



Celebrating Our Many Friends of Floral

Recognizing Milestones, New Initiatives, and Dedicated Donors

The Endowment hosted its annual event & reception during the SAF Annual Convention in Phoenix, AZ on September 7, 2023.

The evening was a celebration of the floral industry as a whole – recognizing supporters across all segments as well as announcing two new named funds, a new scholarship, the first-ever AFE Ambassador Awards, and more. AFE Chairman Ken Young of Phoenix Flower Shops kicked off the event by welcoming everyone and setting the tone for celebrating AFE's current initiatives, accomplishments, strategic goals, and most importantly, our community of dedicated donors.



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A Year in Review

Happy holiday season to each and every one of you!

As we round out the year, we wanted to take some time to reflect and show gratitude to everyone in our floral community. Throughout this Bulletin, you will see many of our recent achievements, impacts on the industry, and new initiatives.

Each of these vital programs would not be successful without the ongoing support of the community that we serve. We extend our heartfelt thanks to you and welcome you to celebrate the close of another year with us by looking back on some major highlights.

We look forward to 2024 and many more years of providing for floral with your involvement! Together, we truly make a huge difference.

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Happy Holidays

Thank you for your support!



About AFE

AFE's Mission Statement

To be the trusted source and catalyst for floriculture advancement through funding of innovative research, scholarships, internships, and educational grants that best serve the dynamic needs and demographics of all industry sectors.



American
Floral
Endowment

Research
Internships
Scholarships
Education

Funding the Future of Floriculture



The AFE Bulletin is proudly sponsored by the Todd Bachman Memorial Fund.

Todd Bachman served as Chairman and CEO of Bachman's before his untimely death in 2008. Todd was a past chairman of the American Floral Endowment and was very active in many state and national industry organizations. Those who knew him will always remember what a great communicator he was and his outstanding leadership and devotion to work and family. His wife and daughters are honored to carry on his legacy.

Donor Spotlight: David Garcia

David Garcia, President of Pete Garcia Company/Garcia Group, is a highly experienced leader in the floral industry.

After graduating from the University of Georgia in 1983, he joined his family business, founded by his father, Pete Garcia, in 1965, which has since evolved into a well-respected supplier of floral hard goods to North America. David has adeptly managed various areas throughout his tenure, showcasing his versatility and deep industry knowledge.

David's connection to AFE is deeply rooted in his family's legacy, with his father and uncle having served as AFE trustees. Since 1976, The Pete Garcia Company/Garcia Group has consistently contributed to the floral industry through annual support to AFE, marking nearly five decades of dedicated partnership in providing essential resources to the community.

In 2020, the Garcia family established the Garcia Family Scholarship Fund through AFE, aimed at assisting students pursuing careers related to the marketing or distribution of floral products, encompassing retail, wholesale, manufacturing, and floral business ownership/operations.

David became a member of the AFE Board in 2015, and he currently serves on the Floral Marketing Fund Committee and chairs the Public Relations/Development Committee. His active advocacy for AFE's mission culminated in his recent appointment as AFE's Chairman-Elect, with his chairmanship set to commence in September 2024.

“My interest in AFE was sparked by my father and my uncle, who were both Trustees. Our company and family continue to support AFE because of the positive impact it has on the floral industry. I encourage others to learn more about AFE and consider giving their support to this great organization.” – David Garcia

AFE is privileged to count David among our dedicated advocates, supporters, and valued industry partners!



DAVID
GARCIA

Pete Garcia
Company/
Garcia Group



To join David as one of our partners and support industry advancement, make a year-end gift today!

Partnering to Cultivate Sustainability Across the Global Floral Industry

AFE Becomes a Member of the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative

The Endowment has become an Associate Member of the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI). This partnership unites AFE, a prominent US-based floriculture funding nonprofit, with FSI, an esteemed international nonprofit with a focus on sustainability.

Through AFE's membership with FSI, this new partnership will strengthen the floriculture industry through collaboration, sharing experiences, and broadened perspectives.



“Sustainability is hugely impactful and affects floriculture globally. By joining forces, we are expanding the impact and effectiveness of both of our initiatives and programs,” stated AFE’s Executive Director Debi Chedester, CAE.

This partnership supports the Endowment’s vision of supporting a strong, unified floriculture community fostering industry innovation and growth to better connect people to flowers and plants in everyday life.

The Floriculture Sustainability Initiative is a market-driven initiative that brings together members of the international floriculture sector. They share the goal of finding more sustainable solutions for farmers, their workers and families, for the environment, and for the future of the sector.

In 2013, FSI was established as an independent international non-profit association under Belgian law. Goals for 2025 include focus on the following three pillars – responsible production & trade, responsible conduct, and integrated reporting.

“Jeroen Oudheusden, FSI Executive Officer, said “Collaboration is crucial in our worldwide industry. By joining forces with AFE, we can share learnings, best practices, and come up with innovative solutions, ensuring that people now and in the future can enjoy flowers and plants in their daily lives and find jobs in our sector that are both exciting and meaningful.”

FSI and AFE are already strategically working together to support additional sustainability education as AFE gears up to launch their highly anticipated Sustainabloom program early next year. The program, established in 2022, will support the need for continued floriculture research around sustainable practices and help to increase floriculture sustainability efforts throughout the industry.



Sustainabloom, powered by AFE, represents a collaborative effort that brings together like-minded floral industry organizations and experts from both industry and academia, developing actionable plans, practical guides, and an array of resources tailored to all segments of the floral industry.

This exciting new initiative will be released to the industry through a brand-new website in 2024. Through programs like this and more, AFE will invest in the future of floral, creating a stronger, more sustainable industry.

Celebrating Our Many Friends of Floral

Recognizing Milestones, New Initiatives, and Dedicated Donors

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"This reception marked not only a celebration of our shared accomplishments but also a promising glimpse into the future of the industry," AFE Chairman Ken Young said. "Besides sharing groundbreaking new programs, scholarships, and funds, we also had the opportunity to recognize and thank the heart of AFE – our dedicated supporters – and the chance to share more about what AFE is doing through networking and conversations with industry members from across the nation."

Updates were shared on AFE's core programs – research, educational grants, scholarships, and internships. This included special highlights of AFE's Sustainbloom – a new sustainability program providing resources and guides for areas of sustainability – and the newly released Thrips & Botrytis Research Resource Library. These new initiatives feed into the ongoing success of AFE's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and goals.

