the Year Competition was one of those defining experiences for me. It was more than a contest; it was a catalyst for artistic growth, professional opportunity and personal transformation.

Walking into the competition, I carried not only my tools and materials, but also my habits – my preferred techniques, my familiar color palettes, my “safe” design instincts. Like many designers, I had developed a style that felt comfortable and reliable. But competition has a way of challenging that comfort. It demands innovation under pressure, creativity within constraints and the courage to take risks in front of an audience.

One of the most powerful aspects of the Texas Designer of the Year Competition is how it pushes participants beyond their artistic boundaries. Each round presents new themes, unfamiliar mechanics and unexpected materials. There's no room to rely solely on what you've always done. Instead, you're forced to adapt, rethink and stretch your creativity in real time. That pressure – while intense – is also incredibly liberating. It strips away overthinking and invites instinct, experimentation and bold expression.

For me, this meant embracing designs I might have previously avoided. It meant exploring new structural techniques, incorporating unconventional elements and trusting my creative voice even when it felt uncertain. In doing so, I discovered new dimensions of my artistry. I learned that growth doesn't happen in comfortable spaces – it happens when you're willing to risk failure in pursuit of something greater.

Beyond the design table, the experience cultivated resilience and confidence. Competing requires vulnerability. You present your work to judges, peers and spectators, fully aware that it will be evaluated and scrutinized. But through that process, I gained a deeper belief in my abilities and a stronger sense of identity as a designer. Each challenge



completed – whether successful or not – became a building block for future success.

Earning the title of Texas Designer of the Year opened doors I never could have anticipated. It provided opportunities to participate in high-level industry events, demonstrations and collaborations that would not have been accessible otherwise. These experiences expanded my professional network, connected me with other passionate designers and allowed me to contribute to the floral community in meaningful ways.



More importantly, the title carries a responsibility – to inspire, to mentor and to elevate the craft. It has allowed me to share my journey with others, encouraging fellow designers to step into competition, not just to win, but to grow. Because at its core, that is what competitions truly offer: a chance to evolve.

Looking back, I realize that the most valuable takeaway wasn't the recognition – it was the transformation. The competition challenged me to see beyond what I thought I could do and embrace the unknown with confidence. It reminded me that artistry is not static; it is constantly unfolding, shaped by experience, courage and a willingness to step outside of what feels safe.

For any designer considering competition, my advice is simple: Take the leap. Step into the unfamiliar. Push your boundaries. Because, on the other side of that discomfort is growth – and sometimes, the most extraordinary opportunities you never imagined.

## FORMATIVE DESIGN OBJECTIVES

With J. Keith White AIFD, CFD, CEJ



### ABOUT J. Keith White

#### AIFD, CFD, CEJ

- Inducted in the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD®) in 1996. Presented Main Stage Programs: 1997 Dallas, 2001 Chicago, 2005 Seattle, 2007 Palm Desert, 2022 Las Vegas, and 2024 Gallery Exhibit Orlando.
- Awards and Honors: Houston Cup Winner, 1993 Texas Cup Winner, 2010 Interflora World Cup Competitor Shanghai, 2022 Tournament of Roses Parade Judge and 2023 AIFD Award of Distinguished Service to the Floral Industry recipient.
- Certified Evaluator Judge (CEJ), AIFD Education Partner: Advanced floral design classes, event design series and floral designer certification classes, FTD Education webinars and workshops, American Floral Trends® Creative Director, countless webinars and lectures.
- Design Features: 2003 - 2022 Tournament of Roses Parade VIP Vehicle Entries, 1995 to current FTD Education Team, Winning Wedding Bouquet Combinations book, California Cut Flower Commission education and outreach presentations and publications.

J. Keith White AIFD, CFD, CEJ, will instruct an advanced, two-day, hands-on evaluation class on Formative Design Objectives at the Texas State Florists' Association School of Floral Design. Five design categories will be reviewed based on the principles, elements and techniques from the AIFD Guide to Floral Design 3rd Edition. The categories include Wedding, Flowers to Wear, Arrangement, Sympathy and Designer's Choice. An individual review of each category will lead to increased understanding of the evaluation process and expand confidence in the art of floral design.

