

SEPTEMBER 2024

TEXAS

in Bloom



Brandy Ferrer

AIFD CFD TMF

2024 Texas Designer of the Year



CHRIS NORWOOD AAF AIFD CFD PFCI

Sympathy Tributes



OCTOBER 17, 2024
Petroleum Club of Midland
501 West Wall Street
Midland, Texas 79701

Co-Chairs
Chris Collum-Williams AIFD CFD TMF
Tom Collum-Williams TMF

SCHEDULE

- 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.** Hands-on Workshop
- 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.** Product Gallery • Time to Network!
- 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.** Dinner and Design Presentation
- 9:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.** Product Gallery and Flower Sale

VISIT TSFA.ORG/MIDLAND
OR SCAN THIS QR CODE



HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Today's Approach to Sympathy Stylings

During this workshop, you will step outside the traditional world of casket pieces and standing easels and explore new ways to meet the expanding needs of your clients. Designing florals to enhance a cremation service is requested more and more often. Experience numerous ways this opportunity may be addressed, and then create your interpretation of the unlimited possibilities.

Member \$95.00 • Non-Member \$125.00

DINNER PRESENTATION

Sympathy Tributes will highlight designs to elevate and expand the very heart of your business. Offering new stylings will help transition your business from the tradition of casket sprays and standing easels to an inclusive approach for adorning the variety of services offered today. Featuring designs to perfectly complement cremation services as well as presentations styled appropriately for the home will expand and elevate your offerings so you may remain current in today's market.

Member \$50.00 • Non-Member \$75.00

Texas in Bloom

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FROM THE *President*



TSFA President
Ed Fimbel
CFD TMFA

Hello TSFA members!

It is my honor to lead the greatest state floral association in the nation. TSFA has been a part of my life for over four decades. I have made many friends, learned from the world's best designers and traveled countless miles to be actively involved in our industry.

Many thanks to Immediate Past President Susan Piland AIFD CFD TMF for an outstanding job in leading our association. To the TSFA Board of Directors and committees, thank you for your collaborative effort that leads to our continued success. A special thank you to TSFA Executive Director Michelle Karns CAE, Director of Education and Certification Carole Sayegh and Education and Certification Coordinator Alyssa Russell for supporting our goals in more ways than can possibly be noted.

I look forward to working with the 2024-2025 elected officers and appointed committees! Guided by the strategic plan, we will continue to lead TSFA forward. TSFA has achieved a great deal this summer and has been represented well at industry events. We are off to a great start!

- The Texas Floral Forum was an outstanding success!
- TSFA members attended and volunteered during the AIFD Symposium!
- We were involved, for the first time, in the Texas FFA Convention!
- We hosted a design event, for floral design teachers, prior to ATAT.
- We hosted, *Burst of Blooms*, TSFA's first design competition for floral design teachers.
- Numerous workshops were presented at ATAT!
- TSFA was well represented at SAF. Texas Designer of the Year Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF and Second Vice President Amy Neugebauer AIFD CFD PFCI TMFA competed in the Sylvia Cup. Look for more about our SAF participation in the October issue!

TSFA's Education Committee is planning another record-breaking year of teaching, certifications and introducing two new tools to keep TSFA on the cutting edge. Advanced curriculum and a virtual reality program were presented at ATAT to enhance high school certification.

Two floral presentations are planned this fall, on October 17 in Midland, Texas, featuring Chris Norwood AAF AIFD PFCI presenting *Sympathy Tributes*, and on November 2 in Salado, Texas, featuring Chris Collum-Williams AIFD CFD TMF presenting *Holiday Happenings*. Both events include a hands-on class earlier in the day. Complete information for each event, with a QR code for easy registration, is included in this issue of *TEXAS in Bloom*.

Plan NOW and schedule June 27-29, 2025, for the Texas Floral EXPO at the South Shore Harbour Resort in League City, Texas. "SECRETS" promises to be an outstanding event, especially with Marisa Guerrero AIFD CFD TMF as Chair. Take time now to save the date!

Working TOGETHER to bring out the best in TSFA,
Ed

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2 *Sympathy Tributes*

4 2024 TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION *REFLECTIONS*

10 REMEMBERING DEBBIE LYON TMF

11 REMEMBERING ALEX TORRES AIFD

12 MEET TSFA PRESIDENT ED FIMBEL CFD TMFA

14 *Holiday HAPPENINGS*

16 HANDS-ON WORKSHOP CREATING BRIDAL BOUQUETS FOR SUCCESS

17 HANDS-ON DESIGN WORKSHOP PROVEN DESIGN TECHNIQUES

18 ADVANCED HANDS-ON WORKSHOP PROVEN DESIGN STRATEGIES

2024 TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

REFLECTIONS

HIGHLIGHTS TEXAS TALENT DURING THE TEXAS FLORAL FORUM

The Texas Designer of the Year Competition was a great success. Nine designers from throughout the state of Texas competed for the title of Texas Designer of the Year. Each designer brought their absolute best as each shared their incredible talent during the Texas Floral Forum in San Antonio!

The 2023 Texas Designer of the Year, Abel González Mencio AAF AIFD CFD PFCI TMF, chaired the competition with “Reflections” as the 2024 theme. To be in San Antonio, a city of historical reflections and staged at the ever so famous La Mansión del Rio, the theme provided unlimited possibilities!

