



*Pim van den Akker*



*Matt Wood*



*J Schwanke*



*Hitomi Gilliam*

*The  
Bloomin'  
Texan*  
September 2015



*Jerome Raska*



*J. Keith White*



*Laura Dowling*



*Jacob McCall*

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# The Bloomin' Texan

SEPTEMBER 2015 | VOLUME XXXXI | NUMBER 9

## From the *President*



Susan Weatherford

David Tuter's "Your Wedding Experience" 2015 in partnership with TSFA was an incredible experience!!

Our renowned TSFA Designers created "On Trend" floral wedding reception displays and our volunteers helped create and distribute over **1,000 BOUQUETS** to brides attending. It was exhilarating to see the NRG Center "Blossom" with all of these bouquets being carried throughout this event.

Thank you to our Texas Floral Education Underwriters, donors, designers and volunteers... because of your help and dedication, you make it all possible.

With the newly elected TSFA Board of Directors, we are looking forward to another great year, encompassed with outstanding Education and Networking **OPPORTUNITIES**.

We encourage each of you to get involved... Not to just be a **Member**, but an **ACTIVE MEMBER!** I'm sure you saw a lot of new faces and friends involved in EXPO and other TSFA events. Please consider contacting our TSFA office (or me) to donate your time to volunteer or join a committee. And **REACH OUT** to those new faces & friends!!

Your attitude plays a significant role in your success. It is your attitude, not your aptitude that determines your "**altitude**".

This year let us ALL begin our journey with a **POSITIVE ATTITUDE!** To be **BOLD, EAGER, EXCITED & INSPIRED** to take large strides towards our shared vision; making our dream that much more **VISIBLE** and **BRIGHTER!**

### *A final thought...*

*Attitude is a little thing that makes a **BIG** difference!*

—Winston Churchill



## presents *Basics to Brilliance*

The featured designers at the Texas Floral Expo have caused us to reflect over this past month. The education shared in each presentation will continue to inspire in 2016 in a series of educational features titled Reflections.

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### THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS STATE FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION

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## Texas Expresses Appreciation to these TSEFA Members and Industry Companies Texas Thanks You!

*Texas Floral Events Coordinator Lynn Lary McLean AAF AIFD PFCITMF*

*A special thank you to the Texas Floral Education and Product Partners.  
These amazing companies are acknowledged in the  
presentations throughout this publication.*

### Texas Floral Expo Product Partners

Accent Décor	Greenleaf Wholesale Florists	Southern Floral Company	Weatherford Farms
Acolyte Designs, LLC	Klepac Greenhouses	Syndicate Sales	Winward
Alpha Fern Company	L&G Wholesale	Teleflora	Zoom! Roses
Chrysal Americas	Oasis Floral Products	The Elite Flower	
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Classic Chevrolet Sugar Land	Mexi Flower	The Elite Flower
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Esprit Miami	Pressed Garden	Weatherford Farms
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### Laura Dowling

Ken Senter AIFD and Lisa Schuessler

### Hitomi Gilliam AIFD

Team Leader Susan Tate AIFD, Aki Ishiguro,  
Kiyomi Kurihara, Ceclia Manouel AIFD TMF,  
Maxine Schaffer, and Haseeba Sharwani

### Jacob McCall AAF AIFD CFD FSMD

Sandy Ramirez TMFA and Corey Harbour AIFD PFCI

### Jerome Raska AIFD

Cheryl Vaughan TMFA

### J Schwanke AAF AIFD CFD PFCI TMF

Josh Anderson TMFA, Kassie Baker TMF and  
Melaine Hugle

### Pim van den Akker

Team Leader Pat Shirley-Becker AIFD TMFA

Michael McCarthy AIFD and Fabian Salcedo

### J. Keith White AIFD

Team Leader Marcia Wilson

Lucas Chavez and Patricia Gomez AIFD

### Matt Wood AIFD PFCI

Chris Collum AIFD TMF, Rebecca Sherman AIFD  
and Tom Williams TMF

## *Classy Glass* | DESIGNER JEROME RASKA AAF AIFD PFCI CFD



Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Syndicate Sales

Flowers provided by Gold Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Rio Roses

Jerome Raska AIFD was assisted by Cheryl Vaughan TMFA

Written by Sheri Jentsch TMF

You know how there are some people you are instantly drawn to. Jerome Raska AAF AIFD PFCI CFD is one of those people. He has a brilliant mind with the creative aspect of floristry as well as the business. It is truly impressive. He makes you want to be a better person and designer. I've had the pleasure of seeing Jerome give presentations at a couple of events. Each time he brings an abundance of energy, class, enthusiasm and easily adaptable creative ideas to the table.

There was a wide range of designers that attended this hands-on design demonstration. Many were students new to the floral industry. Some were retail shop designers and some event only designers. The demonstration included ideas that could be used at any level. The focus was on creating designs that make customers say, "wow!" without adding inordinate labor and product costs — using special design elements to enhance the store brand and potentially a higher price.

Jerome taught profitability in a flower shop is king. He is always searching for new ways to dress up a vase or to make the floral mechanics just a little easier or the presentation of stems just a little more pleasing. Clear glass without the use of decoration can be an issue for arrangements that have to last because the water can get mucky and most recipients of flowers will not change the water. This is why Jerome suggested design on the outside of the vase with ribbon, wire, beads, etc. to disguise dirty water. Plus adding elements to the outside of your vase looks great in your cooler.

Floral design is so much more than just flowers. He recommended changing out vases used in your business often. Putting pictures on your website with unique vases to help sell flower is also a good idea. A website is effectively a "second store". It needs to be closely managed by someone and constantly updated to show new items and techniques.

Using branches is a great way to add perceived value to any container. It makes the customer feel they are getting more value for the money they spent. Another way to add on sales to your store is to create "Bead Kabobs" and display them on your front counter. It is easily accomplished by wrapping wired beads or the larger sized Mega beads onto cane or bamboo. Place them into a container on the front counter and sell as add on. This is a simple and easy way to increase sales and make an ordinary arrangement interesting.

Jerome went on to show how foliage can be used to change up glassware. He manipulated *Aspidistra* leaves into a loop and added to an arrangement to add volume and uniqueness. He also showed an easy way to cover foam with *Aspidistra* leaves. By using this technique, you will save money as less foliage is necessary to hide your mechanics.

We also learned that naming designs is helpful in marketing because the customer can associate with it. A savvy designer will use the right glass and accessories for the right occasion. By adding decorative accessories, specialty foliage and other design elements can quickly and easily be added for extra pizzazz and larger profits. It will ultimately set you apart from your competition.



## *Just a Pretty Table!*

### INTERACTIVE DEMONSTRATION

### JACOB MCCALL AAF AIFD CFD FSMD

Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter The Elite Flower

Jacob McCall AAF AIFD CFD FSMD was assisted by Sandy Ramirez TMFA and

Corey Harbour AIFD PFCI

Written by Sandy Ramirez TMFA

Jacob McCall AAF AIFD CFD FSMD, was our delightful guest at the 2015 Texas Floral Expo held in Sugar Land, in July. Floral designers from across the state came to learn, observe, volunteer and maybe even show off their skills a tad bit. Talent abounds in our floral world and one of our friends who happens to have a lot of talent is Mr. Jacob McCall.

Jacob kicked off the Texas Floral Expo by hosting an Interactive Demonstration Friday afternoon. Approximately fifteen designers arrived at the class with tools in hand, to find a room with three different tables, buckets of flowers, props and a creative facilitator with an interesting twist to a fun afternoon. Florists were immediately grouped and assigned to one of the three tables. McCall gave them full reign of the linens, accessories and flowers assigned to their table but they were required to work as a team. Each table setting had a different theme of Garden Party, Rustic Lodge or Tropical. As an observer, it was quite interesting to watch very capable, shop owners, employees and brand new designers come to agreement on a final design. But wait...about the time they figured out their intended design, McCall would tell them to walk away from their table and begin to work at the table to their right for the next thirty minutes. They were allowed to once again, make changes, start over or enhance what had been started by the previous team. It really was quite enjoyable to watch them as their designer minds were hard at work. I was especially impressed that some chose to tear apart what the previous team had begun and thus make it to their own idea of "Good". So many personalities and so many different twists because as the old adage says "...Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder." Three in the afternoon came quickly and "Just a Pretty Table" was far beyond "JUST a Table! Three "Party Worthy" tables had been created and I believe some proud, challenged and excited designers learned a few new techniques from Jacob McCall while also learning from each other. In fact, I will venture to say...they learned a few new things about themselves. Learning together is quite fun and this Interactive Demonstration was no exception.