**May 22 - 23, 2026 • 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Open to floral designers meeting one of these requirements:**

- Certified Floral Designer (CFD®).
- Enrolled in the process to become CFD.
- Enrolled or planning to enroll in Professional Floral Design Evaluation (PFDE) to become a member of AIFD®.

Class will gather for approximately 6 hours daily.  
Enrollment includes lunch each day and time to network!

#### HOW TO ENROLL

TSFA Member Rate – \$699

Nonmember Rate – \$799



Scan the QR code  
or visit  
[tsfa.org/formative](https://tsfa.org/formative)

#### WHERE TO STAY

TSFA School of Floral Design students may consider reserving lodging at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites, using TSFA's corporate rate of \$109 plus applicable taxes and fees, reservation link is available during the registration process.

Holiday Inn Express and Suites  
247 W. Metro Drive, Leander, Texas  
512-690-5678

**TSFA SCHOOL OF FLORAL DESIGN**  
**413 S. WEST DRIVE • LEANDER, TX 78641**

A photograph of a busy exhibition hall at the Texas Floral Expo. The scene is filled with people of various ages and ethnicities, many of whom are looking at floral displays. In the background, there are several large banners and posters. One banner on the left features a woman's face and the text "NORTH POLE". Another banner in the center has a large number "2" and the letters "FI". To the right, there are two tall, dark banners for "Solace Selections" and "oasis floral products". The "Solace Selections" banner includes the text "Foundations of Care" and "Tools for Tribute". The "oasis floral products" banner features a floral arrangement. The floor is a polished, reflective surface. The overall atmosphere is one of a professional and vibrant industry event.

**BE A PART OF THE TSFA COMMUNITY  
AND VISIT THE PRODUCT GALLERY  
DURING THE TEXAS FLORAL EXPO!**

The Texas Floral Education Underwriters are among the best companies in the industry and will be bringing their best to the Expo! This is an event that you will not want to miss!

*Beyond*  
**THE BIO**



with

**Brandy Ferrer**  
AIFD, CFD, TMF

**WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?**

My Granny Gillham had a magical green thumb. I still remember her enormous rose bush and how she'd send me home with a small bundle, carefully wrapped in a wet paper towel and foil. I'd bury my face in those roses the whole ride home. That scent still brings me comfort to this day.

**WHAT EXPERIENCES LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?**

While earning my teaching degree, I worked at The French Tulip in Oklahoma City and fell in love with floral design. A few years later, I created all the flowers for a family wedding when their florist canceled last minute – and that was the moment I knew this was what I was meant to do. In 2017, I left public education and bought a flower shop in Gilmer, Texas, officially diving into my dream full-time.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?**

Creating sympathy designs is deeply personal for me. I see sympathy work as the final gift we give to someone we love. That feeling stays with me every time I help someone through that process.



**YOU WON THE TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION IN 2024. WHAT INTRIGUES YOU ABOUT THE COMPETITION PROCESS?**

I love the pressure. There's something about a timed challenge that forces me to trust my instincts and lean into creativity without overthinking. It's like creative boot camp – you walk in as one version of yourself and leave with a new edge and fresh perspective.

Brandy with son, Haven Ferrer, at the Orchid Dinner. Haven was the photographer for this dinner and the Texas Floral Spotlight in Tyler. Thank you, Haven!

**WHAT DO YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THESE EXPERIENCES?**

Beyond the design table, competitions have given me a sense of belonging in the industry. I've built real friendships, found mentors and discovered a floral "family" that celebrates and challenges me. Each event reminds me why I love this work – not just for the flowers, but for the people and the shared pursuit of something beautiful.

