

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Industry Icons Honored With Awards at SAF Orlando 2021

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Kenneth Royer, an industry pioneer and a second-generation owner of Royer's Flowers & Gifts, in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, was one of the floriculture professionals who were honored at the Society of American Florists' annual convention in Orlando, Florida, in September. As the first florist in the country to implement computerized systems for his multi-shop operations and one of the first to import directly from South American growers, Kenneth earned a spot in the SAF Hall of Fame.

His business strategies were so successful that in 1998 Kenneth published the book, "Retailing Flowers Profitably," and held dozens of seminars on topics from marketing to management and post-harvest care. He also served with several industry organizations, including on the boards of SAF and the American Floral Endowment.

Greg Royer, Kenneth's son and chairman of the board at Royer's Flowers & Gifts, accepted the award at SAF's award ceremony during the convention on behalf of his father, who at 90 years old couldn't attend the event.

When Kenneth learned he was being inducted into the Hall of Fame "he was speechless," his son told the audience. "The highlight of his year was coming to meetings like this. He still has a passion for the industry."

The award ceremony also honored others, including:

- The Paul Ecke Jr. Award, which recognizes exemplary devotion to profession, industry and community, was given to Robert "Bob" Williams II, former vice president of North American operations at Smithers-Oasis. Bob retired in 2016, but continued consulting in the industry until 2020, when he was diagnosed with ALS. The disease progressed quickly and by late summer Bob was unable to travel. He was presented with the award in August at an event in Kent, Ohio, which was attended by family and industry friends. A video of the event was shown at the awards ceremony. Bob passed away the week after.
- Scott Trees, Ph.D., a breeder of ornamental plants, received the Gold Medal Award, which honors the originator of an outstanding product of significant horticultural and commercial value. Scott, who retired in June from a 40-year career in the industry, has 309 patents for plants and seeds. Among them are verbena, impatiens, salvia, snapdragons, cestrum, scabiosa, phlox and more than 100 geraniums.
- The Alex Laurie Award for Research and Education, which honors someone who's contributed significantly to the advancement of horticulture studies, was awarded to James Faust, Ph.D. Jim, a professor of physiology at Clemson University, is known for his work with poinsettias. He has studied the plants in their native home in Mexico, as well as the Paul Ecke Ranch in Encinitas, California, which at the time was the largest producer of poinsettias.

He is also co-author of a new book, "Cut Flowers and Foliages." **GT**