

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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SAF Receives \$250k Donation for Marketing, Education

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Herman Meinders, founder of American Floral Services, one of the largest international wire services, has donated \$250,000 to the Society of American Florists (SAF) to encourage careers in the floral and horticultural industries, educate florists, and help the industry promote the awareness and sale of cut flowers, plants and floral-related products.

Herman started American Floral Services in a garage apartment in 1970 with 137 florist subscribers in his first directory. Within 15 years, the service had grown to more than 17,000 subscribers. He sold the business in 1994, and in 2000, it merged with Teleflora, where Herman, 85, is chairman emeritus. He's the 2000 recipient of the Paul Ecke Jr. Award, and in 2012, was inducted into SAF's Floriculture Hall of Fame.

"The floral industry was very good to me," he says. "It's important to take care of those that take care of you. That's why I give to the floral industry."

Marketing and recruitment have always been important to Herman, and he sees that these are two big challenges for florists right now, which is why a portion of the donation will be used for those efforts.

"This donation will go a long way to help SAF attract talent to our industry, educate florists and keep our industry and flowers in the forefront of consumers' minds," said SAF President Michelle Castellano Keeler. **GT**