The competition took place surrounded by a gallery, featuring the Texas Floral Education Underwriters highlighting the absolute best in products and services. Three categories were included, with each competitor having the same mechanics, flowers and foliage. The first category was to create a floral design. Each competitor was given a container and 20 minutes to complete the design. The second category was the Surprise Situation. González Mencio asked the competitors to create a floral necklace, which they had 30 minutes to complete. The final category was an Interpretive Design. Each competitor provided a prop, reflecting the theme, for this category. The same flowers and foliage were available, as well as 30 minutes to complete. Those viewing the competition were inspired by these Texas designers!



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

BRANDY FERRER AIFD CFD TMF

Attendees were thrilled when Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF from Gilmer, Texas, won first place and was named the 2024 Texas Designer of the Year. She received the official silver Texas Cup, First Place Ribbon, \$1,000 cash prize, \$1,000 scholarship to represent TSFA in the Sylvia Cup during the Society of American Florists Convention and was named a Star of Texas. Ferrer owns Simply Beautiful Floral Company in Gilmer and is beginning her term as Retail Director on the TSFA Board of Directors.

2ND



TEIA BENNET AIFD CFD PFCI TMF

Teia Bennet AIFD CFD PFCI TMF, from New Braunfels, placed second. She owns Blumen Meisters in New Braunfels. Bennett received the second place ribbon and \$300 cash prize. Congratulations Teia!

3RD



KARI GAUDET AIFD CFD

Kari Gaudet AIFD CFD, from Beaumont, placed third. She owns The Flower Place in Beaumont. Gaudet received the third place ribbon and a \$200 cash prize. Congratulations Kari!

MEET TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR BRANDY FERRER AIFD CFD TMF

THE EARLY YEARS

What is your first memory of flowers?

My grandmother had a magical green thumb and could grow just about anything. As a child, I vividly remember her enormous rose bush full of Don Juan roses. Every time I visited, she would cut a few for me, wrapping the stems in a wet paper towel and aluminum foil. I'd bury my nose in those fragrant roses all the way home from Hugo to Idabel. The comforting smell of those roses is a memory I cherish deeply.



What event or experience led to your interest in the floral industry?

In college, I worked at a flower shop in Oklahoma City, and I absolutely loved it. That experience was a revelation. I realized how much I loved working with flowers and knew I wanted to make it a part of my life, even though I was already on the

road to becoming a teacher. The pivotal moment came in 2005 when my husband's cousin was getting married and their florist bailed on them. I jumped into action, and within eight hours, I had created all of their bouquets and centerpieces. I started my career as a teacher but secretly lived for the weekends when I could work on wedding florals. For a few years, I was so busy as an administrator that I rarely had the opportunity to design. So, when we moved back to East Texas in 2017, I took the plunge, left public education and bought a flower shop.

Share an experience that stands out in your early years in the floral industry.

Attending the Inspired Design Floral Retreat in Georgetown, Texas, was a game-changer for me. It was there that I found my "Flower Family." This community provided me with a robust support system, and my skills flourished rapidly. I no longer felt alone and a whole new world of possibilities opened up to me.

EDUCATION

Overall Education

- Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Oklahoma City University.
- Masters in Educational Leadership from Lamar University.
- Texas Certified Teacher and Principal.

Design Education

I was self-taught until I started attending floral retreats, gained mentors and studied everything I could. I am now proud to be an accredited member of the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD), a Certified Floral Designer (CFD) and certified as a Texas Master Florist (TMF).

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Favorite Job in the Floral Industry

I find deep fulfillment in creating sympathy designs for families who have lost a loved one. Pouring my emotion and creativity into these designs allows me to reflect the beautiful life and personality of the person who has passed.

Present Employment and What You Like Best About It?

I own Simply Beautiful Floral Company in Gilmer, Texas. What I love most is being embedded in a small town's community and culture. Small-town living in Texas is more than just selling flowers; it's a lifestyle that I deeply cherish.

AFFILIATIONS

Your Greatest Support

My biggest cheerleaders are my husband, Mark, and our two children, Haven and Nevah. They accompany me on most trips and our "Flower Family" has warmly embraced them. Nevah has been my best assistant for weddings since she was seven. She designs almost as well as I do! My son, Haven, is an incredible artist and photographer and we often collaborate on ideas. Mark takes such good care of me, especially during the busy seasons.

Your Association Affiliations

In addition to my involvement in the Texas State Florists' Association, I am proud to be affiliated with the American Institute of Floral Designers.

INTEREST IN COMPETITION

It appears that you truly love the art of competition. What intrigues you about the process?

I absolutely love seeing the amazing design styles of other competitors. I learn something new every time! The rush of a timed competition is exhilarating. I thrive under pressure. Competing keeps me sharp, fast and efficient, which is invaluable in my day-to-day work at the flower shop. Competitions also help me avoid the "creative rut" that can occur when running the daily operations of a flower shop.

What do you take away from these experiences?