All of AFE's donors and supporters over the last year were recognized including over 25 organizations and individuals reaching new Lifetime Giving Levels, over 90 donors that supported **AFE's 2023 Annual Fundraising Campaign – R.I.S.E. to Support**, and announcing AFE's new Consecutive Giving Society. The Consecutive Giving Society honors the Endowment's most steadfast benefactors who have been consistent annual supporters for three or more consecutive years. Over 20 donors and organizations were recognized for over 25 years of consecutive giving! Each of these donor recognitions can be viewed in the full program online at endowment.org.

Two new named funds were announced – the **Carlstedt's LLC Fund** and the **Pérez Villegas Family Fund**. And, a new scholarship, the **Ruby N. & Roland A. Whealy Memorial Scholarship Fund**, supporting graduate students with research focused on reducing the effects of changing climates on floriculture crops was established.

Two industry champions, Dr. Marvin Miller and Dwight Larimer, were recognized for their service, leadership, and dedication to AFE with the inaugural AFE Ambassador Awards. They have gone above and beyond to promote AFE's programs and resources serving as ambassadors across the floral industry and academia.

AFE also announced new Officers and Trustees to the Board. David Garcia of Pete Garcia Company/Garcia Group was named **Chairman-Elect** and will begin his Chairmanship in 2024. Bill Foster of BioWorks was



named Treasurer/Secretary and will be joining the Executive Committee. New AFE Trustees include Kelvin Frye of Syndicate Sales, Vijay Rapaka of Smithers-Oasis, and Adam Van Winkle of Stadium Flowers. Two outgoing Trustees were honored as they completed their term on the Board: Cindy Hanauer of Grand Central Floral and Tim Galea of Norton's Flowers & Gifts.

The session ended with a reception full of networking and fun including a challenge presented by Past Chairman, Laura Shinall of FreshPath Marketing, to **Fill the Vases** in the room. As a part of the night's theme, Friends of Floral, attendees were encouraged to join AFE's Friends of Floral program by giving a recurring monthly gift to AFE of any size. Those who made a donation over the course of the night were able to place a rose into the vases provided and build beautiful arrangements celebrating the strength that our industry has to support innovation, advancement, and growth together.

The Endowment shared this video thanking all donors, sponsors, and supporters with special highlight of the new Lifetime Giving Levels reached this year:



“The Endowment is made successful through the dedication of our donors. Through your ongoing commitment to the growth of our industry, we are able to make an impact every year on supporting innovative research, fostering the next generation of future leaders, and providing educational opportunities for all,” noted AFE’s Executive Director, Debi Chedester.

The Endowment thanks and celebrates our entire community of supporters. Without you, these accomplishments would not be possible.

A Special Thank You to The Event Sponsors:

- Altman Plants
- Asocolflores
- Kennicott Brothers
- Pete Garcia Company/Garcia Group
- Royer’s Flowers & Gifts
- Smithers-Oasis/Floralife/DESIGN MASTER
- Syndicate Sales

And to AFE’s Annual Event Flower Sponsor, Equiflor/Rio Roses, who has been providing beautiful roses to this event for the past 24 years.

Additional articles on the new funds, incoming Trustees, new Ambassador Awards, and more are available at endowment.org.



Dr. Terril Nell, Inducted into the Floriculture Hall of Fame



We celebrate and recognize Research Director, Terril Nell, Ph.D., AAF for his recent induction into the 2023 Society of American Florists (SAF) **Floriculture Hall of Fame**. Dr. Nell was awarded this accolade

at SAF's 2023 Annual Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Floriculture Hall of Fame is the industry's highest honor. It is designed to recognize and encourage the highest standards of service and professional responsibility in members of the floral industry.

Dr. Nell has spent his entire career working for the benefit of the floral industry. He retired as Professor Emeritus of Floriculture after a 35-year tenure at the University of Florida, where he served as Chair of the Environmental Horticulture Department from 1991–2012.

His research program focused on the production and postharvest handling of flowering potted plants and fresh-cut flowers. He developed the University of Florida flower postharvest program in 1983, concentrating on developing protocols to improve potted plant and cut flower performance for growers, shippers, wholesale and retail florists, and interior landscapers.

His research has led to the development of best practices and advances within the floral industry leading to improved flower and plant longevity. He has consulted for growers, wholesalers, and retailers nationally and internationally for over 40 years. A highly respected care and handling expert, Dr. Nell co-authored the Flower and Plant Care Manual produced by the Society of American Florists and Flowering Potted Plants: Prolonging Freshness by Ball Publishing.

Additionally, Dr. Nell helped educate and train hundreds of students who have gone on to become successful educators, faculty, industry business owners, and leaders. He continues to inspire youth through speaking engagements, helping young faculty, and being a mentor. Most recently, and after retiring from the University of Florida, Dr. Nell for the past nine years has served as the Research Director of the American Floral Endowment. In this position, he oversees research projects, works with both faculty and industry members, and serves as a research expert and resource for the industry. He also serves as the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative (FNRI – USDA) liaison to the Horticulture Research Institute (HRI) to support research for the flower and nursery industry.

In 2017, Dr. Nell initiated a special research fund at AFE to combat thrips and botrytis which have been devastating to floral crops. Raising \$1.5 million for this special project, he's managed and overseen over 15 projects dedicated to tackling these pests and developing new protocols to help growers reduce losses. This special campaign has resulted in a highly impactful research library of resources for combatting pests and diseases which can be found at endowment.org/tb.



In addition to his work and collaboration with U.S. flower growers, Dr. Nell has also worked with the Association of Colombian Flower Exporters (Asocolflores), to identify and solve growing challenges abroad. This collaborative international effort has led to improved flower quality for consumers.

Dr. Nell has volunteered time throughout his career to additional organizations and causes. He joined the Society of American Florists (SAF) in 1990 and served as SAF's President from 2003–2005, the only member of the academic community to ever be elected to this position. During his years with SAF, he also served on the Growers Council, Government Relations Council, and Research Committee. He chaired the SAF Political Action Committee (SAFPAC) and was able to reignite and grow that fund immensely by personally reaching out to industry members to discuss the importance of supporting legislative action to support the floral industry in the U.S.

Dr. Nell served as the UF liaison to the Florida Nursery and Grower's Association, Florida Turfgrass Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America – Florida Chapter, Association of Floral Importers, and Florida Sod Growers Cooperative.

In addition to his Hall of Fame recognition, Dr. Nell was also honored with a special Award of Recognition during the Asocolflores Networking Lunch at Proflora 2023. This award recognizes Dr. Nell's continued service and dedication to the floriculture industry throughout his career.

