

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Elizabeth Daly**

**703-838-5235**

[edaly@safnow.org](mailto:edaly@safnow.org)

## **Michael Smith, AAF, AIFD, CFD, FDI, FSMD, PFCI Wins 54th Annual Sylvia Cup Design Competition**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA. — Sept. 13, 2023 —** Michael Smith, AAF, AIFD, CFD, FDI, FSMD, PFCI of Artistic Designs Unlimited in Marianna, Florida, won the 54th annual Sylvia Cup Design Competition at the Society of American Florists' 138th Annual Convention. During the Stars of the Industry Awards Recognition on Sept. 9 Smith was presented with the grand prize, which includes the trophy cup, \$3,000 and complimentary registration to SAF's 2024 Annual Convention.



The Sylvia Cup is the country's longest running live floral design competition. The Sylvia Cup Design Competition began in 1967 and is named for Sylvia MacGuffog Valencia, a prominent designer and long-time SAF supporter.

Kelsey Thompson, AIFD, owner and head designer at Bloom Floral & Home Studio in Algona, Iowa, was the first runner-up and received \$500; Patience Pickner, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, owner and creative director of The Picket Fence in Chamberlain, South Dakota was second runner-up and received \$250.



The 25 competing designers had just two hours to create three designs in the style of "The Wild, Wild West". The American frontier — popularly known as the Wild West — encompasses the geography, history, folklore, and cultures associated with the forward wave of American expansion in mainland North America. The promise of "free land" and the discovery of gold was too much for many to resist.

The legends, historical events, and folklore of the American frontier have embedded themselves into United States culture so much so that the Old West, and the Western genre of movies, TV & book specifically, has become one of the defining periods of American national identity.

The three designs:

- **The Spirit of the West:** A museum-worthy floral art piece that captures the heritage of the Native Americans, and the influences of Spanish, Mexican, and American cultures.
- **Gold Rush:** A monochromatic yellow wedding bouquet suitable for the wedding of the daughter of a wealthy gold miner.
- **Dearly Departed:** A sympathy tribute that features some representation of a cross and stands as a memorial tribute to those who did not make it along the journey west.

The Sylvia Cup competition, organized by the Professional Floral Communicators-International (PFCI), was sponsored by Smithers-Oasis, which provided the prize money and hard goods, and Certified American Grown, which provided the fresh product.

Three AIFD Certified Floral Evaluators/Judges appointed by the PFCI Board of Trustees scored each design based on nine factors covering design elements, design principles, mechanics and execution and creative application. The highest combined score determined the winner.

The 2023 Judges were: Tim Farrell, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, Jodi McShan, AAF, AIFD, PFCI and Leanne Kesler, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, FDI.

*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](http://SAFNow.org).