The takeaway from floral design competitions is so much more than just the win. Every competition is a treasure trove of learning and growth. I pick up new techniques, see incredible creativity and am inspired by fellow florists. It's also about building a community—expanding your "Flower Family" and forming connections that turn into lifelong friendships. The challenge of competing sharpens my skills and keeps my designs fresh and innovative. Ultimately, these experiences fill me with a sense of personal fulfillment and drive to keep pushing my creative boundaries.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead, I'm buzzing with excitement about the future of my floral design journey. First and foremost, I'm focused on growing my flower shop, making it an even more cherished part of our community. I want to bring in fresh, innovative designs and deepen our bonds with the wonderful customers who support us.

But that's just the beginning! I'm dreaming big and hoping to hit the road, sharing my love for flowers far and wide. It's all about connecting with fellow flower lovers, swapping ideas and sparking inspiration. My goal is to inspire others to dive headfirst into their floral passions and see just how far they can go.

For those of you on your own floral journey, I can't stress enough how important it is to immerse yourself in the floral community. TSFA is an incredible resource filled with amazing, talented florists who are always ready to share their knowledge and support.

Building a strong support system has been invaluable to me. When you surround yourself with people who understand your passion and challenges, it makes the journey so much richer. TSFA offers fantastic opportunities for learning, networking and growth. From workshops to conferences, there's always something new to discover and someone new to meet.

The floral community is a vibrant, welcoming place where you can find mentorship, friendship and endless inspiration. So, dive in! Get involved, attend events and connect with your fellow florists. Remember, the more you give to this community, the more you'll get back. And, who knows? You might just find your "Flower Family" along the way.



UNDERSTANDING COMPETITIVE DESIGN

Whether you are preparing for competition or studying for accreditation or certification, the thought process for a well executed design is the same. Texas Designer of the Year Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF shares the thought process and inspiration for each of her winning designs.

THOUGHT PROCESS AND INSPIRATION FOR THE TABLE DESIGN

Creating this centerpiece was a blend of natural beauty and structured elegance, inspired by late summer and traditional Mexican artistry. My goal was to capture the season's warmth and energy with a refined and balanced aesthetic.

Color Palette and Flower Choice

I chose a simplified color scheme, focusing on sunflowers and orange roses. In competitions, a monochromatic or analogous scheme ensures a cohesive look. The bold, warm colors evoke a summer sunset, with sunflowers symbolizing adoration and loyalty and orange roses adding vibrancy and excitement.



Incorporating Mexican Tiles

Incorporating ceramic Mexican tiles, known for their vibrant colors and intricate patterns, added a cultural touch. These tiles provided a perfect contrast to the natural elements, adding depth and character to the arrangement without overpowering the flowers.

Structural Elements and Design

Tall, linear elements like equisetum and scabiosa pods created height and movement. I pulled lily grass and Oasis Rustic Floral Wire across in the opposite direction of the sunflowers and scabiosa pods to create dynamic lines, ensuring the viewer's eye is guided through the entire arrangement, enhancing overall harmony.

Competitive Edge

In competitions, I keep a mental checklist of the scoring rubric. I ensure my designs are aesthetically pleasing and technically sound, with clean lines and negative space enhancing visual appeal and meeting competition criteria. This meticulous approach ensures high scores and showcases a harmonious blend of summer beauty and cultural elegance.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



carefully selected to evoke a sense of calm and introspection, aligning perfectly with the theme of "Reflections."

Structural Elements and Design

The structure of the design is both dynamic and harmonious, with the spirals creating a sense of movement and flow. I incorporated green lily grass to add vertical lines and guide the eye through the design. This grass was carefully pulled in the opposite direction of the flowers to create dynamic lines that enhance the overall composition. The negative space, within the spirals, ensures that each element has room to breathe, highlighting the intricate details of both the crystals and the flowers.

Personal Touch and Technique

This design is a perfect blend of personal history and professional technique. The crystal formation process was a nod to my childhood fascination with nature's wonders, while the structural elements and floral choices reflect my professional training and competitive strategy. By combining these aspects, an arrangement was created that is not only beautiful but deeply meaningful.

Competitive Edge

As I created this design, it was important to meet all aspects of the scoring sheet, aiming to gain as many points as possible. The clean lines, dynamic use of negative space and harmonious color palette were all intentional choices to enhance the visual appeal and meet competition criteria.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

THOUGHT PROCESS AND INSPIRATION FOR THE INTERPRETIVE DESIGN

The prop was a labor of love, drawing inspiration from both the competition theme of "Reflections" and a deeper, more personal source. As a child, I spent my summers exploring the trails of Beavers Bend and Broken Bow Lake, where I developed an obsession with rocks and crystals. I was particularly captivated by the way light danced across the faces of clear or milky white quartz, and I eagerly added them to my collection. This project allowed me to reconnect with that sense of wonder and awe, using it to create something truly special.

Inspiration and Creative Process

To create the prop, I started with a metal spiral sculpture that I found at an antique shop. I was drawn to it because of its Fibonacci-esque features, but I knew it needed more to truly shine. I covered it in chenille stems, and using a borax and distilled water mixture, I submerged it, suspended, for 24 hours. The result was a breathtakingly beautiful growth of borax crystals that mimicked the natural crystal formations I adored as a child.