# The Art of the Bouquet | J. KEITH WHITE AIFD CFD



Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter FTD, Inc.

Flowers provided by Gold Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Pikes Peak of Texas

J. Keith White AIFD was assisted by Team Lead Marcia Wilson, Lucas Chavez and Patricia Gomez AIFD

As the workshop began, Keith demonstrated several color harmonies and textures of floral compositions. The importance was evident about the best materials and interesting combinations as a colorful coral, pink and rustic palette of Roses, Hypericum, Pin Cushions, Flame Callas and Scabiosa Pods came together in a hand tied bouquet. Another bouquet artfully designed and presented showed depth and the use of more fragile stems which was secured with “Bind It” tape from Oasis. The first portion of the workshop gave the attendees a current view of bridal bouquet directions with the key design tips to the perfect bouquet. The sense of pride in the floral selections was provided by Pikes Peak of Texas.

The second portion of the workshop started with attendees given an Oasis silvered hammered wedding bouquet holder, David Austin Patience Roses, Mini White Callas, Succulents, Tilanzia and Dendrobium Orchids. The use of a handled bouquet holder was chosen due to the unique design that incorporates a twist off handle knob which allows the flowers to continue to hydrate. Floral placements were done in a triangle form at different depths with the garden roses. The Mini Callas were then placed in a series of by 2 x 1 x 1 in and outward flow from the radial design. The interesting and unique items, Succulents and Tilanzia were inserted by using Oasis floral adhesive to the cut wire for placements. The direction of each of these insertions became the art form, a flat plane for the Succulents, and the airy fringe of the Tilanzia. To finish the bouquet the Dendrobium Orchids were “chained” together and lightly nestled into the flowers and dangled off the design. Magically and confident, from beginner to seasoned designer, each took with them a beautiful bouquet with the guidance and knowledge of Keith.

## Product Power

Written by Elaine Nevarez

As attendees strolled down the hall towards the Product Gallery, there was already a buzz in the air. I walked into the Product Gallery and was quickly approached by a hostess serving hors d'oeuvres as musical instruments played softly in the back ground. I instantly began to relax from my busy work day as I wondered around the room. In the corners of the room “Product Power” was in full swing. Designers, Gregg Hoppe AIFD TMF, Debbie Gordy AAF AIFD TMFA and Sheri Jentsch TMF were busy creating beautiful arrangements with products that were being provided by participating vendors. Attendees were able to see firsthand, creative ways to apply new product into everyday arrangements as they engaged in casual conversation with the designers. This was a very nice added touch for a wonderful event.



# Getting a Grasp on Social Media

SPEAKER ASHLEY DEFRANCO



Gold Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Flower Shop Network

Written By Bridget Weatherford

Confused? With all the various forms of social media out there, do you ask yourself where to turn, what is the best form for my business, what is the quickest and easiest way to get my information out there, connect with my customers, and create possibilities for future customers? Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Yelp and the list goes on and on and continues to grow and evolve at such a rapid pace that you might never find the answers to your questions.

At this year's Expo, Ashley DeFranco was asked to help give the floral industry direction and a little guidance in the ever changing environment of Social Media. Seven years ago, realizing the lack of viable resources available to assist small businesses in their efforts to efficiently utilize the world of social media, she started her company, Simplified Social Media.

As someone who runs a successful business, loves to run marathons, a wife and mother of a two year old baby boy, she has no problem relating to the floral industry and the everyday struggle of just trying to get it all done. It seemed that there was a universal theme running throughout the classroom of, "I need an avenue that is easy to use and one that is not time consuming." As Ashley explained, Social Media is a way you can, "showcase your brand, tell your story, increase exposure, develop relationships, build trust and credibility," all potentially leading to an increase in sales. And, 'yes', it can be done even without a large quantity of that very precious resource that so many of us lack...time.

Ashley walked us through three different social media platforms that she felt were the most applicable to the floral industry. Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook all have their own unique ways of keeping the information flowing between your business, your customers and the potential consumer.



With already over 200 million active users, Instagram is considered the 'newest kid on the block'. There are over 40 billion images uploaded on a daily basis with over a 1000 comments and 8000 likes per second! Yes, that's 'per second'!! Ashley referred to this as, "engagement," and considers it Instagram's strongest and most significant asset. Post a picture with a caption that grabs attention and let the interaction begin. Ask questions, build interest by hinting about what's to come, tell your story behind the picture..."engage with your community." Utilizing hashtags such as #PhotoOfTheDay, #DreamWedding or #SheSaidYes are great ways to create a connection. Hashtags allow users to quickly search and find pictures best associated with what they are trying to find. Remember, you are not only trying to connect with the customers you currently have, you are also trying to build on potential buyers...tap into the unknown consumers out there in cyber world.



Pinterest has 70 million active users, 85% of them being women, 32% between the ages of 18-34 and 45% between the age of 35-54. Pinterest is used as a platform to share tips and ideas. It requires more time to use than Instagram or Facebook, but it is a completely different way to connect with consumers. As Ashley stated, "use keyword rich descriptions that inspire and inform." New to Pinterest is the option of being able to pin directly from Instagram.

Coming soon will be what is referred to as 'buyable pins'. This allows users to purchase directly from Pinterest.



Facebook is one of the oldest and most widely used platforms in social media. One billion active users, 3.2 billion likes and comments per day and 91% of millennials are utilizing facebook. Although this is still considered one of the best avenues for keeping up with family and friends, it has many more complexities when using for business purposes. It is trickier to use in a business environment and is regulated with the use of algorithms. Facebook uses algorithms as way to insure that the users receive the most important and up to date content; therefore, kicking out what is felt as useless information. So, as a business owner you have to provide value to your audience with a good mix of different types of content.

We want to thank Flower Shop Network ([www.FlowerShopNetwork.com](http://www.FlowerShopNetwork.com)) for sponsoring this wonderfully educational class. If you were fortunate enough to attend the class, you know that Ashley was extremely informative and her explanations were not only thorough but easy for even the most inept and technically challenged person to understand. However, with only two hours to devote to such an expansive and challenging subject as social media, there are probably still a lot of questions. For those that were not fortunate enough to attend the class and for those of us still looking to fine tune our social media usage, log on to [www.simplifiedsocialmedia.com](http://www.simplifiedsocialmedia.com) or email Ashley direct at [Ashley@simplifiedsocialmedia.com](mailto:Ashley@simplifiedsocialmedia.com). As Ashley stated, "We do consulting, training, speaking and complete marketing campaigns, from creation to implementation, for clients and love every minute of it!" Get started today!!



# TEXAS CUP COMPETITION

## *Sweet Beginnings*

Gold Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter  
Teleflora

Flowers provided by Bronze Level Texas Floral  
Education Underwriter

Greenleaf Wholesale Florist

Written by Dov E. Kupfer AIFD CFD

Following the newness of this year's Texas Floral Expo, the 2015 Texas Cup Competition format also changed. One new twist was the time of the contest and when each category would be created. Two designs were created during the afternoon closed door session and the third design, the Surprise Situation was part of the dinner program and presentation. The Cup competition began at 2:00 PM with a mandatory meeting led by Chairperson Rebecca L. Sherman AIFD. During the meeting, all the rules were restated and any competitor's queries were answered. The Interpretive design props were checked for price and size. Once all of these were approved, the designers were free to take a brief break before the actual competition began. They could go check out the product provided and organize their design tables. The start time for the Cup was 3:00 PM.

Competing for this year's Texas Cup were 11 very talented designers. Yolanda Amos, Houston; Ace Berry, Houston; James Burrage, Galveston; Nora Cisneros, Porter; Chris Collum, Midland; Tiffany Houck, Sugar Land, Kim O'Brien Jones, Spring; Debbie Lyon, The Woodlands; Alan Masters, Pasadena; Amy Neugebauer, The Woodlands; and Ashley Timmons-Blanton, Tyler. Several were returning to compete, while others were Cup novices.