**WHAT DO YOU PREDICT MAY BE OF MOST BENEFIT TO RETAIL FLORISTRY?**

AI can help florists save time, cut waste and connect better with customers. Predictive tools for inventory and automated content creation are huge time-savers. But the biggest win might be using AI to enhance creativity – helping florists stay inspired, focused and competitive. AI can be a tool to generate design inspiration, color palettes and even storytelling.



**WHAT MOMENT FROM THE ORCHID DINNER IS MOST TREASURED?**

My favorite moment was quietly watching guests linger at my table, taking in every detail of my centerpiece as it glowed under the lights of the Plaza Hotel ballroom – surrounded by orchids, elegance and the work of floral legends. As a girl from small-town Texas, that moment of connection – right there in the heart of New York City – was a surreal and humbling reminder that creativity can speak louder than words. To be invited to return

for a third year is an honor that will bring pure joy and an experience that is all about the creativity!

**WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF PLAYING IN THE FUTURE OF FLORAL EDUCATION?**

I want to keep bridging tradition with innovation – teaching design, but also the business and tech skills florists need to thrive. I see myself mentoring, leading workshops, speaking at events, writing articles and creating resources that inspire growth at every stage of the floral journey.



Nevah Ferrer carried a bouquet of blooms and florals on the wrist for prom. Exquisite details were created by a former Texas Designer of the Year who just happens to also be her momma!

**Opportunities to study with Brandy Ferrer during the Texas Floral Expo**  
**Reimagining Time Tested Products**  
 Friday, June 19 • 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. • Hands-on Workshop  
 Underwritten by Smithers-Oasis  
**Prep, Protect, Perform**  
 Saturday, June 20 • 2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. • Spotlight  
 Underwritten by Smithers-Oasis

# Beyond THE BIO

with

**Susan Piland**  
AIFD, CFD, TMF



## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

Teaching floral design for the TSFA School of Floral Design is a passion. I love to guide students in discovering their own artistic abilities and see them transform their ideals into beautiful arrangements.

## WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR LIFE IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

Achieving Texas Master Florist in 1986 was the first of many highlights! Early in my career, I won the Dallas Cup Competition in 1989 and 1992 and went on to compete in the Texas Cup Competition, placing in the top 5 in 1993 and 1994. My lifetime goal was to be inducted into the American Institute of Floral Designers. That goal was reached in Chicago in 2023.

## WHERE DO YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY IN 10 YEARS?

I was reading a recent statistical overview, and the global market of flower and plant sales is expected to grow over 6% in the next five years so the potential is promising. Plus, all the students who have gone through TSFA's high school floral certification program will be the next generation of faithful consumers for years to come.

Patrick and I celebrated 40 years of marriage this year!



## WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?

One of my flower memories was picking roses through Mrs. Garrett's chain link fence, running to hide under the canopy of the large branches of our magnolia tree, then hearing the phone ring and my mother yelling, "Susan!" I was caught ... again.

## WHAT EXPERIENCE LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

Attending Skyline High School in Dallas was the perfect pathway for my career. I found my true passion in floral design and embraced



every opportunity that was offered. I met my husband working at an area florist during my senior year, where he was the delivery driver! The rest is history!!

## WHAT INDUSTRY EDUCATION MADE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE?

The summer I graduated high school brought my introduction to the Texas State Florists' Association at the TSFA Convention in San Antonio. I was absolutely in awe. I began the Texas Master Florist classes at this convention, which took two years to complete back in the day. I was pinned TMF by Willard Scott (yes, the NBC weather guy) at the 1986 convention in Houston!!

## WHAT INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT LED YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

During my floral career, I have worked for several florists in the Dallas area and even went back as a teacher's aide under the instruction of my horticulture teacher at Skyline High School, Mr. Skinner. I was co-owner of Windsor Florist in downtown Mesquite until 2016.



We are beyond blessed. Our little heart warrior Henry, brother to Deckard and cousin to Maurie is thriving after two open heart surgeries due to a heart defect.