Color Palette and Flower Choice

For the floral elements, shades of blue and purple created a soothing, reflective palette that complemented the crystalline structure. The blue delphinium and purple lisianthus provided a gentle contrast against the white borax crystals, adding depth and tranquility to the arrangement. These colors were

THOUGHT PROCESS AND INSPIRATION FOR THE SURPRISE SITUATION

Creating this floral necklace was an opportunity to blend cultural inspiration with practical design techniques, resulting in a unique and vibrant presentation .

Color Palette and Flower Choice

Green and blue flowers for an analogous color scheme ensures a cohesive and calming palette that complements the design. This scheme is a reliable choice in competitions for its harmonious effect.

Incorporating Handmade Mexican Yarn

The handmade Mexican yarn was the primary inspiration. I wound it around wire to create leaves, adding texture and cultural depth, honoring the craftsmanship of Mexican artisans.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

Use of Mirrors

Mirrors were added for reflective elegance, creating light play and visual depth. They symbolize reflection and self-awareness, adding a modern twist to the traditional elements.

Wire Structure Technique

The wire structure is a versatile technique I learned from my mentors. Using a 36-inch piece of decorative wire, spiraling both ends, and then opening the spirals, I created the base. This adaptable technique is perfect for tight time constraints, allowing for creativity and efficiency.

Clean and Simple Design

In competitions, I strive to keep designs clean and simple. This approach ensures that each element can be appreciated without overwhelming the viewer. It also meets the competition criteria for balance and harmony.

Bloom with Brandy

TSFA is pleased to announce a new monthly column in *TEXAS in Bloom*, where 2024 Texas Designer of the Year Brandy Ferrer AIFD CFD TMF will discuss a variety of topics! Stay tuned ...



TSFA PAYS TRIBUTE TO TWO FORMER TEXAS DESIGNERS OF THE YEAR

The outpouring of emotions speaks volumes of a strong floral community in our beloved state.

We honor Debbie Lyon TMF and Alex Torres AIFD with memories of their accomplishments and contributions.

We express sympathy to their families and know that, like stars, their legacies will forever shine.

Remembering Debbie Lyon TMF



Named 2017 Texas Designer of the Year, Debbie Lyon TMF takes home the coveted Texas Cup and flowers, of course!

TSFA has lost a shining star. Debbie Lyon TMF, the 2017 Texas Designer of the Year, passed away on the evening of August 13.

Debbie was born on December 8, 1966, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

She graduated from Will Rogers High School in 1985. "I knew I wanted to be a florist in the ninth grade following a chapter on careers in Mr. McGinty's civics class. I thought being a florist sounded romantic and exciting," said Lyon in a previous interview.

Shortly after graduating high school, Debbie started her training at the Platt College School of Floral Design and fell in love with flowers.

Debbie and Kenn were married in Tulsa, Oklahoma on June 1, 1985. They have three children, Gabe, Julie and Matt, and three granddaughters, Braelyn, Eleanor and Maeve.

Debbie's first job in the industry was at LeVan's Flowers in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Although Debbie started out as a "bucket girl", Mary Lee Evans AIFD, the owner of LeVan's, showed Debbie early on that a flower shop could be a fast-paced whirlwind of chaos and creativity. Debbie's floral journey led to many roles in the industry, with an appreciation for every step of the way. She worked rolling roses in cello, for six cents a stem, to be sold in gas stations. She managed the floral department in a high-end boutique grocer. She found a home at several brick-and-mortar florists and worked in wholesale and then in mass market. This culmination of experiences led her to a high point in her floral adventure in 2017 when she won the Texas Cup and was named the 2017 Texas Designer of the Year.

Working as a mass market florist for many years, Debbie enjoyed the structure of the grocery store floral shop, with a continual flow of customers and the support of the larger corporation. She managed a Kroger Marketplace floral shop in Tomball, Texas, and served as a floral mentor for 22 shops in District 6.



Reminiscing about their competitive wins, 2022 Texas Designer of the Year Mary McCarthy AIFD CFD TMFA celebrates with dear friend and 2017 Texas Designer of the Year Debbie Lyon TMF.

She later joined Mary McCarthy AIFD CFD TMFA and the amazing team at The Blooming Idea, and she treasured those days.

Believing strongly in education, Debbie recognized the Texas State Florists' Association for strengthening her love for the floral industry and enriching her life through several opportunities to learn and grow. Debbie earned her Texas Master Florist certification in 2017 and served on the TSFA Industry Relations Committee. She also served as Secretary for Allied Florists of Houston.

In a TSFA Member Spotlight, Debbie shared that "The life I designed was rich in family, friends and work that is exciting, demanding and ultimately fulfilling. As I learned long ago from my first employer, 'The floral industry is a fast-paced whirlwind of chaos and creativity,' and so is my life. I wouldn't have it any other way!"

Family and friends will celebrate her life on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at 1 p.m. at WoodsEdge Community Church Pavilion in Spring, Texas.

"I have known Debbie for a long time, with our first meeting during an Allied Florists' of Houston event. I became much closer to her in 2020 when she joined The Blooming Idea, working full time as manager. She had a wonderful manner with both customers and team members alike. She had a passion for floral education and loved mentoring young designers, having great patience with them. Her day off, Wednesday, was her day to take care of and spend time with her adorable granddaughters. She looked forward to this special time with them every week! Her family came first, but The Blooming Idea was a close second, and I'll truly miss her kind and caring nature."