Each competitor was furnished identical materials including everything required for the three categories — the wedding bouquet, surprise situation, and the Interpretive Design. These included fresh flowers, foliage, containers, props and supplies.

Working with a color palette of marsala, peach, pink, green and gold, each designer had buckets filled with Geraldine roses, Ilse spray roses, burgundy celosia, gold strike roses, burgundy hanging amaranthus, freesia, pink veronica, bouvardia, astilbe, stock, dahlias, Bells of Ireland, pink mini callas, green mini hydrangea, Pavarotti carnations, jasmine vine, green hypericum, and gold Mokara orchids.



*Left to Right - Texas Cup Chair Rebecca Sherman AIFD, Texas Cup Winner Chris Collum AIFD TMF and President Susan Weatherford*

The foliage included myrtle, galax, and seeded eucalyptus as well as curly willow.

The competition began right at three o'clock. The first category was the Wedding bouquet. The designers had 45 minutes to create a wedding bouquet style of their choice designed with the flowers and product provided by TSFA. The bouquets created ranged from traditional to contemporary and avant-garde. Each one was a unique design featuring wonderful flower and color combinations, unusual and fun design techniques and mechanics. The contest was monitored by Rebecca, and the Texas Cup monitors Samantha Boyle, Kathy Bell and Mary McCarthy. Time was called and the bouquets were taken to be judged and would then be modeled after judging as part of the dinner presentation.

The second category designed was The Interpretive Design category. The theme of the competition was "Sweet Beginnings". The design created would reflect a design suitably created for a sixty inch round table where guests at a wedding would be seated for a dinner reception. Each competitor made a prop that was used to

create their own unique interpretive design. The table linen, flowers, and supplies as well as other creative elements were provided by TSFA for this category. The prop could not exceed \$100 and had to fit in a 30x30 space with height unlimited. The design had to be able to be carried by the designer without assistance. The time limit for this design was 45 minutes. Some of the props that were used featured very unusual items. Alan used a beautiful cut crystal pedestal he created with crystal garlands dripping off of his floral design. Nora created a large diamond ring surrounded by flowers atop a white Grecian pillar. Another used a wrought iron doubled branched structure where curved cascades of flowers flowed off the branches to the base. Other designers created wire sculptures to add floral orbs or dainty clusters of flowers. Another prop was a beautiful gold gilded and crystal epergne, and then a metal box frame featuring suspended wire hearts. A group of flowers sat on a top corner with another at the opposite bottom corner. Chris created the most unique prop from a roll of wire pins ribboned from the top of a central pole ending in a tapered hammered metal

*The bouquets created ranged from traditional to contemporary and avant-garde. Each one was a unique design featuring wonderful flower and color combinations, unusual and fun design techniques and mechanics.*

bowl. Along the ribbon were three pages and paper fans made from pages that told the story of the “new sweet beginning” of the wedding couple. A floral design topped the design as well as a paved and group of flowers contained in the base. The centerpiece designs were judged and then presented on the tables later that evening for viewing and commentary during the program and presentation.

With the first two categories completed, Part one of the Texas Cup was done. The last design, the Surprise Situation, would be created during the evening session. The designers were free for the time being to relax and get ready for the evenings competition.

The “Stars of Texas” Dinner Event would be the background for the finale design of the Texas Cup. The designers reported back at 6:45 PM to resume the contest. As the attendees entered the banquet room, they were seated at tables that featured the eleven interpretive designs from the afternoon session. Rich Salvaggio AAF AIFD PFCI was the guest commentator for the evening’s festivities. He commented on the designs from the days session. During this time, the wedding bouquets were modeled. Rich commented on the different bouquets and the techniques used by the designers to create them. At this time, the designers were handed envelopes with the Surprise Situation. There is simply not a wedding florist around that has not experienced a “surprise situation” that adds to the excitement and thrill of being an event planner, wedding specialist, or wedding floral designer!!! The designers opened the envelopes to discover the “surprise situation”. You have the allotted time limit to create chair décor for a wedding reception. Chiavari chairs were provided by Daryl & Co. to each designer for this design. Within 30 minutes, each competitor created a very unique chair adornment. Some created swags of ribbon and flowers while others created very sculptural groupings of flowers that adorned the backs of the chairs. Decorative aluminum wire was used to create scrolls and swirls as well as the mechanic for attaching the designs to the chairs. Within 30 minutes, beautiful and unique chair décor was created by the designers. The chairs were moved for judging. The designers were dismissed and went to sit at the table that featured their design.

Rich called on each designer to explain his or her concept, talk about the prop they created, and explain their designs. One by one, each designer stood and spoke about the design that graced the table that they were sitting at with other attendees. The visions and stories they shared about their unique props and designs, made them come to life with explanation. Each one a special floral interpretation of “Sweet Beginnings”.

Along with the Texas Cup Competition, other Stars of Texas were recognized. Scholarship recipients, Texas Floral Education Underwriters, President Susan Weatherford, Volunteer of the Year Elaine Carrell, Expo chair Gayle Johnson AAF TMFA and Texas Floral Events Coordinator Lynn Lary McLean AAF AIFD PFCITMF, Hall of Fame Award to Rio Roses, Achievement Award to Jimmy Klepac and finally the Texas Cup. Rebecca Sherman AIFD was recognized as the Texas Cup Chair. All the competitors were recognized and applauded for jobs well done. Awards were announced. Awarded 3rd Place was Nora Cisneros and 2nd Place went to Alan Masters. The 2015 Texas Cup Winner was announced. Chris Collum took 1st Place and won the Texas Cup. The evening ended on a “Floral High”.



2nd Place Alan Masters AIFD TMFA



Rich Salvaggio AAF AIFD PFCI



3rd Place Nora Cisneros TMFA



## *Basic 101...Anything but Basic*

### **DESIGNER J SCHWANKE AAF AIFD PFCITMF**

Texas Floral Education Underwriters Acolyte Designs, Inc | Chrysal Americas | Design Master | Greenleaf Wholesale Florists Priest International, Inc | Rio Roses | Southern Floral Co | TSFA Growers Division

J Schwanke AAF AIFD CFD PFCITMF was assisted by Josh Anderson TMFA, Kassie Baker TMF and Melaine Hugle

Written by Nora Cisneros TMFA

Early Saturday morning was the “Anything But Basic” superstar J Schwanke AAF AIFD PFCITMF! J always starts out his programs as if no one has ever heard of him, even then you felt like you were hearing his story for the first time. He told the story of his grandparents Carnation Joe Green and his wife Lily, his mother going into labor during a snow storm and he was born at the Nebraska State Floral Convention. His story is one for the record book. His blood definitely runs a deep shade of green.

J spoke about what the board of TSFA wanted out of his shows in 2015 at the Texas Floral Events including this Texas Floral Expo. They wanted tips and tricks for the floral industry. His most recent publication that he has penned is called Bloom 365, a compilation of 365 every day tips and tricks, that’s one for every day of the year. Dianna told him, they only wanted 101 tips during his show. Tricky you would think! Here a just a few of them:

1. His first arrangement that he brought out was sitting on a big beautiful urn. The urn looked like it had a lot of flowers but it only had about half of the flowers that you thought it did because it was built on a wreath ring. There was not a center vertical axis as in most arrangements. It was empty. This surprised almost the whole room. It looked like it was packed full, but it wasn’t.
2. He made a huge cross out of an 18” cross, by wrapping the oasis cross with anchor tape several times and then inserting layers of long extended delphinium and larkspur out of the edges of the cross shape. He gave the cross the wow factor.
3. A great way to change a clear vase is to take a bucket, fill the bucket with water, spray your favorite color of spray paint into the water, dip a clean vase into the water and paint mixture and wallah! you have a beautiful painted vase. Be sure to spray on clear finish on top of the paint.
4. The fastest easiest way to add ribbon to a oasis wreath is to take the spool of ribbon and a wooden pick, without any hesitation, press on the ribbon with the wooden pick, pressing into the foam, carefully pull out the stick.  
Works every time.
5. Customer wants a plant but wants a lot of fresh flowers included. Tired of that look with lots of water tubes poked in around the plant? Try decorating the plant by using a wedding bouquet holder, designing a unique arrangement and then inserting the handle into the dirt.