## Opportunities to study with Susan Piland during the Texas Floral Expo Transitioning Styles for Today's Bride

Friday, June 19 • 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. • Hands-on Workshop

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

## It's a Wrap

Sunday, June 21 • 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. • Spotlight

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



# Beyond THE BIO

with Fabian Salcedo



### WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?

My first memory of flowers is from when I was working as a host at Pappasito's in high school, making carnation bud vases for the tables.

### WHAT EXPERIENCES LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

Creating florals for friends' weddings led me into the floral industry. I felt that I had a knack for floral designs and wanted to see where it could take me.



### WHAT CONTRIBUTED MOST TO YOUR DESIGN EDUCATION?

Attending the Floral Design Institute contributed most to my design education and made me realize it was a career worth growing.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

My favorite job in the floral industry was working for CAFFCO and traveling to China to create holiday and permanent botanical designs.

### YOUR CAREER HAS TAKEN YOU ON QUITE THE JOURNEY. WAS THERE ONE OR MORE MOMENTS THAT CHANGED YOUR PATH TO LEAD YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

One thing that changed my path to get me where I am today was working for The Flower Studio and learning all the ins and outs of the floral industry.

### WHAT LED YOU TO THE IDEA FOR THE HANDS-ON WORKSHOP THAT YOU WILL SHARE DURING THE TEXAS FLORAL EXPO?

Kokedama is a technique that I use very often, but I don't see others using it as often as I do. I have some amazing everyday clients who allow me to be creative with their designs, and many of them typically want long-lasting arrangements. So, I frequently use this technique. Because

I wanted to create a Kokedama display for the Texas Floral Expo lobby decor, it was only natural for me to choose it as the idea for my hands-on workshop.



### WHAT ARE THE KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT YOU HOPE WILL BE GLEANED FROM THIS CLASS?

I hope the key takeaways from this class will be how to use this simple concept to elevate and expand the creative options we have to offer our clients.

### WHAT DO YOU PREDICT TO BE THE GREATEST CONSTANT AND THE GREATEST CHANGE IN FLORAL DESIGN AS OUR INDUSTRY MOVES FORWARD?

I think the greatest constant in our industry is the need to constantly grow and evolve. We are always learning and blooming new ideas. In my opinion, the greatest change in the industry moving forward will be learning how to seamlessly incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) into the design process.

### WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF PLAYING IN THE FUTURE OF FLORAL DESIGN EDUCATION?

I see myself continuing to push my creativity to innovate designs so I can share those insights with others.



Opportunities to study with Fabian Salcedo during the Texas Floral Expo

## The Art of the String Garden

Saturday, June 20 • 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. • Hands-on Workshop

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

## Featuring Kokedama in Everyday Stylings

Sunday, June 21 • 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. • Spotlight

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

# Beyond THE BIO

with

Cassie Sanders  
AIFD, CFD, NBCT, TMF



## WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?

My first memory of flowers is my mom receiving a dozen roses from my dad every Valentine's Day – a tradition he's kept since she was 16, through more than 40 years of marriage.

## WHAT EXPERIENCES LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

I entered the floral industry by accident. I went to college to become an ag teacher and selected my student-teaching program for its strong ag mechanics focus, expecting to teach welding. On my first day, floral design was added to the schedule. I've been learning, growing and blooming in the industry ever since.

## WHAT CONTRIBUTED MOST TO YOUR DESIGN EDUCATION?

Education and classes through TSFA played a major role in my floral training. In my first full year of teaching, I enrolled in the TSFA Fundamental Elements and Principles course to gain more hands-on experience. After several years of teaching and learning at TSFA events, I earned my TMF, then went on to pursue my CFD and AIFD as I sought new professional challenges.



## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

Teaching high school students about the floral industry will always hold a special place in my heart – it's where I fell in love with flowers. I now channel that passion into supporting the industry through my work with TSFA.