— Mary McCarthy AIFD CFD TMFA

Remembering Alex Torres AIFD

Written by Beth O'Reilly AIFD

***Some believe that love,
like starlight,
will forever illuminate our hearts.***



Alex had a way of making everyone around him feel like a star, but in essence, he was the true star. Bill Schaffer AIFD remembers Alex introducing him to a group of designers from Mexico. "For some reason, he always thought I was a superstar," Bill explains. "He was so proud to introduce me, so proud that he knew me, translating back and forth to this group that he mentored."

In 2005, Alex won the Texas Cup and went on to represent Texas State Florists' Association at the Society of American Florists' Convention, competing in the Sylvia Cup. Lee Burcher AIFD remembers it well! "When I walked into the room and saw Alex's table, the designs stood out! He was so gifted and his star quality shined through as he was crowned 2005 Sylvia Cup Winner. TSFA was indeed proud of this accomplishment!"

Alex Torres AIFD passed away on August 17. His journey was a tapestry woven with threads of laughter, love, food, flowers, music and family. His social feed was a vibrant mosaic of exotic locations, mouthwatering dishes and breathtaking florals that captured the essence of his personality. Alex had a knack for turning the ordinary into the extraordinary. His zest for life was infectious, inspiring us to step out of our comfort zones and embrace the unknown. He taught us that life is an adventure meant to be savored and explored.

Alex's floral journey began in high school, with a homecoming mum. His sister was attending homecoming and he couldn't stand the thought that she might not receive one. As it turned out, she arrived at school with several, but not one was a match for Alex's creation.

In 2007, along with seven other Texas designers, Alex proudly walked the AIFD stage to receive his accreditation into the American Institute of Floral Designers, and from then on he was forever #proudtobeaidf. He served numerous years on the Allied Florists of Houston Board, occasionally providing music when a DJ was requested for an event. He loved to design for floral enthusiasts attending the local Houston area garden club events and Society for Advancement of Floral Design meetings.

In 2012, Alex was asked to be one of the main stage designers for AIFD Symposium in Miami. Ted Bruehl AIFD remembers, "his face lit up like a disco ball. He was so happy and excited. He knocked it out of the park, which was no surprise."

Alex made it his mission to help other designers achieve their AIFD accreditation. You could always catch him in the AIFD flower room, which was his favorite place to be. He exuded joy in helping others achieve their design endeavors. Though he designed with some of the biggest names in the industry, he was always humble and was there to assist in all ways possible doing what he loved best. He enjoyed freelancing and helped so many shops when they were in a bind.

Family was his greatest love of all. Alex is survived by his mother, Virginia Castro; sister, Marcela Torres; brother, Martin Torres Jr.; and beloved nieces and nephews. A Rosary was held on August 29 in Houston, Texas, with Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and burial at Forest Park Lawndale on August 30.

The legacy of Alejandro "Alex" Torres lives on, inspiring an unwavering belief in the power of beauty and reminding us all to seek the extraordinary in the everyday. Like starlight, his legacy will never fade.



Alex loved being involved in AIFD and found his "happy place" in the AIFD Symposium flower room. He was always there to provide much needed help! He also shined when he stepped out to celebrate AIFD success, fashionably dressed for a gala in all white to conclude the 2024 AIFD Symposium.

MEET TSFA PRESIDENT *Ed Fimbel* CFD TMFA



From left to right, meet Ed's family: Son Seth and daughter Stephanie with Ed and Cheryl. MaryEllen, married to son Stephen, is holding their son and Cheryl and Ed's first grandchild, Aldric.

Ed's grandchildren visit Adelaide Botanical Gardens in Australia. From left to right, meet Talia and Aldric!

Ed Fimbel has dedicated countless hours to a number of TSFA committees. His focus – to expand education in order to ensure the success of this industry and the well being of those who are a part of it – led him to a position on the TSFA Education Committee. His longstanding service as an Education Committee Co-chair has strengthened TSFA, providing unlimited possibilities to students of all ages and to the teachers who direct their paths. His keen interest in Level 1 and Level 2 Floral Design Certification for high school students led to tremendous support of the new components previewed recently at ATAT.

LET'S MEET YOUR FAMILY

Cheryl and I have been married for 47 years. We have 34-year-old triplet children, Stephanie, Stephen and Seth. Our daughter-in-law, MaryEllen, and son Stephen have blessed us with two grandchildren, Aldric and Talia.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME OUTSIDE OF THE INDUSTRY?

I like riding bicycles, playing golf, even though I am not that good at it, and cruising to ports of call.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE COLOR AND WHY?

My favorite color is blue and I guess the reason why is that there are not that many true blue flowers. They are unique, like me!

WHAT BRINGS YOU THE MOST JOY?

The most joy is watching people experience that "aha" moment when they learn and understand a new idea or technique in floral design.

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR FAVORITE TRIP TO DATE?

Cruising the Mediterranean Sea, visiting Barcelona, Spain; Rome and Venice, Italy; and Croatia.

IS THERE A "DREAM TRIP", AND IF SO, WHERE WILL THE "DREAM TRIP" TAKE YOU?

I would love to cruise the Panama Canal.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE FOOD?

I love to eat Mexican food!

DO YOU PREFER TO COOK OR DINE OUT?