Guess you will need to see J in person or purchase his book on line to get the rest of his tips and tricks. Thanks J, as you always say, “Always...Flowers”.

# Pure Inspiration | DESIGNER HITOMI GILLIAM AIFD

Gold Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Teleflora | Flowers provided by Bronze Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter L&G Wholesale  
Hitomi Gilliam AIFD was assisted by Team Leader Susan Tate AIFD, Aki Ishiguro, Kiyomi Kurihara, Ceclia Manouel AIFD TMF, Maxine Schaffer, and Haseeba Sharwani

Written by Rey Rodriguez TMFA

Pure inspiration is definitely a great adjective to use when describing floral artist Hitomi Gilliam AIFD. The stage was set with partially completed arrangements as if someone stepped out of a flower shop on a lunch break, and was waiting for the floral elves to make the magic happen. And, oh did the magic happen. As Hitomi took the stage, you could feel the energy level in the room sky rocket. We all sat on the edge of our seats.

As the program begins, Hitomi shows how easy it is to transform a small orchid plant into a plant structure that could easily bring in 3 or 4 times the original value. She adds smyca branches purchased from Ikea, and takes the orchid plant and wraps sheet moss around the root ball and wraps that with silver bullion wire, then rests those plants into the smyca branches. As she does this Hitomi tells us that the structure can easily be created by anyone at the flower shop, and you can have a few of them around the store so that when you need one for a plant you can quickly cover the root balls of the plant with moss and wire and suspend that plant in its new home.

While designing, Hitomi encouraged all of us to learn to be more efficient with our time. She reminds us that we all have value, and that our time is important, and that we should make certain that we do more with our time than just make flower arrangements. In an effort to encourage the crowd to be more creative with designs, and to think outside the box more, she begins to insert flowers into her pre-made structures. The florist assistants busy themselves by adding flowers to her arrangements. Under her direction her new on stage “pop up” shop is busy producing one of a kind, unique floral arrangements. Not only does Hitomi show us all how you can transform a simple elegant vase into a one of a kind keepsake but she also uses open space and flat wire, adds clematis to the structure along with phalenopsis orchids, and poof! the once flat wire has become a beautiful trellis adorned with flowers. Hitomi always helps to educate, she not only tells you about how she attaches the flowers, she also explains and shows how she crafts her one of a kind containers. Hitomi can be magical

and transform not only flat wire into a trellis, but she showed us how she took midelino and foam core and crafted a gorgeous picture frame and wall hanging perfect for any commercial installation. Each structure supporting flowers in water picks or air plants such as tillandsia.

Hitomi, a true teacher, points out that it is our responsibility to help educate our consumers, that some of our key words should be organic, and sustainable. After the show I heard different florists discussing how they could use her large designs in their own shop or how they were inspired to recreate it in their own way. As any good teacher would do, she reminded us that knowledge is power, and that attending educational Expos such as this one, will benefit each floral designer. We just have to be willing to learn. Not only is Hitomi an educator, and entertaining to watch she is always inspirational as well. I had the opportunity to sit a bit longer and sit in on a talk with the designer, just so that I could take more notes, and she told us that when we make contributions to organizations we should always give our donation with an invoice so that they learn what the value of our art is worth. She states that we should associate floral design with fashion. When you are purchasing items for your store you need to think about fashion. Don't fill your store with one of every color, and size. We should have a plan, and keep to a color scheme. We should learn to limit our selves to what we purchase. Always try to develop your concept before you over buy. She stressed how valuable our time is, and told us its okay to be that expensive designer.

With great designs comes great service, lots of knowledge and being more efficient with all this, we can become better florists. We need to share our ability with the consumers and be more open to help other designers in an effort to learn and to educate. Hitomi reminds us to think out side the box, and let every moment inspire us. She is quoted in saying, “inspiration surrounds you almost every moment of your day whether you know it or not.. you just have to be open to capture these opportunities.” I am so glad I was able to be among the crowd to witness her art in motion.



# Making Every Day's Life Extraordinary

DESIGNER PIM VAN DEN AKKER

Platinum Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter BloomNet  
Flowers provided by Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter  
Zoom!Roses

Pim van den Akker was assisted by Team Leader Pat Shirley-Becker AIFD TMFA,  
Michael McCarthy AIFD and Fabian Salcedo  
Written by Rey Rodriguez TMFA

When you see the works of Pim van den Akker, you would never expect to hear that floristry was not his first choice as a career. The stage is set, the audience sees floral design tools, structures created from twigs, flat cane, bleached branches and clear security ties, and even apples. Each time you would let your eyes roam the length of the stage you are in awe of all the creative structures waiting to be spoken about and decorated with flowers.

And so it begins, each structure taken one by one, telling a story. As Pim inserts his flowers, his hands are rapidly moving across the structures as he inserts just a few flowers he transforms the structure into a beautiful work of art. Pim reminds us that it is important to smile, and enjoy what we do. We are all asked "what is the most important thing about design?" The crowd sits quietly, he asks for our participation, and one by one different people give a response, but the correct answer he was looking for was YOU. He states that we are the most important part of a design, when we design we need to create for us, not for others. He feels that when you create for others it blocks the creativity. We are the only one that needs to be happy about what we are creating. He suggests that we consider what we do, and if we consider what we do as our passion he feels that we need to transfer that passion into our work, into our art. He goes on to say that the art of floristry is not difficult. It's actually very simple.

As he demonstrates just how simple each single insertion is, and how every placement of product is important, he manages to copiously make one arrangement after another. Each arrangement more different and unique than the next. In the background we see flat cane that resembles what appears as a rib cage of an animal. We see green apples pierced with thin rods, and then he adds gorgeous green anthuriums and mango callas. Every time he

tells us about his technique used he tells us to create with a smile. I think it interesting that he feels there is NO right way to design and No wrong way to design, he feels that we should create for our self gratification, and expresses that floristry is like breathing, it should be rhythmic and magical.

As he crafted each arrangement, using melted wax on top of hanging amaranthus, and tack 2000 on the blooms of pampass grass, he states that as a designer we should not be afraid to fall or to make mistakes, that those mistakes will lead us to succeed. Reminding that what we do has to make sense, almost as if we were painting by numbers. We should find our own rhythm, but be open to learning from others. He suggests that when you are working on an arrangement to close your eyes for 5 minutes and when you open your eyes, write down the first things you see...then ask yourself if those are the things you want to see, to help develop your strengths and find your weaknesses.

As a child Pim set goals, he wanted to be the Best in the World, and he wanted to write a book. Floristry opened up his world to possibilities. He tells us that as a child he was bullied, so he attended a special school, and when he was offered his options for classes, at the time he thought he would take the easy route so he signed up for a floral class; I think I can say for all of us that we are so glad he did take that class. While studying, he saw a presentation by a Belgian Floral Designer and he purchased his book and was truly inspired by him. At this point he knew how he would spend his life. Pim would create with flowers and make people smile, including himself.

As I was taking notes, I was impressed as he made a small arrangement, and he draped peelings of a flower stem over top of the flowers and it looked so graceful and complimented the arrangement. I thought to myself if I would have tried that I am not certain anyone would have appreciated the art behind what was created, but having seen him do it, I better appreciated the ability to try something different. I witnessed him stepping just outside the lines of what most of us know as floristry and doing what most of us would ever consider doing. He was willing to try new ideas, and concepts so that he could create something pleasing to him. He made himself smile.

van den Akker reminded us to take value in who we are, to invest in our self, to share ideas and to inspire. Ironically, I had previously told someone a story of how I crafted an arrangement with my eyes closed once, and during his onstage program, Pim tells us that we should like something only if we truly like it. He suggests that we design blindfolded. He states that when you complete your design if you like it and truly like it then proceed but if you don't then redo it and try it all over again till you truly like it.

I am always impressed with his use of texture, he can turn something so rough and brittle look so soft with the addition of graceful orchids, or wool, or with the addition of hot wax. He will strip the leaves off of a vine and add the vine to the arrangement it is no longer just some twigs in a vase, or twigs attached with security ties. I have had the pleasure of seeing him on stage more than once and this experience was more up close and personal, and you could experience the detail of his work so much better. I was completely moved by the experience.