## YOUR CAREER HAS TAKEN YOU ON QUITE A JOURNEY. WAS THERE ONE OR MORE MOMENTS THAT CHANGED YOUR PATH TO LEAD YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

My career has balanced two passions: teaching and floral design. Seeking to challenge myself, I pursued my AIFD designation to deepen my design expertise, followed by National Board Teaching Certification to refine my teaching practice. Both experiences fundamentally changed how I approach each field.

## WHAT LED YOU TO THE IDEA FOR THE SPOTLIGHT THAT YOU WILL SHARE DURING THE TEXAS FLORAL EXPO?

Working in both education and the floral industry has revealed a disconnect between the two. I've seen firsthand how impactful well-structured internships can be for both students and flower shops. I want to encourage more shops to take a chance on a student and provide them with an opportunity that can be impactful for both stakeholders.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT YOU HOPE WILL BE GLEANED FROM THIS CLASS?

A key takeaway from this class is understanding appropriate skill levels and realistic expectations for student interns, as well as how to partner effectively with local floral design programs for mutual benefit.



Sanders is pictured with Marcette Kilgore, the State Director of Career and Technical Education for the Texas Education Agency.

## WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT WORKING AT TSFA?

I love supporting florists and floral educators while advocating for an industry I'm passionate about.

## WHAT DO YOU PREDICT TO BE THE GREATEST CONSTANT AND THE GREATEST CHANGE IN FLORAL DESIGN AS OUR INDUSTRY MOVES FORWARD?

The constant in our industry is that people love flowers – they will always be part of life's most meaningful moments. The greatest change ahead is the industry's shift toward sustainability.

## WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF PLAYING IN THE FUTURE OF FLORAL DESIGN EDUCATION?

I see my future in floral education as supporting TSFA instructors and the education committee with a solid, hands-on curriculum, teaching courses and workshops, and advocating for the floral industry with the Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Agriculture and other entities.

## WHAT DO YOU FIND TO BE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

I'm a mom of two girls, married to my wonderful husband and fueled by creativity and fresh air. When I'm not watercolor painting or crafting, you'll find me camping, reading or enjoying life on our six-acre property southwest of Lubbock.

An opportunity to study with Cassie Sanders during the Texas Floral Expo

# Planting Seeds for Success

Saturday, June 20 • 2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. • Spotlight

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



# Beyond THE BIO



with  
**Rebecca Sullivan**  
AIFD, CFD, TMF

### WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?

My earliest memories of flowers include picking lantana blooms from nearby fields and using them for bridal bouquets for my Barbie dolls. They were colorful, the perfect size and always beautifully arranged.

### WHAT EXPERIENCE STANDS OUT IN YOUR EARLY YEARS OF TEACHING FLORAL DESIGN?

I loved teaching floral design and had the opportunity to offer courses that provided a fully immersive and intense experience for my students. Over the years, I enjoyed sharing the therapeutic powers of floral design. Students were able to “decompress” and unwind when involved in design. In my first year of teaching floral design, I had the entire varsity football team in my class. These young men blossomed ... literally. We had so much fun! The pride these boys had when they delivered their designs to their moms and girlfriends was so fulfilling! Even though I am retired from public education, I will always consider myself a teacher!



### WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYMENT AND WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT IT?

I am the owner, head designer and sole employee of Fancy Pants Floral, which means I handle everything from design to delivery. The most rewarding part of my work is creating the ideal floral design for each special moment, especially for funerals. I've found that listening to my clients' stories and building personal connections with them is an essential part of my creative process.

### WHAT EXPERIENCE LED YOU FROM TEACHING FLORAL DESIGN TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

I opened my floral business while still teaching high school. My days were a whirlwind! I'd take orders during lunch and then rush home to design and deliver after the final bell. To grow my client base, I also taught “wine and design” classes at a local brewery. I loved seeing the creative progress of my returning students, and those experiences were key to building my business.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

While my current business is a great success, teaching high school students was also incredibly rewarding. During my time as an educator, I helped more than 300 students earn their TSFA Level 1 floral certification.