That's 50-50 for me!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE?

I don't have a favorite movie, but I do like action films.

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF FLOWERS?

My first memory of flowers was, as an elementary-aged child, when

my mother grew Amaryllis lilies in the spring and poinsettias in the late fall in the flower beds across the front of our home.

WHAT EVENT OR EXPERIENCE LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY?

I started in the floral industry by filling in for a friend at a local florist while he went on vacation with his family. Starting out as a delivery driver, bucket washer and floor sweeper in 1969, I continued to climb the ladder until I owned my own shop for 17 years, retiring in 2017.

INDUSTRY EDUCATION

I attended countless design presentations and hands-on classes to become a Texas Master Florist Advanced (TMFA) in 1986 and a Certified Floral Designer (CFD), certified by AIFD, in 2022.

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Located in Victoria, Texas, I worked at Wedemeier Florist from 1969-1973 and at Victoria's House of Flowers 1973-1987, purchasing Victoria's House of Flowers in 1987 with ownership through 2004. Located in Sugarland, Texas, I worked at Nora Anne's Flower Shoppe from 2005-2016.

YOUR FAVORITE JOB IN THE FLORAL INDUSTRY

My favorite job is delivering the finished floral design and seeing the reaction on the face of the recipient!



From left to right, Teia Bennett, Cheryl Vaughan, Annie Choi, Robin Schill, Susan Piland and Amy Harumi join Ed at the 2022 AIFD Symposium.

WHAT ROLE IN TSFA BEST PREPARED YOU FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT?

I stand on my 40+years of TSFA membership, as well as serving two times on the TSFA Board of Directors. My involvement on numerous committees and my dedication to this association has provided a great foundation for becoming president of the Texas State Florists' Association.

WHAT GOALS DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE FOR TSFA?

I have three goals that I would like TSFA to achieve this year:

- Increasing membership
- Greater member volunteerism
- Continuing an outstanding education platform



Cheryl joins Ed for the Texas Floral Forum, where he was elected TSFA President!

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

Right now...being elected president of the Texas State Florists' Association is the biggest highlight of my involvement in the floral industry.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY TODAY?

This industry is still a growing and a vibrant part of today's society. It is an industry that conveys many sentiments of life. Whether it is the happiness of a birth, the sadness of a death, the celebration of a birthday, anniversary, graduation or a job well done, flowers do say it all!

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY IN TEN YEARS?

My hope is that this industry will continue to thrive and be a productive for all floral enthusiasts.

Holiday HAPPENINGS

with Chris Collum-Williams AIFD CFD TMF

Hands-on Workshop • Product Gallery • Dinner Presentation

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2024

Stagecoach Inn
416 South Main Street
Salado, Texas

Chair: Jimmy Burrage CFD TMF



Chris Collum-Williams AIFD CFD TMF began his floral career thirty two years ago as a delivery driver for a flower shop in Levelland, Texas. Working his way up over the years, he was always thirsting for more floral knowledge. Once a designer, Collum-Williams began competing in local and state design competitions. He won the West Texas New Mexico Florist Association (WTNM) Silver Cup in 1997 and the Texas Cup in 2015. Chris received his Texas Master Florist in 1996.

In 2004, Collum-Williams started freelancing, with jobs taking him all over the United States. He continued his freelance career for three years, working for several flower shops and event planners, always learning new techniques and business smarts along the way. In 2007, Chris and his husband Tom, accepted management positions at Flowerland in Midland, Texas and at Mark Knox Flowers in Odessa, Texas where they have successfully been the past 17 years.

In 2010, Collum-Williams was inducted into the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) in Boston. After achieving this highly coveted goal, he is now even more eager to share his knowledge with others in the floral industry, while all the time still learning himself. Collum-Williams has presented Main Stage during AIFD Symposium.

His industry leadership continues to make a difference. He currently serves, as a Director, on the AIFD National Board. He is a past president of WTNM and is a recipient of the WTNM Silver Rose Award. His passion for the floral industry is strong and evolves every day through creativity and education.



Enjoy a Weekend in Salado

Relax, Shop, Antique, Learn

Bring your family! Meet friends! Stay the weekend! Come for the day!

With 48 newly renovated guest rooms, the Stagecoach Inn awaits!

Originally opened in 1860, Stagecoach Inn is a Texas landmark. As the second oldest, continuously running inn or hotel in the state, travelers have parked their wagon, horse or vehicle at this iconic inn for over 160 years.

STAGECOACH ESTD 1860 INN & RESTAURANT

Photography Credit | Jenna Hearn



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HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

BRINGING YOUR MAGIC TO THE HOLIDAYS!

Creativity is your magic! So taking time to develop your creativity is like giving a gift to yourself! Oftentimes, it is creativity that expands a vision. Discover the difference that creativity can make in each and every design! Uncover just how easy it is to update a holiday centerpiece! Learn time efficient ways that can easily elevate style. There is no limit to the power of creativity. It is that power that will ensure repeat business and increase awareness of the magic you bring to the holidays!