Pim is quoted for saying, "there is a story behind all of this which is a story thick with passion and pleasure. It is a story best told by each in his own way, but always with a shared vision, always wanting our sector to sparkle and letting the world around us experience what the beauty is and what the floral beauty can do."



# Parties...Basic Yet Brilliant

## DESIGNER JACOB MCCALL AAF AIFD CFD FSMD

Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter The Elite Flower  
Jacob McCall AAF AIFD CFD FSMD was assisted by Sandy Ramirez TMFA  
and Corey Harbour AIFD PFCI  
Written by Dov E. Kupfer AIFD CFD

How do you make a party or event a very memorable time for all in attendance? America's representative to the Interflora World Cup, Jacob McCall AAF AIFD CFD FSMD, presented his program and shared his innovative ideas and vision with attendees of this year's Texas Floral Expo. Basic concepts with brilliant interpretations of several different parties and events were used to create several different vignettes on stage.

Jacob began his presentation with a tall, urn and column design featuring the complimentary colors of yellow and purple. Jacob explained that his trademark is use of strong color in his designs. The design he featured had a long garland of Sprengeri enhanced with yellow callas and purple accents. The urn was filled with purple gladioli, stock and orchids and incorporated a focal of red cabbage and deep purple carnations. This design was made up of Color, strong lines and movement as well as vegetables.

The next vignette featured orbs of carnations in an analogous combination of pink, burgundy, and peach accented with purple pink orchids. Two round cocktail tables were covered with beautifully textured linens. Jacob explained that the use of different linens within a venue will add to the drama of the event. One was burgundy and flower textured with the other a peach leaf petal design. Accenting these were repurposed broken umbrella spines covered in fuchsia aluminum wire accented with orchid florets. A final touch was dianthus confetti made from carnation petals. Jacob went around the tables and spread it all along the floor of the tables. A fun party look was created using color, texture and wonderful accents.

Jacob spoke about a new trend in party or events which is the "Celebration of Life", a sympathy event, honoring the life of a deceased loved one. He created this vignette in memory of his great grandmother. A white rocking chair was surrounded by arrangements of all white flowers and candles. He added white gerbera while the music played. At the end, he set a large bouquet of white callas on the seat of the rocking chair. He explained that the celebration of life events incorporate personal objects that belonged to the deceased or had some accent that would represent them or the family. On the back of the chair were 17 ribbons with love knots tied in them, representing family members. A beautiful tribute to remember a loved one.

"Pretty in Pink" was the title of his next party design. Based on the movie Steel Magnolias, Jacob did an upscale, more modern and trendy version of Shelby's "Blush and Bashful" look in the true Southern style of design. Two cocktail tables were covered with pink satin and pink glitter table linens. One table featured a large urn filled with gladioli, roses, lilies and Gerrondo hybrid gerbera. A large orb covered with magnolia leaves and corsage was the focal point of this L shaped Western Line design. The second table featured large candelabra with a floral in the center and a wreath of flowers on the table. Strands of crystals dripped from the arms of the candelabra. Votive candles accented the tables to complete this monochromatic pink look.

The last look was created on stage. A large wooden table was decorated with two large urn arrangements. A beautiful analogous fall color scheme was used to create the look. Choosing the color of Happiness, Orange, flowers in oranges, golds, yellows, browns, peaches, salmons, and coppers were featured. Two chair back designs were

created to show chair accenting ideas. A large garland made from evergreens and paper flowers and paper pomps was the "pièce de résistance" of this vignette. Jacob described making the garland was a "leap of faith" and a step out of his comfort zone, as he had never made one till now. "Evergreens can be used all year long. It's all in the details" he said. Using favorite flowers and details adds to the beauty of an event. Additional to the garland were accents of led candles and half grapefruits with gerbera centers.



"Details are key to beautiful event presentations. They are so important." Jacob spoke about scents and smells and lighting and how these enhance the event. Lighting on tables, walls and fixtures, and how becoming friends with venues and their directors can help add to the ambiance of an event. The room darkened and the chandelier changed color to a soft peach tone, accenting the entire vignette. A beautiful presentation.

Jacob's presentation was wonderful, awe inspiring, and innovative. He gave you a new look on parties and how to make them more dramatic and memorable!

# Make Change Work | SPEAKER RANDY PENNINGTON

Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Vickery Wholesale Greenhouse

Written by Lana King TMFA

With this year's Texas Floral Expo being all about CHANGE, how appropriate was this presentation at Sunday's Expo. OK – we all know it is sometimes a little hard to get up and attend the first presentation of the day at 8:30, but for those who did, we soon realized we were not going to be snoozing during this one! We all enjoyed a fantastic breakfast that morning as our speaker was introduced.

We all woke up to an exquisite setting created by Debbie Gordy AAF AIFD TMFA and Alan Masters AIFD, Compton's Florist in La Porte, Texas. The roses used throughout the designs were the inspiration that led us into

the "Everything's Coming Up Roses" new varieties that followed "Wake Up Texas"!

Randy was given two introductions – the first by Floral Events Coordinator, Lynn Lary McLean AAF AIFD PFCITMF, and the second by a letter personally written by Pat Berry of Vickery Wholesale Greenhouse. Pat could not be present for the breakfast, but wanted to do a special, personal introduction of our speaker. Randy is a business performance veteran, award-winning author, and an expert in helping organizations deliver positive results in a world of accelerating change. He opened Pennington Performance Group in 1990, and he's been helping leaders and organizations build strong cultures and navigate change ever since.

Randy came up on stage with a bang!! He challenged us to "make your brain hurt."



When he got married, he told us his wife said she would never ask him to change, but she would expect him to continue to adapt. Think about that – how you might do your business a little differently? It is a challenging world out there today. We need to be FASTER; BETTER; CHEAPER; and FRIENDLIER. It doesn't matter how good we used to be. The ability to quickly change and adapt in pursuit of your vision is the difference between excellence and irrelevance.

However, the challenge is how do we quickly change and adapt? We all know most of us aren't good at change. But, it's a mindset. How do we go to work every day and get better at what we do? Are you READY TO MAKE A CHANGE? I can't imagine anyone who isn't wanting to change his or her business and grow for the better. After listening to Randy, we should have all been inspired to go home and start instituting changes in our flower shops. What can we do?? Don't be afraid to GO FIRST. Get on more social media since we all know it's not going away. Treat everyone as you would want to be treated – with a smiling face; a "thank you for shopping here"; have a great day. We all need to continually change and adapt to stay competitive.

"The present should be guided more by the future than the past." People support what they help to create.

In a marketplace that is constantly changing, this inspirational speaker shared steps to design and implement a strategy to get meaningful results. It's so easy to get motivated at a presentation, then go home and think about what we want or need to change, but take our time getting that process put in place. I challenge all of you to start right now by making just one change at your shop during the slower part of the year – whether it is the way you handle customers, perhaps it might be updating your designs, or the way you reach out to your customer base – maybe on your website or Facebook or other social media. What will set you apart from your competition?

Make that change work for you – and everyone else!

# The Sweet Smell of Success | The Business of Roses

## SPEAKER

**OSCAR FERNANDEZ**

Gold Level Texas Floral Education  
Underwriter Rio Roses

Written by Susan Weatherford

This presentation explained exactly how all of the beautiful varieties of roses come to market. The attendees were eager to hear all the detail and work involved in order to produce one single variety, the process from Breeder to Propagator to Grower. We learned about Greenhouse design, the amount of water necessary per hectare, beds per hectare and plants per bed. In addition to learning about the growing process we were taken into the world of grading and packaging the flowers. Oscar explained the grading tables have evolved over the years. We learned about specifications and that we should all have an expectation for our flowers.

This presentation was scheduled to run 45 minutes but could have gone double that. All the attendees now have a better appreciation of what it takes to produce a rose.



# A Dozen Roses... A Dozen Ways

## DESIGNER

**JEROME RASKA**

**AAF AIFD PFCI CFD**

Silver Level Texas Floral Education

Underwriter Syndicate Sales

Flowers provided by Gold Level Texas Floral  
Education Underwriter Rio Roses

Jerome Raska AAF AIFD PFCI CFD was assisted  
by Cheryl Vaughan TMFA

Written by Dov E. Kupfer AIFD CFD

A dozen roses in a vase. The way we all sell them.