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE GREATEST HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR CAREER?

The year 2025 has been the most incredible year of my career. It kicked off with a bang; I won Texas Designer of the Year and was inducted into AIFD just two weeks later! It was also a fantastic experience to be a chair of TSFA's dinner and design presentation at the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas Professional Development Conference, where I got to create alongside some of the best designers in the state. To top it all off, I had the chance to compete for the Society of American Florists Sylvia Cup in Arizona. I was awarded the AIFD S.H.I.N.E. scholarship and will be working and learning with Chris Norwood, AAF, AIFD, CFD, PFCI in September. What a year!!!



2025 Competition Chair Brandy Ferrer AIFD, CFD, TMF, and 2024-2025 TSFA President Ed Fimbel CFD, TMFA, celebrate my win!



TSFA member J. Keith White AIFD presented me for induction into AIFD.



From left to right AIFD President Laurie Lemek AIFD and AIFD Membership Chair Loann Burke AIFD take a moment to celebrate my induction into AIFD.

### WHAT DO YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THESE EXPERIENCES?

Some of my most cherished friendships were made behind the competitive design table. I've connected with amazing designers from across the state, country and the world. Beyond the awards, the boost in confidence that comes from competing is an irreplaceable benefit.

An opportunity to study with Rebecca Sullivan during the Texas Floral Expo  
**Design With Heart • Build With Intent**

Saturday, June 20 • 2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. • Spotlight

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



# Beyond THE BIO

with

**Cheryl Vaughan**  
CFD, PFCI, TMFA



outside my comfort zone. She mentored me as a leader and encouraged me to serve in key chair positions.

## **WHAT LED YOU TO THE IDEA FOR THE HANDS-ON WORKSHOP OR THE SPOTLIGHT YOU WILL SHARE DURING THE TEXAS FLORAL EXPO?**

This workshop is from real life experiences over the past few years. More brides are desiring flowers that can be used for more than a 15-minute ceremony. They want more for their money and to feel like they are being responsible. Sustainability is playing into their requests, as well.

## **WHAT ARE THE KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT YOU HOPE WILL BE GLEANED FROM THIS CLASS?**

The key takeaway would be designing with intention. If we are repurposing, we need to design with that intent – being especially thoughtful with our mechanics, as well as our creativity.

## **WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT TEACHING AT THE TSFA SCHOOL OF FLORAL DESIGN?**

I love teaching at the TSFA School of Floral Design, and I especially love that light bulb moment when students truly “get it!”

## **WHAT DO YOU PREDICT TO BE THE GREATEST CONSTANT AND THE GREATEST CHANGE IN FLORAL DESIGN AS OUR INDUSTRY MOVES FORWARD?**

I feel customer service is the constant – but it is also the change, because that is the only thing that sets us apart many times. The change has to be that customer service becomes one of our top priorities to keep us growing and thriving.

## **WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF PLAYING IN THE FUTURE OF FLORAL DESIGN EDUCATION?**

I plan to continue teaching any opportunity I get. The elements and principles of design are the basis for every design created, and unless new designers understand those, they can't succeed. So, my mission is to stress elements and principles in everything I teach!

## **WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?**

One of my first memories of flowers is helping – or maybe getting in the way – at my grandmother's feet in her flower garden. She had beautiful lilies that I have transplanted into my yard and enjoy to this day. Also, the fragrance of the beautiful honeysuckle that she had growing on her arbor going into her front yard stands out, and every time I smell honeysuckle, it takes me back to that memory. She and my mom taught me a love of flowers.



## **WHAT EXPERIENCES LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?**

That's easy! My sister, Laurie, had a flower shop – Flowers by Laurie in Lytle – and I would come help her out. I mostly answered the phone and waited on customers during the busy holidays. I didn't initially think I had the ability to design.