DINNER PRESENTATION

AN EVENING OF HOLIDAY MAGIC

From the tiniest details to the expansive WOW, this presentation will bring an evening of holiday magic to educate, delight and inspire. Merchandising techniques to transform an ordinary space to an extraordinary wonderland. Design tips to elevate style. Details to add interest to your spectacular selections. Suggestions to bring profitable results to the season. Imagination and originality to motivate you and your team to success! Chris Collum-Williams is a dedicated retailer that brings it all, with great success, season after season. Experience the magic!

SCHEDULE

- 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.** Hands-on Workshop
- 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.** Product Gallery • Time to Network!
- 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.** Dinner and Design Presentation
- 9:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.** Product Gallery and Flower Sale

Experience Salado and all the community has to offer. Galleries, boutique shopping, glass works and places to enjoy a coffee or lunch are among a few ways to spend your day!



**VISIT [TSFA.ORG/SALADO](https://tsfa.org/salado)
OR SCAN THIS QR CODE**

Texas State Florists' ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS HANDS-ON EDUCATION AT ITS FINEST

Three hands-on workshops were presented during the Texas Floral Forum with tremendous response. TSFA has long been a leader in education. Hands-on is a sought after component that will continue to elevate floral design education in Texas with the support of the Texas Floral Education Underwriters,



Written by Gaby Ponsaerts TMF

When I think of wedding bouquets, my mind immediately goes to pretty flowers, colors, design styles and so on. Yet, as Andreia Muller AIFD CFD FSMD explained during this hands-on workshop during the Texas Floral Forum, there is more to it in order to make your bouquets a success. The bouquet also needs to be profitable. Muller shared a great deal for our consideration and for our benefit!

- 1 Confirm that you have all the needed information and that all information is correct. These are the first steps to alleviate some stress and provide what is needed to place a correct order at your wholesaler.
- 2 Give the bride a call a week to 10 days before the wedding, so you can review the entire list of items, times and contacts.
- 3 Charge when additional designs are requested.
- 4 Rather than lowering the agreed upon price, suggest where extra flowers might be showcased if the count of table designs decreases or if similar adjustments are requested.



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BOUQUETS STYLED FOR SUCCESS

Hands-on Design Workshop • Instructor Andreia Muller AIFD CFD FSMD

- 5 Pull the flowers for the bridal bouquet first and set them aside. The bridal bouquet is the star of the show and the most photographed, This creation certainly deserves the absolute best blossoms!
- 6 Send a picture of the completed bouquet to the bride the day before the wedding. This allows time for changes and alleviates stress for the bride. If she loves her bouquet, she will love it all.
- 7 Design corsages and boutonnieres later, using fresh broken or short flowers or the lower blossoms of line flowers, such as delphinium, that may have been featured in the altar designs.
- 8 Use Design Master Petal Proofer or a similar product when using delicate blossoms. Applied on the back side can stretch the lifespan of peonies, ranunculus and dahlias.
- 9 Creative use of foliage can also contribute to the bottom line. So many inspiration pictures show expensive and hard to come by vines. Mimic this look by editing plumosa or Italian ruscus.
- 10 An edgy look can be achieved by cutting Fatsia, monstera or magnolia leaves in different shapes.
- 11 Flowers can sound exclusive, cutting edge and more expensive with a different approach to the name. Dianthus sounds much more elegant than carnation. Peruvian lily sounds much more exclusive than alstroemeria.
- 12 Flowers can also be manipulated to add value. When we remove the center petals, its status goes up even more. How about incorporating naked sunflowers in those centerpieces instead of tossing them away because of a few damaged petals.

Actions speak louder than words, so we all received a collection of bold sunflowers, zinnias, hanging amaranthus, dianthus, Peruvian lilies, roses and celosia. In order to keep our bouquets light and airy, Muller shared her chicken wire mechanics that she uses on just about all of her bouquets. Precise placement of flowers and foliage is much easier with this inventive mechanic that disappears completely in the bouquet. Though we all started with the same flowers and information, bouquets varied as they were assembled, with each reflecting the individual style of its designer.

Perhaps even more important than the shared tips, was the advice Muller repeated throughout the workshop:

**KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET
AND FIND A SOLUTION.**

These tips are undoubtedly a recipe for success! Thank you, Andreia!

PROVEN DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Hands-on Design Workshop • Instructor Chris Norwood AAF AIFD CFD PFCI

Underwritten by the Texas Floral Education Underwriters



thinner and more flexible pieces into a circle at the top until a structure was formed that allowed flowers to be arranged and remain exactly where each was placed. From this starting point, he expanded the concept of this technique by offering tips to create a variety of armature styles, including a crescent, an infinity shape and domed structures.



Written by Gaby Ponsaerts TMF

When hearing the name Chris Norwood AAF AIFD CFD PFCI, I feel a little intimidated. This gentleman is a giant in the floral industry. His accolades include serving as AIFD President in 2006-2007 and AIFD Symposium Coordinator, not once but twice, receiving the Award of Distinguished Service to AIFD and being named a Fellow of the Institute in 2012 and receiving the AIFD Award of Distinguished Service to the Industry in 2022. His work has been featured in *Flowers&* and *Florists' Review* to name a couple of magazines. For years, he was featured weekly on KATV Good Morning Arkansas. Norwood became a household name at the onset of COVID, when he brought a little bit of “Happy” through the beauty of flowers to homes worldwide, via Facebook Live.

