

Industry News Extras
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With a Mid-Week Holiday, Florist Saw Rush of Orders on Valentine's Day

By Mary Westbrook

Valentine's Day was a [success for many florists](#) — but the Wednesday holiday was also a last-minute hustle.

That's according to a Society of American Florists post-holiday member survey, which found that, on average, **56 percent** of retail florists' holiday orders came in on Valentine's Day itself and **80 percent** of orders were delivered on Feb. 14. In 2017, when the holiday fell on a Tuesday, respondents said nearly 38 percent of orders came in on Valentine's Day and 79 percent of holiday orders were delivered on Valentine's Day.

In Arizona, a florist speculated the day of the week may have played a factor. "Last year, when Valentine's Day landed on a Tuesday, I saw more early deliveries on Monday to client's work, to start the week off right," she wrote. "This year, since it landed on a Wednesday, few clients wanted it early. Most wanted it on the day of. I believe this will be the same for next year when Valentine's Day falls on a Thursday."

Meanwhile, a trend of orders coming in after the holiday continues: More than half of respondents (**54 percent**) said they took up to 10 new holiday orders, excluding re-deliveries, after Feb. 14, a number in line with 2017 returns; about **21 percent** said they took 11 to 20 such orders.

In write-in, anecdotal responses, a number of florists noted those late-coming orders. [Read more.](#)

Gay Smith Memorial Tribute Established

By Lori Ostrow

A memorial tribute has been established with AFE honoring Gayle (Gay) Smith, 63, who passed away on March 1, 2018.

The tribute was established thanks to a generous contribution from **Chrysal Americas** President Jim Kaplan. Smith served as the technical manager for Chrysal for more than 18 years.

"We are honored to establish the **Gay Smith Memorial Tribute** on behalf of our staff, clients and the entire industry," said Kaplan.

“Gay was part of the Chrysal family and she will be missed tremendously. This memorial tribute with AFE is a fitting salute to her dedication not only to our company, but to the industry she loved.”

Smith was an active member of the industry and a great supporter of all things floriculture. Her career spanned more than 45 years, and she proudly wore the title of “queen” of post-harvest care and handling.

She grew up in suburban Phoenix and attended the University of Arizona studying environmental horticulture. After college, she relocated to San Francisco and began working at a local florist in the late 1970s. Smith eventually found her way to the San Francisco Flower Market where she worked for Kitayama Brothers, filling and hauling buckets of carnations and roses.

By 1981, she had made a name for herself as the first female manager working among the male-dominated world of growers and wholesalers at the market. She introduced the market to the idea of importing flowers from Holland, Israel and South America, and became an expert on unusual, unique blooms and their post-harvest needs.

Smith was hired to open a small export business at the flower auction in Aalsmeer, Netherlands, in 1983. She returned to the U.S. in 1986 and worked at Melridge Inc., where she honed her knowledge of marketing and found her true love of flower care and handling. She also led tours to farms throughout Central America and Europe, teaching post-harvest techniques and how to market unique floral products.

In 2001, she joined Chrysal as the technical manager for North and South America, traveling to wholesalers, retailers and supermarkets and sharing her knowledge for care and handling techniques, proper hydration methods, and the importance of pH levels to maximize shelf life.

Always giving of her time to help advance the industry, Smith wrote hundreds of articles and made dozens of presentations to promote healthy flowers. She was active with many industry organizations including the Society of American Florists, where you could always find her helping out with the Outstanding Varieties Competition making sure all of the entries were hydrated. She was also active in the Wholesale Florists & Florists Suppliers Association and the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers.

Diagnosed with ovarian cancer in early 2016, Smith fought the disease with her sisters Joy and Susie by her side, and never lost her love, spirit and enthusiasm for flowers and the floral industry.

She is survived by her sisters, her brother Danny, and other family members William and Gabriel Kyne, David, Katie and Mark Doyle.

Joy and Susie are hosting a celebration of her life on March 24 at 3:00 p.m. at Unity Church of Portland, 4525 SE Stark Street, in Portland, Ore.

Contributions to the **Gay Smith Memorial Tribute** can be made [here](#), or by sending a check to:

**c/o Gay Smith Memorial Tribute
American Floral Endowment
1001 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 201
Alexandria, VA 22314**

Arne M. Thirup, AAF: 1928-2018

By Mary Westbrook

A dedicated family man and a much-admired industry leader who advocated tirelessly for domestic flower growers died peacefully on Feb. 21. Arne M. Thirup, AAF, the former President of Pajaro Valley Greenhouses Inc. in Watsonville, California, was 90 years old.

“Arne was a true pioneer in American cut flower production,” said former Society of American Florists president Red Kennicott, AAF, of Kennicott Brothers Company in Chicago. “Arne’s friendly personality and his willingness to share resulted in his becoming a mentor to many, as he established standards to which others aspired.”

“Dad lived his life for the floral industry and his family,” said his daughter Karen Sambrailo, who remembers watching her father walk through the greenhouse early in the morning and accompanying him at night, armed with a flashlight, to turn on the boiler. “So many of my best childhood memories are of him growing flowers, talking about flowers. It really was his passion.”

Thirup held many leadership positions within the floral industry throughout his life, and he played a key role in the creation of the California Cut Flower Commission. In 2001, he was inducted into SAF’s Floriculture Hall of Fame, the industry’s highest honor.

According to his family, Thirup was born and raised in Denmark, one of six children of a greenhouse operator. He was educated in the field of horticulture, came to the United States in 1953 for an internship program in Indiana, and eventually made his way to San Francisco. It was here that he met Pauline, a recent German immigrant and they married shortly thereafter.

Early in their marriage, the couple worked their day jobs, he as a gardener and she as a nanny, while the evenings were spent tending to their one-acre flower parcel. Together, they built Pajaro Valley Greenhouses Inc., a successful flower growing business that included locations in Watsonville, Nipomo and Vista, California as well as floral wholesale outlets in Atlanta, Knoxville and Nashville.

Thirup was a tireless and trusted leader within the industry. He served on numerous boards and held office positions for most of the regional and national organizations within the floral industry, including SAF treasurer, president of Roses Inc.; chairman of the Monterey Bay Flower Growers Association; chairman of the Floral Trade Council; and CCFC commissioner and treasurer, among other roles. In addition, he served as president of Watsonville Rotary and was a board member of Watsonville Chamber of Commerce and the Monterey County Farm Bureau.

In 1987, Thirup also became one of Greenhouse Grower magazine's earliest honorees as Grower of the Year for his activism supporting fair trade in cut flowers.

Thirup is survived by Pauline, his loving wife of 64 years, three daughters, Sambrailo and her husband, Mark, of Watsonville, Doris of Arroyo Grande, and Sandy (Frank) Garcia of Danville, as well as seven grandchildren, Erik (Natalie), Kiersten (Billy), Ty, Alexandra, Grant, Brock, and Maren. He is also survived by one great-granddaughter, Taylor Sambrailo, and was looking forward to the birth of a second grandchild in July. In addition, he leaves his sister, Ingeborg (Holger Jorgensen) of Denmark and many nieces and nephews in Denmark.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, March 1st, with Rosary at 6:00pm at Ave Maria Memorial Chapel. A mass will be celebrated on Friday, March 2nd at Holy Eucharist Church in Corralitos. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted in the care of the Carroll family of Ave Maria Memorial Chapel www.avemariamemorialchapel.com.

The family asks that memorial gifts be made to either Hospice of Santa Cruz County, 940 Disc Drive, Scotts Valley, CA 95066, or Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust, 85 Nielsen Street, Watsonville, CA 95076, or to a charity of the donor's choice. [Read more.](#)