Can we do something to the standard arrangement that will make it different?

That was the premise for the break-out

session and program by Jerome Raska

AAF AIFD PFCI CFD. Jerome introduced the attendees to new ways to create designs using a dozen roses. Fun and innovative designs were created using different design, techniques, containers and accents.

Entering the room, you were treated to a myriad of designs using the standard dozen roses with a twist. Fun colors and containers added to the excitement of the program. Jerome began by saying "it's about education, it's about you!" He talked about proper care and handling of the precious flowers. Spoke about the different products available from Syndicate sales to keep the roses in pristine condition, from start to finish.

"Stop the Madness! Change how you sell roses! You can't keep doing the same thing over and over again, and expect different results." Jerome made these comments as he spoke about creating different, exciting, and "distinctively yours" rose designs. Selling by the arrangement and not by the number of flowers was a suggestion he made. He said you need to educate your customer about roses. Train them to buy roses differently. With that, he began to show the different arrangements he made.

Tall vases with a dozen roses hand tied in different colors were on the back tables of the stage area. These were later given away at the end of the program. A design featuring three black vases connected with curly willow, filled with groups of a dozen roses, callas and assorted foliage was accented with hot pink midolino arcs. Another design was created using a carnation orb with the roses emanating from it atop a glass cylinder with trailing amaranthus and other foliage. Another design used the dozen roses in white, inserted into a curly willow ring that surrounded a cloud of gypsophila accented with mini callas and pearl garlanding.

Other designs featuring the roses included containers covered with yarns and pearl garlanding, unique glass and ceramic containers and baskets, design styles using the roses as linear elements, and other fun and unique treatments. A fun design was made in a bark covered container with a dozen yellow red bicolored roses in a mound, curly willow branch ends horizontally placed under the roses, and twisted bark wire sheltering the design with butterflies accenting it. A bamboo structure was used to create another unique look. Miniature bottles on a tray were filled with pink roses and deep purple ranunculus.

Another design in a glass cylinder incorporated a dozen white roses and hydrangea hand tied to one side and sheaf of white callas on the other surrounded by silver flat wire loops and twists. Many other designs were shown. A quick foam coverage technique was demonstrated using aspidistra leaves, piercing them and then inserting into the foam. A unique wrap was shown using newspaper and raffia ties. Jerome called this "Hot Off the Press". A fun way to present loose flowers. He spoke about the business end of selling as well. Educating the consumer and making the proper sales. Putting photos of the unique designs on your web site. Using special promotions such as National Rose Month (June), and targeting the new generation of consumers by making flowers fun!

Jerome's program taught us that we need to teach our customers about roses, how to care for the designs they receive and to know roses by their names so when ordered, they will know the type and color that will be used. Selling in a way that will boost the confidence of the consumer and make us the consummate professionals. I will end the article with this. He suggested these words when selling. "I will create something that is distinctive and unique that everyone will comment on."



# First Impressions... Endless Possibilities

## DESIGNER

**MATT WOOD AIFD PFCI**

Bronze Level Texas Floral Education  
Underwriter Winward

Matt Wood AIFD PFCI was assisted by  
Chris Collum AIFD CFD TMF,  
Rebecca Sherman AIFD, and  
Tom Williams TMF

Written by by Dov E. Kupfer AIFD CFD

Permanent Botanicals have become a trend in today's design world. They are seen in home décor and interiors in homes and offices, as well as restaurants and shops worldwide. Designs created with lifelike flowers are the passion of designer and the "Master" of permanent botanicals Matt Wood AIFD PFCI. Matt created florals of permanent botanicals and taught the attendees many new techniques to make them creatively and efficiently, with a minimum of time and labor.

The program began with a dim lit stage and a large urn on top of a column in the center. Within minutes the urn was filled with a floral wreath, dogwood branches and bunches of flowers. The lights came up to reveal a large and lush bouquet of pink, peach and ivory colored flowers with trailing greens. The vine wreath encircled the flowers and branches. An incredible first impression for sure! Matt told us about his early flower shop days and how his love of flowers turned to the love of permanent botanicals. He said he did not replace fresh flowers but creates with the permanents because that has become his passion. He creates floral decorative accessories. He makes floral art. With permanent botanicals the possibilities are endless.

The techniques used to create the large urn arrangement were revealed when Matt discussed the construction techniques of his designs. The urn was filled with styrofoam to just above the lip. In the center he inserted pieces of PVC pipe that were covered with large foliage leaves. The base was then covered with the foliage and flower covered wreath, the dogwood branches inserted into the tubes and bunches of flowers added to finish the design. He said any type of branches could be inserted into the PVC pipe inserts to change out the look per season or event. Same with the flower bunches. This transitioned into his discussion of merchandising.

Matt explained how he keeps bunches of permanent botanicals on hand in color sequence and in color combinations. He showed how he does this with pallet boards he creates from magazine photos and digital photos he takes of fabrics and patterns he sees. Inspiration boards are then created and he can show how the colors and flowers will work well together. Large boards of the enlarged photos of the patterns and textures are then used to enhance displays of the arrangements and accessories to create unusual and exciting vignettes.

The program continued with Matt showing pyramid shaped topiary designs. Made in large containers, 4 2x2s are inserted into the corners of



the foliage filled container, bent towards the center creating a triangle and the top covered with a terra cotta pot that has a finial attached to it, to create a decorative top. The poles are then covered with strands of foliage and ivy, all attached with zip ties. Bunches of permanent botanicals are also attached with the zip ties and the designs are complete. A few fresh hand tied designs were also added to show the versatility of these topiaries.

Designs, created with metal fencing in urns, were shown next. The fencing was rolled to create tubes and then inserted into foam filled urns. Flower bunches and foliage were added to the urns and some were zip tied to the top of the fence tubes. He spoke about the flowers used and how they are hand colored and curled by the employees of Winward. Flowers are replicated by tearing them apart and studying them. They are then recreated permanently and put on the market.

Matt showed the permanent tulip drop-ins and how to create hand tied designs using the permanent flowers. He created a cascade design by adding trailing flowers to the round hand tied design. He then created a two tiered epergne garden style design with foliage plants and bunched flowers. A large curly willow armature design was next. Blue hydrangea were put in the container in a large ring. The branches were semi covered with fern and foliage stems. Bunches of tulips, ranunculus, lilies and other flowers were then just dropped into the middle to finish the design. Several other designs and techniques were then shown. The use of tied branches, focal and linear axes and other design tricks were discussed. A final piece where the branches were placed in horizontal lines was created. The birch covered container was filled with magnolia leaves and flowers. The last part of the design was making it look like a handled basket. The extended branches were brought up and connected to form a handle, encompassing the rest of the arrangement. Pussy willow branches were added as well as trailing ivy stems, finishing the look.

Matt's program was inspirational and innovative. He gave a new understanding to the use of permanent botanicals. Many new ideas and techniques were shared with the audience. I'll end this with a quote from Matt. "Be passionate about design and flowers. Make a floral art statement."

# Flowers Styled for the White House

DESIGNER LAURA DOWLING

Presentation underwritten by the Texas Floral Endowment

Flowers provided by Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Southern Floral Company

Laura Dowling was assisted by Ken Senter AIFD and Lisa Schuessler

Written by Dov E Kupfer AIFD CFD

How does one create florals for the most important people in the United States for their personal use and for all the events they are involved in? Being the chief floral designer for the White House and for President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, was the job of Laura Dowling for over six years, until she retired in February of this year. During the Texas Floral Expo and her presentation, Laura shared her fascinating story of her six year tenure in the People's House.

Laura created incredible designs that showcased her style that was influenced by the French Classic designs. She told the audience about her beginnings and how, while on a trip to Paris, she was walking along the streets and found inspiration from the designs of famed French designer Christian Tortu. She began to buy books on French design and took classes with the French designer. She learned how to create the French style that she has made her own.