So just how does a man of such great achievement share the world of floral design with a new or fairly new floral designer? For starters, during the Texas Floral Forum in San Antonio, he asked us to say hi to the person next to us. A simple, yet effective, way to help us relax, smile and possibly make a new floral friend! He then opened the door to the proven design technique of curly willow armatures.

He showed us how to make a simple round armature by using the five sturdiest stems as a handle and base while weaving the

We then had the fun of placing the flowers while Norwood shared these techniques regarding placements:

- 1 Keep the less expensive flowers low, as a background supporting the more expensive blooms, so each of the more expensive blossoms may shine.
- 2 Place flowers in small groups of twos or threes to enhance the harmony and to expand the perceived value of the finished design.
- 3 Bring your creativity to the design. This was proven when the results clearly showed that these techniques, in the hands of 40+ florists, resulted in as many creative and awe inspiring designs as there were those creating.

This basic technique, and how we were taught to expand on the basic styling, will help each of us offer creative, contemporary and exclusive looks to our customers.

There is nothing that customers like more than receiving an arrangement that is new and different from what they have seen before. Little do they know that, as it has been said, “Everything old is new again.” That will be a little secret kept between Norwood and each of us who attended his well taught class! Thank you, Chris!

PROVEN DESIGN STRATEGIES

Advanced Hands-on Design Workshop • Instructor Chris Norwood AAF AIFD PFCI

Underwritten by the Texas Floral Education Underwriters



Written by Gaby Ponsaerts TMF

Hands-on was definitely the focus of this workshop. We all received a rectangular box and a bucket filled with exquisite spring flowers to create different styles of arrangements.

The first option that Norwood demonstrated was a crescent shaped style, which is very popular. It is sometimes called inverted or referred to as a new crescent.

Since sustainability is also on our minds and the minds of many consumers, Norwood taught us how to create a mechanical structure of chicken wire.

Once the mechanics were set, he began the design with a light and low layer of pittosporum that also aided in keeping the flowers exactly where he placed each blossom. This design style begged for a strong and low focal area in the middle of the arrangement, so placements of hydrangea fit that purpose perfectly. He achieved the shape with snapdragons supported by edited huckleberry. Lisianthus and stock strengthened the shape. The focal area was reinforced with roses, in that these placements may



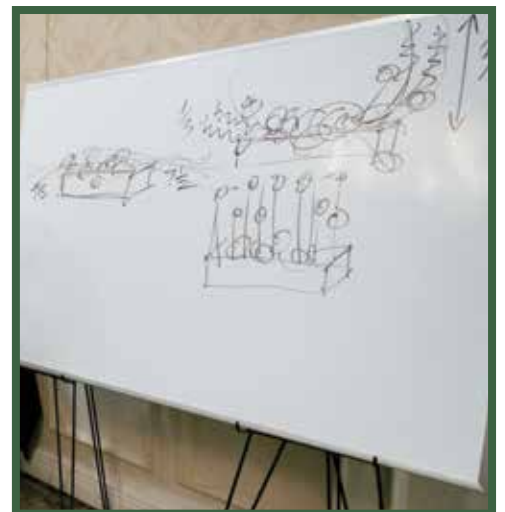
remain low while being inserted at slightly different heights and angles.

“When the cake is made, you add the frosting”, Norwood demonstrated! In this case, the frosting consisted of spectacular ranunculus and anemones that danced ever so slightly above the base flowers. Positioning jasmine vine brought in movement and a touch of whimsy.

Although this combination of flowers seemed absolutely perfect for this design style, Norwood demonstrated that the same selections may be used to create a low and long centerpiece. This strategy makes it possible to utilize inventory on hand for a number of different design styles.

As someone who operates at the cutting edge of the industry, he has also noticed that the parallel design style is once again gaining in popularity. As you may suspect, he demonstrated a stunning parallel design using the exact same flowers.

As we all rolled up our sleeves to begin designing, we realized it is of the utmost importance to develop buying, designing and selling strategies that will align our customers' needs with our business needs. Many thanks to Chris for highlighting this aspect of our business, combined with great fun and a memorable experience!



Expanding possibilities by using the same flowers, designed in three distinctive design styles, in the same container. Talk about inventory control!



TSFA Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

- 1 New TSFA Board of Directors Term Begins
- 2 Labor Day
- 6 Grandparents' Day
- 10 Suicide Prevention Day
- 11 Level 1 and Level 2 Teacher Training and Certification in Leander
- 11 Patriot Day
- 20-23 TMF Certification Classes
- 24 Mastering Wedding Bouquets: Innovative Floral Design for Educators in Lubbock
- 25 Floral Fashion: Designing Wearable Blooms for High School Classrooms in Lubbock

OCTOBER


- 1-2 Level 1 and Level 2 Teacher Training in Huntsville
- 6 TSFA Board of Directors Meeting
- 11-13 Fundamental Elements and Principles of Floral Design in Leander
- 14 Columbus Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- 17 Texas Floral Showcase in Midland
- 20 Tropical Paradise Class in Leander
- 30 Designing in Glass Class in Leander
- 31 Halloween

NOVEMBER

- 2 Texas Floral Showcase in Salado
- 5 Election Day
- 11 Veterans Day
- 11 World Kindness Day
- 28 Thanksgiving
- 30 Small Business Saturday

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