Dr. Nell's impact on the floral industry has been significant. AFE is so grateful to have him as a part of our team and will miss him dearly when he retires at the end of the year. **Congratulations, Terril!**

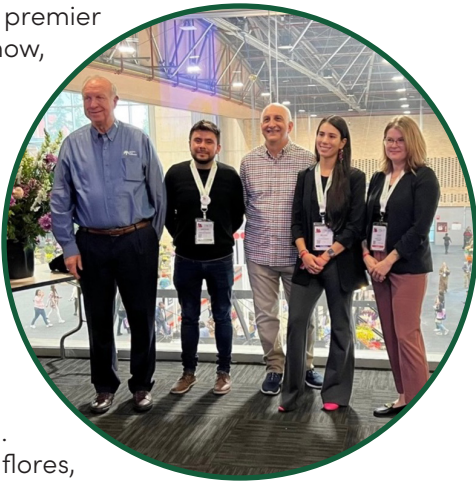


Spotlight at Proflora 2023: AFE Shares Impactful Thrips & Botrytis Research

By Laura Barth, AFE Research Coordinator

Proflora, Colombia's premier horticultural trade show, marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. After a four-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the event returned in-person with a bang, drawing over 300 exhibitors from 18 different countries.

Organized by Asocolflores, one of the key sponsors of the American Floral Endowment's Thrips and Botrytis Campaign, Proflora 2023 was a resounding success. AFE's Research Director Dr. Terril Nell, Executive Committee Chairman Ken Young, and researchers Dr. Melissa Muñoz and Ashley Summerfield attended, representing the Endowment and sharing our important work. AFE seized this opportunity to connect with industry members from across the world and delivered two informative presentations that highlighted the latest research on Thrips and Botrytis management.



Ashley Summerfield, a Senior Research Technician at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre in Canada, presented practical strategies and knowledge to help growers make a successful transition to a biocontrol-based IPM program. Her presentation delved into the intricacies of biocontrol-based thrips management, offering valuable insights into the strategies that have proven effective for ornamental growers in Canada. Ashley, who boasts nearly a decade of experience in greenhouse pest research, has focused extensively on Thrips IPM. She is particularly passionate about Thrips species identification, having co-authored a simplified Thrips identification guide for growers and IPM technical specialists in Ontario, Canada. Both sessions had full rooms with attendees eager to learn more about AFE's Thrips & Botrytis research and resources. The good news for those looking to learn more is that the Endowment has recently launched a brand-new Thrips & Botrytis Research Library that is totally free to the industry with informative webinars, insightful fact sheets, engaging articles, and more for implementation strategies. These impactful resources are provided in both English and Spanish at endowment.org/tb.

AFE also participated in the Sustainability Meeting that Proflora hosted. The Endowment is working diligently on a new sustainability project, Sustainabloom, which will be launching with a website soon providing sustainability guides for all segments of the floral industry.



During the conference, the Endowment partnered with other US Floral Trade Organizations in a special informational booth showing how the floral industry can continue to support each other and collaborate globally.

The AFE's success is made possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsors. The informative presentations by Melissa Muñoz and Ashley Summerfield not only educated attendees but also highlighted AFE's commitment to advancing knowledge and profitability in floriculture. We look forward to future collaborations that will further benefit the floral industry and its stakeholders.



Dr. Melissa Muñoz from NC State University, a native of Medellin, Colombia, and a member of AFE's Young Professionals Council, took the stage to present her extensive research findings on Botrytis control. Melissa's academic journey, culminating in a Ph.D. at Clemson University, provided her with valuable insights into Botrytis blight's impact on cut roses.

Her work has identified alternative practices to effectively manage this disease in Colombian cut flower operations. Her Proflora presentation, delivered in Spanish, focused on innovative management strategies to deal with the pressing issue of fungicide resistance development and explored the use of biorational products as sustainable alternatives.

Longer-Lasting Cut Flowers: The Subzero Solution

By Jennifer Kalinowski and Dr. John Dole, NC State University

Discover how cutting-edge research can help flower growers store flowers for longer durations, ensuring blooms remain fresh and vibrant for extended periods. Hear the direct findings from AFE-funded research, and access the full research report online!

Cold storage of cut flowers is often a necessity. On most farms, it is impossible to harvest enough flowers to satisfy the immediate needs of all customers and markets. Storing cut flowers at cold temperatures of 35–39°F reduces respiration and transpiration, allowing them to remain fresh and have a longer vase life. The duration that flowers can be stored varies with the species from a few days to several weeks. The majority, however, can only be stored for a few days to a week before vase life is reduced.

It would be greatly advantageous for flowers to be stored longer than a few days. If cut flower growers could hold cut flowers for an extended time, product could be stocked more easily for holidays, markets, and events. In addition, growers would be able to manage excessive production that can occur if warm temperatures speed up crop schedules.

Subzero storage (storage at temperatures of 31°F/–0.6°C) may be useful in extending storage length without sacrificing vase life. Earlier work at NC State showed that tulips could be held at 31°F for 9 weeks with no loss of vase life and peonies had improved flower opening and quality after being held at 31°F for 16 weeks compared to 33°F.

The objective of our latest study was to develop a practical long-term storage process for selected cut flower species using subzero temperatures. In this article, we will be sharing the results of one experiment from our study.

We evaluated differences in viability, vase life, and quality of 17 commercially important cut flower species: alstroemeria, anemone, campanula, carnation, chrysanthemum, delphinium, freesia, gerbera, gypsophila, larkspur, lily, lisianthus, ranunculus, rose, stock, sunflower, and tuberose when stored dry at either 31°F or 39°F for durations of 4, 8, and 12 weeks. Results showed that all species stored at 31°F were comparable to or had longer vase life than stems stored at 39°F. Tuberose stems were not viable after holding for any storage duration or temperature. When stored at a subzero temperature for extended periods, many species did not lose as much water and had less disease than when held at 39°F. However, the length of storage that freshly cut flowers can withstand without loss in viability or quality varied among species and cultivar. Rose and carnation stems were the most tolerant of extended storage durations, up to 12 weeks.

This study offers a valuable solution for flower producers. By storing blooms at subzero temperatures, they can ensure longer vase life and better match supply with market demand. Especially during times when unexpected weather conditions speed up flower production, this method offers a fallback to manage early harvests effectively.

In the future, more research will be needed to check if results are consistent across various flower cultivars. But for now, storing flowers dry immediately after harvest seems like a promising and cost-effective solution. To read the full research report, additional experiments, and results, visit endowment.org.

