

CHRISTINA NEWTON

For my internship, I worked at Hall's Flower Shop and Garden Center in Stone Mountain, Georgia. They are a family owned small retail business that has been passed down from one generation to the next, including some of the customers and employees. I began my internship by sitting with Ms. Cathy, a woman who has been there for 37 years, through two generations of owners and many different point of sales formats. During the first week, she walked me through the system and how to take orders, both over the phone and in person. I learned how to wire out orders, review internet orders, and speak with customers to make sure they get exactly what they want. Over the course of my internship, I worked the phones and helped customers while designing or working in the garden center. It was just a fact of life, everyone gets to answer the phone at some point.

During the entirety of my internship, there was always something new to be learned. The first week and much of the rest of the summer, I learned how to make a dozen roses and kept working on getting the shape correct. I learned how to make many of the everyday pieces that are kept in the display cooler, which changed as spring turned into summer. I also got to try my hand at making some designer's choice arrangements which was fun, but frustrating when it did not turn out how I wanted. The biggest lesson I learned is that greenery helps everything in its place and is the most important part in vase arrangements! I learned how to make packed pieces and sprays for funerals. Ms. Betsy, one of the owners/wedding designers, taught me the best ways to make corsages and boutonnieres and work on wedding flowers. My favorite part was learning how to make flower crowns. It was our goal for the summer to make some designs for



prom and weddings and decide which method we liked the best, which ended up being chenille stems, ribbon, and the hot pot glue.

Scattered throughout the summer, I also got to work in the garden center. Most of the time it was just going out there during their lunch breaks and answering phones and helping customers if they came in. But towards the end of the summer, I actually got to learn some different things out there. Ken, one of the owners/greenhouse master, and Amy, greenhouse manager, taught me how to match poinsettias up for planting doubles and triples and also plant them to grow for Christmas time. Amy also taught me how to make European basket gardens and the importance of using different heights and textures in designs. Marie who is a master gardener and one of the ladies who works in the garden center, taught me how to make terrariums and about different kinds of houseplants. Amy and Marie even denoted a shelf for me to display my designs for customers.



Overall, the time I spent at Hall's has impacted my education and career plans in a great way. They taught me that while it may take me some time to learn new designs, if I just keep working on it and moving it around, it will be a design to be proud of. They have also shown me the different aspects of a retail floral business and how much it takes to maintain. I still would like to have my own floral shop one day, but it will probably be a while before I do. I would like to learn a lot more about the different parts of the floral world and even try my hand at different jobs within it.

I have one semester of classes left and then I will graduate from Eastern Kentucky University with a bachelor's of science in horticulture in December 2017. The Hall family has

offered me a full-time position after I graduate which I plan on taking and working with them until I figure out the next step in my life and where it will lead me. I am grateful to the American Floral Endowment and Ms. Debi for all of the work they put into helping me during this process and for providing this opportunity for students like me. I would also like to thank the Hall's Flower Shop and Garden Center family for welcoming me in with open arms and minds and making me a part of the family.

~Christina Newton