Upon her return to the United States, she opened a design studio in Alexandria, VA. She worked in the studio part time, creating designs for friends and special clients. After the White House Florist, Nancy Clarke retired in 2009, an opportunity presented itself. Upon the insistence of her husband, Laura submitted her application and portfolio. She was called for an interview. A month later she was called back, with the other top two applicants, for hands on design evaluation. During the four hour evaluation, she was asked to create three designs. Something for a "State Dinner", a design for the Blue room and for the Oval Office. Once completed, Mrs. Obama entered the design area and discussed with Laura her presentation. Laura was then hired as the Chief Floral Designer for the White House.

Laura told us the story of how flowers became popular and needed in the White House. It was during the time of President Franklin Pierce in 1850. He used flowers in the state rooms to lure his wife into those rooms. During those early years, floral arrangements were very formal in design. It wasn't until the Kennedy Administration, when Jaqueline Kennedy began using looser and more relaxed arrangements based on the classic European and Flemish styles of design. The look in the White House changed.

Laura's responsibilities as the Chief Florist were many. She was in charge of the design staff, floral orders and procurement, daily floral deliveries, event and party planning and execution of the florals for all the events and parties as well as delivering, set ups, and pick-ups. The arrangements were repurposed after events and she was in charge of that as well. She had 7 days a week, 100 hour work weeks. Always busy and on the go, Laura was also in charge of the holiday décor for all the holidays. She kept a chronicle of events and an event calendar, many of which were planned 6 or more months in advance.

During her presentation, she made hand tied bouquets, like those that were gifted by the First Lady. She talked about the different styles of design used in the different rooms as well as the colors used in the rooms and had arrangements on stage that were examples of those designs. The Blue room used monochromes of blues and purples. The Red room colors were reds and purples with trailing ivies and willow baskets. The Green room's colors were whites and greens. The use of fruits and vegetables was also mentioned. Vegetable bouquets were popular. She made a radish bouquet on stage. Foliage covered containers were a signature look and several different styles were shown. Laura's designs were traditional, yet transitional. She spoke about depth, as in the different rooms and depth in the designs. "Look into nature...copy it, but stay simple. Become more aware of interiors, as related to home décor and fashion. Think about your own background and that will lead you to your design style." She talked about the new technologies. "Invigorate and excite people with color, scent and movement." Many ideas were shared. Ken created a wreath incorporating apples and Lisa made a hanging flower "boule". Urn and basket designs were shown. A great and inspirational program.

Laura Dowling's six year tenure in the White House was an incredible floral journey. She is a very inspirational and talented designer. Her program was Beautiful, awe inspiring and educational. She left us with one more thought and I will end this article with it. "Dream Big, Work Hard and Anything is Possible!"



# Roses On Parade

DESIGNER J. KEITH WHITE AIFD

Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter FTD, Inc.  
Flowers provided by Gold Level Texas Floral Education  
Underwriter Pikes Peak of Texas

J. Keith White was assisted by Team Lead Marcia Wilson,  
Lucas Chavez and Patricia Gomez AIFD

Written by Annie Fentz Smith

“Roses on Parade” presented by J. Keith White AIFD CFD was the stunning grand finale of a great, inspirational TSFA Texas Floral Expo weekend! Keith is the Lead Floral Designer for FTD sponsored VIP Entries at the “Tournament of Roses Parade” of Pasadena, California.



The theme of the weekend was “From Basics to Brilliance”, and Keith certainly launched us into brilliance with a spectacular parade of unique inspiration, explosions of color and sound that exceeded all expectations!

The parade entry began as the music boomed, gymnasts, ribbon dancers and hoop dancers from Dance Works of Sugar Land, TX, twirled up the aisle. Suddenly, the rhythms of the Stephen F. Austin High School Bulldog Band Drum Line of Sugar Land, outfitted in bright fuchsia leis, brought a sense of anticipation, as we all began to realize this was no ordinary floral presentation. We were about to be treated to an extravaganza in creativity, color and floral design!

Keith’s own intricately carved antique Chinese Sedan Chair, once used as a method of transportation for the upper class to travel in, was marched up the aisle, lavishly draped with Roses, Anthurium, Gerberas and other flowers in vibrant shades of orange, pink, yellow and green. Apples and oranges hung from garlands of flowers and spheres of green Roses swung from the corners. Meanwhile, dancers handed out roses to guests.

“One little item can inspire you when you study it.” Something as simple as an Asian ginger jar can bring many images to mind.

He brought forth a huge fan of Oncidium and Mokara orchids. “The fan is the quintessential design of Asian influence. A woven bouquet of Mokara Orchids was shown along with a colorful jewelry piece to inspire us.

The wedding themed segment began as Haseeba Sharwani danced and

swirled with a huge bouquet to the song, “The Only Girl”. A white wedding carriage was revealed, extravagantly festooned in textures and shades of pinks, purples and green. Roses, Tulips, Hypericum Berries, Stock, Ornamental Kale, Hydrangea, Orchids, Protea, Callas and crystals dripped lavishly from every angle of this beautifully appointed wedding carriage! Keith showed ways to bring an “illusion of wonderment” by hiding elements within the arrangement that bring a “Wow! Factor” and make people ask, “What is that?” “Every design is special that goes out of your shop”, he encouraged, “Even if it is carnations, each stem has a personality. There should be a surprise element in every bouquet”.

We were then treated to one design after another, each with impeccable detail and visual yumminess. Sitting on the stage, another treasure from Keith’s collection, an 1880’s Doctors Buggy, acquired from a hardware store in Austin, TX. A Wild West Boa, in shades of orange and rust accompanied a Texas size hand tied bouquet complete with deer antlers and mosaic tiles dangled down. Keith spoke of repurposed items and found objects for inspiration as the large Accent Décor gold vessels was adorned with a ring of florals complete with found antique bottles suspended, antlers and a recycled wreath form. Keith spoke of the things that inspire him. “It’s all about progress in the world, we always want to be inspired.” “I’ve always been inspired in the

stands at a parade...for a moment...for an instant...it’s about the flower ...It’s all for that special moment.”

Keith’s goal was to inspire us by designs, colors, textures and objects that we see. Everyone walked away, stirred and motivated!

“It has to be magic, in this business. And you have to be confident. Even if you are afraid, GO FOR IT!”

— J. Keith White AIFD CFD

Two tickets for the “VIP Tournament of Roses Parade, 2016” were awarded at the end of “Roses on Parade Program”.

Congratulations to Debbie Woltmann TMFA, with Brenham Floral, Brenham, TX for winning! Special thanks to FTD, Southwest Airlines and Texas State Florists Association for sponsoring this fabulous gift package!

“I am so excited to have won. Always has been on my bucket list to attend the Rose Parade. Every year I watch the parade to see the flowers. Can’t believe I will see it in person. And Oh my! Such a wonderful package—flight, rental car, accommodations, parking pass, tours of the cars, carriages and floats and game tickets. Thanks everyone, TSFA, FTD, Keith White, Southwest Airlines, Fiesta Floats! I will take pictures.” — Debbie Woltmann TMFA

A very special “Thank You” for everyone who contributed to such a stunning program!

# Life Changing Mechanics and Techniques for Today's Florist

## DESIGNER HITOMI GILLIAM AIFD

Gold Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Teleflora

Flowers provided by Bronze Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter L&G Wholesale

Hitomi Gilliam AIFD was assisted by Team Leader Susan Tate AIFD, Aki Ishiguro, Kiyomi Kurihara, Ceclia Manouel AIFD TMF, Maxine Schaffer, and Haseeba Sharwani  
Written by Nora Cisneros TMFA

The incomparable Hitomi Gilliam AIFD, presented "Life Changing Mechanics and Techniques for Today's Florist". This class was the final class of the day. TSEFA was concerned about the students missing dinner time, so goodie bags of bottles of water and a few snacks were provided.

Each of the students were able to choose a container, the choice of the container depended on which arrangement you were going to create. The tall container was to create an arrangement with black river rocks basing birch branches with mendellino sticks weaved through using her techniques. You should be able to see water above the stones to make it look like a pond. The shorter container is similar except using water pearls atop the oasis to give it a more sophisticated party look. Each of the arrangements start out the same way by gluing with a even layer of pan glue on the bottom of a snug fit piece of hard styrofoam. The styrofoam should be about half the height of the container. Pan glue should be used, because you can get a even layer of the glue so there are no air pockets underneath where the water can get underneath to pop up the foam. Insert with glue dipped birch branches into the styrofoam, pushing the branches all the way to the bottom of the container. Insert a short layer of oasis foam on top of the styrofoam and then lay black rocks on top so that all you see is river rocks and add water so that you see the water. Weaving the mendalino sticks into the branches, adding flowers into the water and into water picks wired into the branches. The smaller container is made the same layer of styrofoam about halfway up with the branches and then pour in the pearls into the container with water. You don't need the oasis because the pearls do the same job, holding your flowers in place.