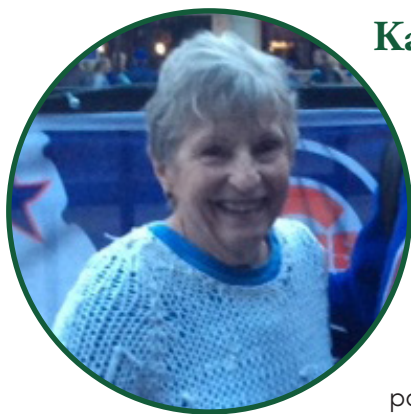


Average vase life visual representation of stored rose 'Freedom Red' flowers compared to non-stored control flowers after 4- and 8-week storage durations held at 31°F (–0.6°C) or 39 °F (4°C).

Two Memorial Tributes Established to Honor Industry Champions

Katie Kennicott & Andy Mast

We are sad to announce the passing of two industry leaders, Katie Kennicott and Andy Mast. Memorial Tributes have been established by family and friends of each through AFE to forever remember and honor them.



Katie Kennicott of Kennicott Brothers

A memorial tribute has been established through the American Floral Endowment honoring Kathleen "Katie" Kennicott, who passed away on October 13, 2023, at the age of 86.

Many in the floral industry knew Katie Kennicott best as the sunny, astute and engaging wife (64 years) of Harrison "Red" Kennicott, of the Chicago-based wholesale distributor Kennicott Brothers Company; however, Katie also played a direct role in the company's success. Over more than 60 years of active involvement in the floral industry, she showed a special talent for making strong connections with customers, suppliers, and others—connections that have helped to change the face of the industry.

Katie met Red when both were students at Michigan State University; they married the summer after Red graduated in 1959. While Red went straight into the family business, for five years Katie pursued the career she had prepared for, teaching math to eighth graders. Eventually, however—and perhaps inevitably, given her abilities—she was drawn into service with Kennicott Brothers as a customer-relations representative.

Over a period of at least 40 years, Katie came along with Red to nearly every WF&FSA and SAF annual convention, strengthening the company's connection to suppliers as well as to customers and always giving back to the industry. Katie's was a life that touched many other lives. Those who knew her will remember her saying, "That was fun." So, it was.



Andy Mast of Andy Mast Greenhouses

A memorial tribute has been established in memory of Andy C. Mast through the American Floral Endowment by the Mast Family and friends at

Ednie Flower Bulb Company,

Fredon, NJ. Andy Mast, owner of Andy Mast Greenhouses and industry pioneer, passed away on July 8th, 2023, at the age of 76.

Andy was born to Neal and Jacoba Mast in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in September of 1946. He emigrated with his family two years later, settling in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He attended West Side Christian School and Grand Rapids Christian High, graduating in 1964. He furthered his education at Michigan State, completing their horticultural program.

Andy worked in partnership with his father, Neal, until branching out on his own in 1975 to become the owner of Andy Mast Greenhouses. He grew the business from the original site in Walker to include two additional sites over the years in Muskegon and Holland. His contributions to the greenhouse industry run deep.

In efforts to improve the quality of crops, Andy pioneered with Michigan State University using practical growing techniques to control the height of crops. So successful in implementation, the DIF technique is currently utilized around the world!

We, at the Endowment, are grateful to be able to honor the memories of these industry champions. To read the full tributes for each of these industry leaders and make a contribution in their honor, please visit endowment.org/memorial-tributes.

A Year In Review

As the year comes to a close, we invite you to celebrate all that the Endowment has been able to accomplish and provide through your ongoing support. What a year it's been! We couldn't have done it without you.

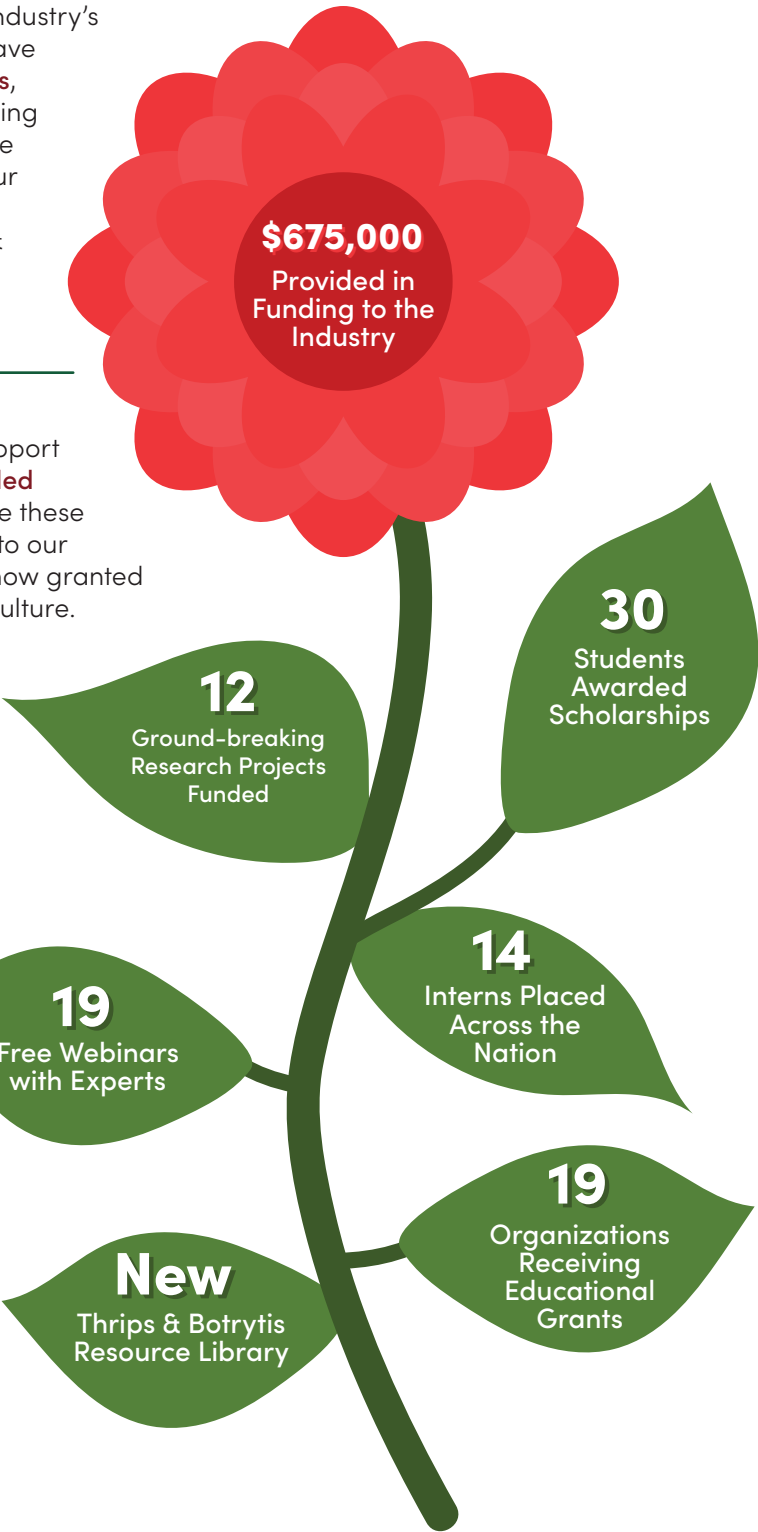
Together, we have granted **over \$675,000 in funding this year** to support research, internships, scholarships, and education for the entire floral community. Here are some key highlights from 2023:

1 Research and advancements are key to the industry's ongoing growth and success. This year, we have funded **12 ground-breaking research projects**, including five new projects and seven continuing projects. The projects are working to move the industry forward and help solve some of the challenges our industry members face on a daily basis. These research projects focus on areas such as improving flower quality & longevity, pest & disease management, new technologies, plant breeding & engineering, and more.

2 Education for all remains a key priority. To support and empower the next generation, we **provided scholarships to 30 students this year**. We hope these scholarships can help to alleviate challenges to our labor force as new, young professionals are now granted the opportunity to pursue careers in floriculture and horticulture.

3 Also, in support of education more broadly for the floral community at all ages, the Endowment awarded **19 organizations with Educational Grants**. This funding will help these organizations host conferences, teach students and educators about the floral industry, offer programs such as greenhouse training and florist certification classes, promote sustainability practices, and more.

4 We know education goes beyond the classroom and industry events. To ensure that the future leaders of our industry have hands-on experience, **14 of the best and brightest from universities across the nation received internships** focusing on floral production, greenhouse management, commercial plant production, and floral design. These students have been working in the industry hands-on and learning far beyond what can be taught in a classroom. We are so excited to keep up with these outstanding interns through their future endeavors in our industry.



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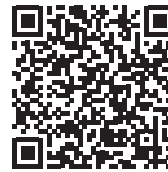
Making results, research, and resources digestible for all – We can't forget to mention **our 19 free, interactive webinars we hosted** throughout the year with industry experts. These include our monthly Grow Pro Webinars, which provide growers with direct access to new findings, best practices, and the chance to talk with industry experts. For young professionals, we hosted seven webinars focusing on professional development, networking, and public speaking. In addition, we hosted a Floral Marketing Fund webinar to share the latest consumer research results.

6

Brand new this year, **we launched the Thrips & Botrytis Resources Library**. This comprehensive library is the result of a special research campaign, established in 2017, to address the control and management of Thrips and Botrytis. It launched recently free to all thanks to the campaign's generous industry sponsors, whose support made this research possible. The library contains resources in English and Spanish, including webinars, articles, fact sheets, and more! Check out the free library at endowment.org/tb.

And, we won't stop there... The Endowment has provided for the floral industry for over 60 years and aims to continue for many more. In the pipeline for 2024 are a fully redesigned website to further make all of our resources accessible and easy to digest, Sustainabloom (our new sustainability project, which will also have its own website), and so much more as we continue to fund all of our core programs: research, internships, scholarships, and education.

If you want to see programs like these keep blooming in 2024, please consider making a tax-deductible, year-end contribution to AFE here. It is only with your support that we can continue working towards a stronger, empowered, more sustainable floral industry for all!



**Make a
Year-End
Contribution**

Launching in 2024! AFE'S ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Exciting news awaits in 2024 as we unveil the **AFE Annual Partnership Program**! This innovative program brings together AFE's esteemed floriculture programs with the dynamic resources of forward-thinking organizations. Our common goals? To enhance our combined efforts, broaden our impact, and usher in a transformative era of positive change and growth for the floral industry.

The **AFE Annual Partnership Program** goes beyond traditional one-time event sponsorships by offering a unique opportunity to enjoy the benefits expanded over 12 months! We have meticulously crafted distinct tiers, each brimming with customized advantages, designed to enhance awareness of AFE programs and your company within the floral community throughout the partnership year.

There is an opportunity for businesses of all sizes to become annual partners!

We hope you will join us on this exhilarating journey as we collaborate hand in hand, kindling a future that shines brighter, brims with innovation, and nurtures sustainable growth. By participating, you not only contribute to essential floriculture programs and resources but also become an integral part of our community. To see the full Partnership Plan Packet ahead of our full launch, visit bit.ly/AFEPartners.

Together, we are shaping the very landscape of the floral industry, one partnership at a time!

If you want to be one of the first to become a partner, contact us today at afe@endowment.org.

Coming Full Circle Leads to Life of Giving

This special article features AFE's Legacy Circle Member, Sten Crissey, a long-time industry member who has been retired from the industry for 15 years. Sten resides in Seattle, Washington with his wife, Maryann.

Since he was big enough to push a broom, Sten Crissey spent his days growing up in the floral business.



His dad, James, had opened the Seattle-based Crissey Flowers and Gifts downtown in 1942, well before Sten came along. But once he did, the family business was in his blood. His mom, Aimee, handled the office duties, and his dad ran the shop. Sten jumped in where needed, and his responsibilities would grow as he did. He folded boxes, then handled deliveries, and by the time he was a teenager ready to graduate high school, he was a well-known face in the shop.

He would go on to graduate from the University of Washington, where he earned his BA degree in history. He had a strong interest in the past, but now he was looking at a future full of options. Surprisingly, none of those options at the time included the family flower shop.

"The only thing I didn't want to do at the time was work in the family business," he said.

Banking and Marriage

Sten's path took him to the bank, where he landed a job in the credit department in 1968. It was a good opportunity, he thought. What he didn't expect was that his biggest fortune in banking would present itself on his very first day on the job.

It was the day he met Maryann.

"She was the best part of my banking experience. We started working at the bank the same day. At that time, there were not many women in management in any industry, but she was one of the first women management trainees at the bank," he said.

Maryann was a French major who grew up in Wisconsin and ultimately wound up at the University of Washington. After attaining her Master's Degree, she began working on her doctorate. But by this time, much like Sten, Maryann was looking to veer from the path she was on.

That path not only led her to a successful career in banking that lasted for more than 50 years, but also to a marriage with Sten in 1974. She retired in 2022 as a senior loan officer who rode the wave of old-school banking through the modern era with a customer base that ran the gamut.

