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Kimberly Williams, Ph.D. Receives the Alex Laurie Award at SAF Phoenix 2023

Alexandria, VA.— Sept. 13, 2023 — Distinguished Teaching Scholar Kimberly Williams, Ph.D., one of the world’s foremost experts on floriculture crop nutrition, is the 2023 recipient of the Society of American Florists’ Alex Laurie Award, which honors an individual who has made broad-scope, long lasting contributions to research or education in the floriculture industry. The award was presented on Sept. 9 during the Stars of the Industry Recognition at SAF’s 138th Annual Convention.



About Kimberly Williams, Ph.D.

A self-described “hybrid farm kid,” Williams was raised in Great Bend, Kansas, but assisted her family on her grandparents’ farm. She graduated from Kansas State University with her B.S. in horticulture in 1988, then completed graduate work at North Carolina State University in 1995, earning M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. Williams’ first position was as an assistant professor at the University of Illinois until 1997, when she returned to her alma mater as a member of the faculty. In 2006, she was promoted to the rank of professor in the school’s Horticulture and Natural Resources Department (HNR).

Dr. Williams has carried a split teaching and research appointment throughout her career. For many years, she has taught core undergraduate courses for HNR including Greenhouse Operations Management, Herbaceous Crop Production, Floral Crops Productions & Handling and Interior Plantscapes. Recently, due to increased student interest and industry demand, she created a Hydroponics Production course. Her courses fill to capacity each semester and have prominent lab sections, providing engaging and fruitful hands-on learning opportunities. Her impact reaches many high schools across Kansas, as many of the agriculture education students adopt horticulture lessons for their curriculum.

Dr. Williams has been recognized nationally for her teaching. In 2009, she received the USDA Food and Agriculture Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award for the North Central Region. In 2007, she was named NACTA Teacher Fellow by the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture, a coveted honor that recognizes outstanding teaching. In 2010, Kansas State’s Provost’s Office bestowed her its highest honor, University Distinguished Teaching Scholar. In 2020, the Kansas State University Alumni

Association awarded her the Dr. Ron and Rae Iman Outstanding Faculty Award for Teaching, honoring the best teacher on campus.

Dr. Williams has also been lauded for her writing. In 2001, she won the Alex Laurie Award for “Most Outstanding Floriculture Research Paper.” In 2004, 2008 and 2014, she received the Outstanding Education Publication Award from the American Society for Horticulture Science. She has authored more than 45 refereed publications, more than 45 symposium proceedings, 17 chapters and books, and more than 65 trade and popular press articles. She has delivered more than 50 presentations, including podcasts.

In addition to her disciplinary research, Dr. Williams has been active in producing scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) materials. She has co-authored 11 SoTL publications and actively collaborates with faculty across the U.S. to deliver instructional content to the greenhouse industry.

“Dr. Williams shares so much with her fellow educators,” says Jana R. Fallin, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus at Kansas State. “She is always willing to help another professor to design research, help with publications, participate in events on campus, share speakers she brings to her department and her college. She is a caring, humble, gifted person.”

On average, Dr. Williams advises between 25 and 35 undergraduates each year. Over her career, she has assisted hundreds of students in securing valuable internship opportunities across the country, at a wide variety of industry locations. She has also served as the major advisor for nine M.S. and three Ph.D. students and served on graduate committees for more than 25 graduate students. Her former students are actively involved in all areas of the horticulture industry including academic, laboratory research and greenhouse growing.

“As a teacher, she is passionate, knowledgeable, and motivational. She not only guides her students in their studies but encourages them to explore every opportunity available to them through internships, university activities and participating in industry events,” says American Floral Endowment Executive Director Debi Chedester, AAF. “Dr. Williams has been instrumental in providing top talent to the floriculture industry.”

Event photos will be available here: [SAF Photo albums | Flickr](#)

About The Society of American Florists

The Society of American Florists is the association that connects and cultivates a thriving floral community through training, education, marketing resources and advocacy. Our vision: The power of flowers in every life. For more information, visit SAFNow.org.