Hitomi showed the class four different ways to connect the mendalino sticks together to construct abstract weaves. They were to use either bullion wire or raffia. Always use two to three sticks bound together, because it is more interesting. She always has several of these ready made up to use when needed.

Hitomi presented the Japanese Earth concept, bringing a touch of the outside, inside. She uses the three layer method of Japanese Ikebana, which incorporates three equal layers heaven, people and earth. Heaven level are your most expensive flowers up in the top of your arrangement. The flowers near or on the top of your container are the people level, they are considered looking toward the heavens. The Earth level is your basing, the greens and the container.

She said "Nature reflects what you do in life", there is a curvilinear test that shows what kind of designer you are by you drawing a simple spiral on a piece of paper. Which way did you draw it outwardly or inward. This is called Sprial Introspection. Try it, its quite interesting, what are you? Whatever you are Hitomi said, "hold on to the passion in life. If you let the passion go you will never be happy with what ever you create, but if the passion is there you will always be happy." She also quoted Budda, "Perfection is only in your mind, you never reach perfection, only go towards it".



## Develop and Grow Your Own Personal Floral DNA

### MY TIME WITH PIM VAN DEN AKKER

Platinum Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter BloomNet

Flowers provided by Silver Level Texas Floral Education Underwriter Zoom!Roses

Pim van den Akker was assisted by Team Leader Pat Shirley-Becker AIFD TMFA, Michael McCarthy AIFD and Fabian Salcedo

Written by Sheri Jentsch TMFA

"Man... I connected with that Dude!" I know at this moment, all of my English teachers are cringing. That isn't the proper way one is supposed to start any written word. However, I was asked to write an article following Pim van den Akker's Hands-on workshop: Develop and Grow Your Own Personal Floral DNA at the Texas Floral Expo held in Sugar Land, Texas. And man, I connected with that dude. Pim told us in the beginning that it was not going to be your ordinary hands-on workshop and he was correct. I did not truly comprehend what he

*Continued on next page*

meant by that when he first said it. After a hot minute of Pim speaking, it hit me like a ton of bricks. This wasn't going to be just a workshop. It was going to be an emotional, psychological design experience. Everybody knows that Pim is unique in the way that he uses new materials and techniques to create floral art. What they don't know is his complete understanding of self which forms the methodology he uses to create his life work. It became very clear to me that Floristry is everything to Pim van den Akker. The creative process within Floristry is his work which became his passion, his escape, his savior and his happiness.

Pim began the workshop by telling us that he hoped we would never look at floristry the same way again. He explained that everyone in class had the talent to be a great designer but we had trust our own capabilities to grow. A good designer has to understand where their weakness is to become a better designer. He taught us that technical thought is most important and to question what the effect of our work would be. He explained to us the importance of having a creative time table for each project. And most importantly, he showed us that doubt really comes from others.

This is pretty heavy stuff, right? Well, for our first lesson, Pim asked the class to create something. He wanted to know who the designers were that were sitting in front of him. And just like that, he pointed to the other side of the room where all of the amazing product sat and told us to "just go create something". I don't believe any of us moved. It felt like an eternity passed and then he said... "I told you this wasn't going to be like any other hands-on workshop you've ever attended before". He wasn't interested in watching us recreate something of his. He wanted us to create for him, individually. He wanted to see each of our doubts, our fears and our strengths.

Slowly, we all recovered from the shock of having to design for Pim van den Akker. It was truly remarkable to see the creativeness in our group. Pim went on to discuss the importance of investing in capabilities that would make us different and stand out in our marketplace. He showed us amazing new techniques with many varieties of products. He challenged us to think outside the box with the use of ordinary everyday elements. He discussed the importance of knowing who you are individually (psychology) so that we could marry it with design. It is ok to be different. If you are happy with your design, the customer will know. That if you enjoy design and do it with all of your power and energy, your clients will see your passion, love it and buy it. Pim believes that mistakes are beautiful. But if you feel you've made a mistake, one should attempt again and again to make the process better. He said not to give up and in the process you will create a signature look. Pim then asked the class to create a second look... which we had to sell to him. And with that same boyish charm, he points his finger across the room, again where all of the amazing product awaited and says, "Go ahead".

Another recovery period... I think this is when lunch happened.

Pim went on to say that learning starts with us as designers. How willing are you as a designer to commit yourself? Being curious, investigating, willingness to make mistakes will produce cool things and in the process you will make fun discoveries. Pim believes that routine kills floristry. He repeats the importance of sticking with a particular ideas and making it better versus bouncing around from idea to idea. You have to search for moments of happiness and when you find it, feel it. Pim showed that he still gets goosebumps and feels happy after he creates. He believes that energy creates energy and we can create that for our clients.

Finally, Pim asked us to create something from the various techniques he showed us at the workshop. My mind was so blown at that point, that I had nothing to give. I was pushed so far out of my comfort zone, I had literally shut down. And I told Pim this when he came to discuss what I had created. And the beauty of our interaction, at that moment, was that it was ok. Pim asked each of us what we learned that day at his workshop. In a brief synopsis this is what I said... clearly I needed to work on my creative time table. It is ok to be different. Not only is it ok to be different, being different should be nourished. It is ok if you shut down. It is ok to make a beautiful mistake as long as you get back up and keep trying. It is good some times to show your weaknesses. It is important to be happy. And, planning the details when working on a project will make you stronger.

One last thing before I wrap up this article that affected me so profoundly... There is something Pim said that resonates with me still today. He made the comment, "If you are struggling, you are not doing it right". After visiting with him at length about that comment, I realized that if you are struggling, you need to go back to your original idea, rethink your end result and strategy and try it again. In a defining moment, I realized that this is true with life as well. The definition of psychology is: of, pertaining to, dealing with, or affecting the mind, especially as a function of awareness, feeling, or motivation. Pim's hands-on workshop was a psychological design experience. It was new. It was refreshing. It was rewarding. I was honored to be a part of it.

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DALLAS

# TSFA *Calendar of Events*



## SEPTEMBER

- 7 Labor Day
- 13 Grandparents Day
- 14 Rosh Hashanah
- 14- TSFA School of Floral Design Classes
- 17 Houston and Austin, Texas.  
Basic Floral Design | Wedding Design  
Sympathy Design | Floral Management  
Care & Handling of Cut Flowers and  
Foliages. For registration information  
telephone the TSFA office at  
512.834.0361 or online at  
texasschooloffloraldesign.com.
- 21- TSFA School of Floral Design Classes
- 24 Houston and Austin, Texas.  
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Foliages. For registration information  
telephone the TSFA office at  
512.834.0361 or online at  
texasschooloffloraldesign.com.
- 23 Yom Kippur  
First Day of Autumn
- 30 Texas Floral Showcase, Merket Alumni  
Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock,  
Texas featuring Basics 101...Anything  
but Basic by designer J Schwanke.  
Registration information on page 10 of  
this issue or online at tsfa.org



## OCTOBER

- 12 Columbus Day (Observed)
- 12- TSFA School of Floral Design Classes
- 15 Houston and Austin, Texas.  
Basic Floral Design | Wedding Design  
Sympathy Design | Floral Management  
Care & Handling of Cut Flowers  
and Foliages. For registration  
information telephone the TSFA  
office at 512.834.0361 or online at  
texasschooloffloraldesign.com.
- 16 Bosses Day
- 19- TSFA School of Floral Design Classes
- 22 Houston and Austin, Texas.  
Basic Floral Design | Wedding Design  
Sympathy Design | Floral Management  
Care & Handling of Cut Flowers  
and Foliages. For registration  
information telephone the TSFA  
office at 512.834.0361 or online at  
texasschooloffloraldesign.com.
- 31 Halloween



## NOVEMBER

- 1 Daylight Savings Time
- 8 TSFA Board of Directors Meeting
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 26 Thanksgiving



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