A Return to His Roots

Sten describes his time working at the bank as a fortunate experience that allowed him to be in contact with a variety of businesses and industries. The biggest lesson he found was that there were never any rosy paths to success, no matter the appearances. Stresses and strains occurred for everyone.

As he sifted through financial statements at work, day after day, he reflected on his time after college graduation and his decision to take a new career route. It was becoming clear to him that he had turned away from the family business because he had been over-exposed to the challenges of the business while not fully appreciating the benefits.

"I think when you grow up in a family business, you can develop aversion because it becomes so familiar," he said. "And when there is pain and strain and problems, the conversation comes home to the dinner table. Then you start to sense the trials."

But two years of banking gave him a new perspective, and he decided to not let the fear of what could happen hold him back from where he wanted to be. So, after two years at the bank, Sten joined the family's floral business.



Growing Involvement

Sten spent the following years learning the business alongside his parents. His father made clear there was more to doing business in the floral industry than what was happening inside his shop. He followed his father in becoming active in several state and national industry organizations. He served on committees for entities seeking to improve the future of every aspect of the business. For Sten, giving of his time and his resources, both expertise and monetary, was an important part of his career. He said that is the reason he and his dad embraced the work of the American Floral Endowment (AFE) since its inception.



"We were regular contributors to AFE and realized all gifts, large and small, helped," he said. "If everyone would do a little bit, the Endowment, and by extension, the industry, would be just fine. You don't have to stand back and wait until you can make a major gift."

Sten said he saw the impact those contributions to AFE made over the years, so he felt honored to be invited to join AFE's Board of Trustees. Over the years, he was a member of several committees, served as the planned giving specialist and was a chairman of the board. As an AFE trustee, he worked with other board members to ensure the contributions were put to the best use to promote and advance the industry through research, education, and programs like scholarships and internships to foster the next generation.

"AFE is unique in our industry. It is a simple fact that no other organization can or would perform the work AFE does. The research AFE funds creates better quality products, expands the variety of products, and develops production techniques to keep the cost of flowers lower than they otherwise would be," he said.

"The board is made up of industry members with a vested interest in the industry's success," he continued. "In addition, their scholarship programs attract and encourage the most capable and educated college students into the field of floriculture."

Leaving a Legacy

It was always the little things, Sten said, that would make his work fulfilling. He would go out of his way to make orders special — to comfort those in sad times and celebrate with others in good times. Serving customers and serving the industry were twin priorities, and in that regard, he was in lockstep with his father.

"My dad died in 1989. I couldn't imagine how I could run that business without him. And it was at that point that I realized I had actually already been running the business. He was letting me make critical decisions," said Sten. "He had been setting it up for me without saying anything and preparing me without me even knowing."

Sten continued to operate the flower shop for another 17 years before he sold it and retired in 2006. In that time, he wrote a guide to Valentine's Day preparation for florists, which the Society of American Florists (SAF) distributed. He served on the volunteer leadership team that provided all the inaugural flowers for presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George H.W. Bush. He was inducted into the Floriculture Hall of Fame in 2004 and received the Paul Ecke, Jr. Award by SAF in 1996. He and Maryann enjoy retirement with their two sons and three grandchildren, all of whom live nearby in West Seattle.

After retirement, Sten continued his support of AFE. As mentioned, he joined the organization as a planned giving specialist, and in that time, he became a founding member of AFE's Legacy Circle. He said the collaboration to begin the Legacy Circle was a way to encourage industry members to make planned gifts of any amount. Such gifts can and should be made without jeopardizing a donor's financial security or that of their heirs.



Moreover, the Legacy Circle honors everyone in the industry who supports the organization with planned gifts.

"Regarding those listed as Legacy Circle members, there isn't one of those individuals that doesn't bring back fond memories," he said. "They are just wonderful people who value the industry, value what they gained from the industry, and continue to express their appreciation through their ongoing support of AFE. It is great to see their names and read their stories, but AFE needs many more industry members to step up and be counted with them."

For more information about AFE's Legacy Circle or how you can arrange for a gift to AFE, contact us at 703-838-5211 or afe@endowment.org.

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Research
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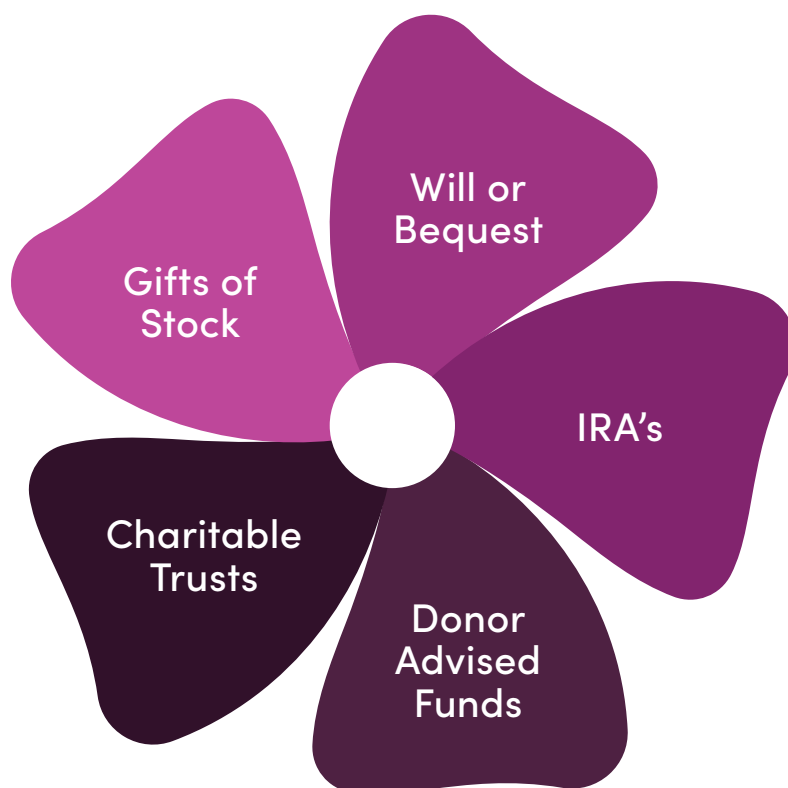
AFE-funded research has catalyzed groundbreaking developments across various domains, encompassing pest and disease control, postharvest handling, and flower breeding.

- **Advancing Education and Engagement:**

Diverse programs offering floral professionals the chance to enhance their skills and knowledge. Promoting industry-wide collaboration on current trends, consumer awareness, and new technologies.