## **WHAT CONTRIBUTED MOST TO YOUR DESIGN EDUCATION?**

My sister encouraged me to just take a class and to see if I was interested. I thought maybe I could learn to just put together a vase of flowers for my house. My first class was two semesters at Austin Community College (ACC) in Austin with Kathy Thomas AIFD as instructor, and she introduced me to TSFA, where I met Pat Shirley Becker AIFD, TMFA, who became my mentor.

## **WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?**

For years, I would have said weddings and events are my passion, but in the past five or more years, I have developed a different perspective. I would say teaching is my favorite job in this wonderful industry!

## **YOUR CAREER HAS TAKEN YOU ON QUITE THE JOURNEY. WAS THERE ONE OR MORE MOMENTS THAT CHANGED YOUR PATH TO LEAD YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?**

There are a many people who have inspired me in different areas of my career. Pat Shirley Becker was the first one to bring me into TSFA. She believed in me and gave me a desire to learn more. Then, there was Lynn Lary McLean, AAF, AIFD, CFD, PFCI, TMF, who inspired me to step

## **PLEASE SHARE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT WILL OFFER A GLIMPSE BEYOND THE BIO!**

One of my favorite classes was an Ikebana class in Japan, where my instructor knew very little English. It was also so exciting to see orchids growing in their natural habitat on the Island of Okinawa Japan.



Opportunities to study with Cheryl Vaughan during the Texas Floral Expo

## Wedding Florals in Motion

Saturday, June 20 • 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. • Hands-on Workshop

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters

## The Ripple Effect

Sunday, June 21 • 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. • Spotlight

Underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



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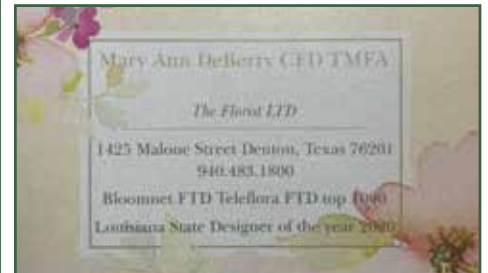
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# TSFA Calendar of Events

Designer Credit | Kari Gaudet AIFD, CFD  
Featured presenter at the recent Texas Floral Spotlight in Dallas.



## MAY

- 1 May Day
- 5 Cinco de Mayo
- 6 National Nurses' Day
- 10 Mother's Day  
Dia de las Madres
- 15 Bring Flowers to Someone Day
- 16 Armed Forces Day
- 22-23 Formative Design Class
- 25 Memorial Day

## JUNE

- 7 World Caring Day
- 8 National Florists' Day and  
Best Friends Day
- 12 National Red Rose Day
- 14 Flag Day
- 19-21 **Texas Floral Expo**  
**BLOOM**
- 21 Father's Day

## JULY

- 4 Independence Day
- 19-23  
TSFA Presents at ATAT Conference
- 31 - Aug. 2  
Fundamental Elements and Principles  
of Floral Design

## TEXAS FLORAL SPOTLIGHT IN SAN ANTONIO



Platinum Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Bill Doran Company was the perfect location for TSFA to present a Texas Floral Spotlight featuring presenter Kari Gaudet AIFD, CFD. In celebration of Bill Doran's 80 year legacy, the spotlight was held at the Dallas location with free hands-on education provided to each TSFA member in attendance.



Three design assistants brought their absolute best!  
Bruce Easley, AAF, AIFD, CFD, TMFA  
Ed Fimbel CFD, TMFA  
Susan Piland AIFD, CFD, TMF

Stephania Duarte, with Bill Doran, was incredibly helpful!



**CONGRATULATIONS BILL DORAN  
COMPANY ON YOUR 80 YEAR LEGACY!**

### PRODUCT PARTNER

Bill Doran Company provided the fresh products and supplies for the hands-on workshop and design presentation. A special thank you to Scott Jewett for saying YES to hosting this spotlight! A special thank you to Dallas manager Monte Butts who organized multiple details onsite and to all those at Bill Doran Company who contributed to the success of this event!



# Making Texas Floral Education Possible

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## SILVER



## BRONZE



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