- **Attracting the Next Generation:**

Scholarships for undergraduate to Ph.D. programs, hands-on internships, and Young Professionals Council empower the next generation of industry professionals, ensuring their readiness for their career paths.



Supporting AFE empowers the floral community to take an active role in securing its future, fostering innovation & advancement, and nurturing education and engagement—essential components that collectively cultivate a healthy and thriving floral industry!

CONGRATULATIONS

on your retirement, Terril!

Thank you for your tireless efforts and dedicated service on behalf of AFE and the floral industry!

Wishing you many happy and healthy years ahead!

With gratitude,

*AFE Board of Trustees
and Staff*



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DEC 19

1:00 PM

Technologies and Strategies for Sustainable Substrates in Containerized Crop Production

Speaker: Dr. James Altland, USDA ARS

MAR 19

1:00 PM

How to Manage Peat Shortages

Speaker: Dr. Brian Schulker, Jiffy

JAN 16

1:00 PM

Biorational Products for Botrytis Control

Speaker: Dr. Melissa Muñoz, NC State University

APR 23

1:00 PM

Biochar for Container Production

Speaker: Dr. Ping Yu, UGA

FEB 27

1:00 PM

Preparing for Parvispinus

Speaker: Dr. Sarah Jandricic, OMAFRA

MAY 21

1:00 PM

Identification and Management of Root Diseases in Floriculture Crops

Speaker: Dr. Francesca Hand, OSU

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Waste Not, Want Not: The Benefits and How-To of Composting and Recycling

U.S. Consumer Perceptions & Willingness to Pay for Sustainable Environmental Practices in the Floral Industry

By Cindy Hanauer, Grand Central Floral

Composting is one of the easiest ways to begin a sustainability program. The practice of composting has been around a considerable amount of time, with evidence of ancient civilizations composting as far back as 4,000 years ago. However, the modern method of composting as an agricultural practice began in the 1920s.

A florist can recycle and compost green waste by separating plant trimmings and organic matter, such as leaves and flowers, from plastic and non-organic waste. Mix the waste with brown materials such as shredded newspaper or sawdust, and add some water to moisten the mixture. These plant materials can be composted using a compost bin or heaping in a pile or row, which will break down the organic matter and turn it into nutrient-rich soil amendment. The finished compost can then be used as a fertilizer for potted plants or returned back to the soil to achieve a robust agricultural crop.

So, what if you don't have a garden or outdoor growing area? Some florists partner with local composting facilities, floral growers, or agriculture farms to dispose of their green waste sustainably (a list of composting facilities can be found on the US Composting Council's website.) A business may also arrange for compost pickup by contacting their local waste management or composting company to see if they offer collection services. If not, many cities have community composting programs where residents can drop off their compost.

The Floral Marketing Fund's recent study, **U.S. Consumer Perceptions & Willingness to Pay for Sustainable Environmental Practices in the Floral Industry**, explores consumers' perspectives on sustainable practices, including composting and recycling, among many other sustainable practices.

So, what are your consumers saying is the willingness to pay value of composting floral waste?

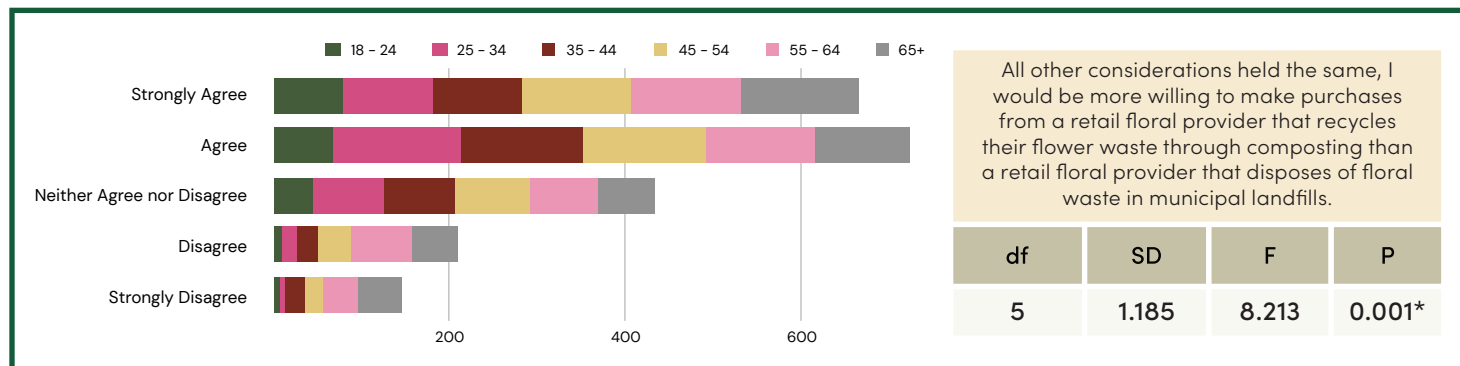
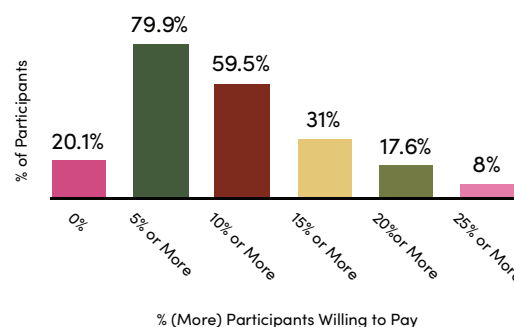
And the survey says...

The majority of participants shared a **willingness to pay a premium of 10% or more** for flowers to a floral provider that recycles their flower waste through composting rather than disposing of it in a landfill. This was the second most influential sustainable practice where consumers are willing to pull out their wallets behind locally sourcing flowers.

Does age impact this response? It was found that all age groups, except for those 65 years of age and older, indicated a willingness to pay 10% or more for flowers to a floral provider that composts their floral waste.

Is your business already composting? If so, we'd love to hear about it! You can share any of your own business experiences with us at info@floralmarketingfund.org and see the full report along with additional follow-up articles at floralmarketingfund.org.

Willing to pay for a flower arrangement made by a retail floral provider that recycles their flower waste through composting rather than disposing of floral waste in a municipal landfill



The Influence of Internships

Connecting with Students and Faculty at Michigan State University



Just a few short weeks ago, AFE Staff, alongside the Vic & Margaret Ball Committee, had the opportunity to visit Michigan State University (MSU) to review internship applications, select students, and spend some time with faculty and students who directly benefit from the Endowment's programs.

Every year, the Vic & Margaret Ball Committee meets in March and October to evaluate applications and select students for its prestigious internship program. The program awards three-, four-, or six-month internships to students pursuing a career in commercial production/growing. On top of the paid internship, students receive a scholarship of up to \$6,000 upon completion. This program grants a full-circle experience of both hands-on practice and financial aid to empower students in their educations and futures in floral.

This October, the Ball Internship Committee went to MSU to talk about the internship program and network with the community. MSU has an extensive Department of Horticulture offering undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, and certificate programs, making it an ideal place to connect with academics within our industry.

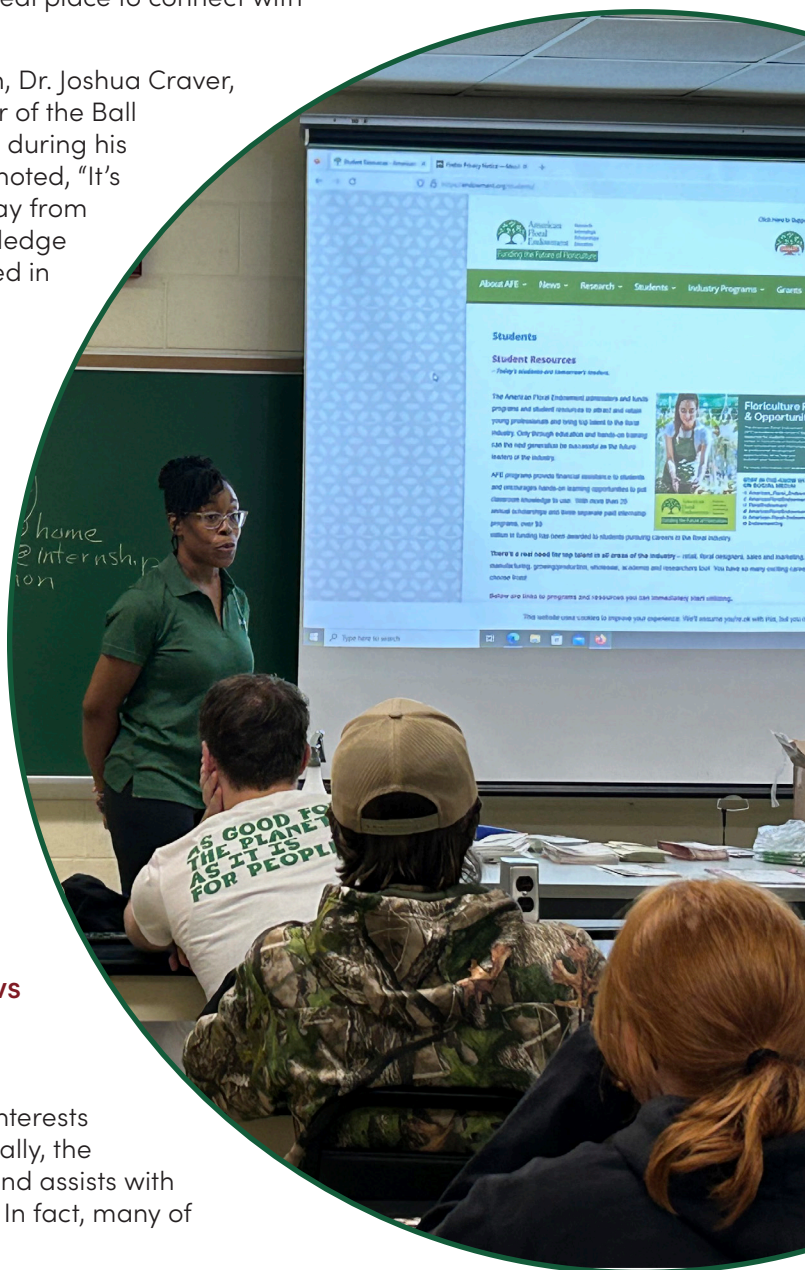
When presenting the Vic & Margaret Ball Internship Program, Dr. Joshua Craver, Assistant Professor at Colorado State University and member of the Ball Internship Committee, shared how he had been a Ball intern during his undergraduate program at Mississippi State University and noted, "It's an opportunity of a lifetime for students to be able to go away from their home university or college, to put their classroom knowledge to use and to see firsthand how what they are learning is used in the real world."

All great opportunities come with some challenges and growth, especially those that push you out of your comfort zone. During the Committee's visit to students in Dr. Roberto Lopez's horticulture class, they addressed challenges that students can sometimes encounter when seeking to do an away-from-school/home internship. Not to worry - AFE helps address these barriers by working with students every step of the way from start to completion. The Endowment also reviews the students' reports at the end of each internship placement to ensure the experiences are impactful and adjusts the program to meet any current needs.

However, it's not only the students who benefit from this opportunity. Faculty are also offered a travel reimbursement to visit their students during their internship.

“It's always great to visit our students when they are performing their internships and meet with the internship team and growers. It allows us to develop relationships that lead to research collaborations” says Lopez.

This program fully takes into account each student's career interests and finds a host employer that matches their goals. Additionally, the Endowment helps with expenses through a travel advance and assists with finding affordable housing for the duration of the internship. In fact, many of the hosts AFE works with have housing available for interns.



What goes well with internships and education? Ice cream, of course! Before ending the day with a campus tour, students and faculty were treated to a stop at the famous Dairy Store, where everyone had even more time to network and strengthen our floral family.

In addition to visiting MSU, the Committee also visited Van Atta's Greenhouse & Flower Shop and Christians Greenhouses, where they learned about their unique growing operations, products, and businesses. Seeing our industry in action and thriving inspires all of the work that the Endowment does. Check out all of the photos below!



On the final day, the Committee met and selected the next budding young professionals to receive our internships. Be sure to tune into AFE's communications and social media not only to meet the new cohort but to join them on their internship journeys as we share videos of each intern at their placement.

Special thanks to Dr. Lopez, the faculty, and students at MSU! We can't wait to see what you accomplish next.

Interested in Our Internships, Scholarships, and Other Funding Opportunities? **Don't miss our upcoming deadlines for 2024!**

FEBRUARY 1

- Paul Ecke Jr. and Altman Family Scholarships

MARCH 1

- James & Helen Phillip Floral Design Grant
- Mosmiller Internship
- Vic & Margaret Ball Internship

MAY 1

- Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarships

JUNE 1

- Educational Grants

AUGUST 1

- Gus Poesch Research Grant
- Scientific Research Proposals

OCTOBER 1

- Arizona Retail Florist Grant
- Mosmiller Internship
- Retail Florist Continued Education Grant
- Vic & Margaret Ball Internship

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED YEAR-ROUND

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