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HOW AIFD AND SAF MEMBERSHIPS CHANGED MY FLORAL CAREER

JUNE 08, 2017 THADDEUS SERVANTEZ, AIFD, CFD IN AIFD CFD PATHWAY
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Not too long ago, I was simply the owner of [Westminster Flowers and Gifts](#), a local florist that has been a part of the community just outside of Denver, Colorado for over 50 years. I was happy and doing what I love day in and day out. Today, I am not just an owner and local florist; I am an accredited member of the American Institute of Floral Design (AIFD), an active member of the Society of American Florists (SAF) pursuing my PFCI accreditation, and the Vice President of the Floral Association of the Rockies (FAR).

I am Thaddeus Servantez AIFD, CFD, a person passionate about



floral education, involved in industry groups and actively continuing my career to be more than the neighborhood florist I was a few years ago. How? What changed? **I became a member of organizations that would change my outlook on the floral industry, and now I love what I do more than I ever thought I could!**

An Odd Push of Fate

From an odd push of fate, my family convinced me to take my online test for the Professional Floral Design Evaluation (PFDE) in Denver. To my surprise, I passed and was invited to participate in the hands-on evaluation session at the [annual AIFD Symposium](#). PFDE is the pathway set up by AIFD to become an internationally recognized and accredited florist.

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Their website states: “The mission of AIFD® is to advance the art of professional floral design through education, service, and leadership, and to recognize the achievement of excellence in this art form.” This was the moment when **I realized I had found the missing puzzle piece to fulfill my desire as an artist.** [AIFD](#) gave me the motivation to have a purpose in my work, use the principles and elements of design, and understand my love for flowers as an art form. I am happy to say that **July 5, 2016, was a highlight of my career as I was invited to join AIFD as an accredited member!**

Opening Doors and Making Connections

AIFD opened doors that I never thought possible. Along the way, I met Lisa Weddel AIFD, CFD, IMF, PFCI, a very active member of the [Society of American Florists \(SAF\)](#), who took the time to explain the many benefits that organization could provide me: "SAF is the Society of American Florists. The organization is made up of growers, wholesalers, and retailers in the floral industry. Their mission? The sole mission of SAF is to help our industry in any way possible. They lobby for laws at the capital, they fight bad publicity, promote all the industry holidays and much more." SAF is a voice for all florists. If there is a problem or a question regarding anything in our industry, they have someone to answer it or the resources to find the answer. They also provide workshops, marketing materials, podcasts, conventions, blogs, and archives of articles and other resources available to all members.



After learning how SAF would benefit me and my business, I began looking into joining [Professional Floral Communicators – International \(PFCI\)](#), a [network of professional floral business educators certified by SAF](#). According to SAF, "PFCI is the service mark of the floral industry's finest floral educators. Each member of the organization has proven themselves through their education and experience, their ability to speak authoritatively about topics pertinent to the floral industry such as the principles and elements of floral design, the proper care and handling of flowers, and effective business management techniques." SAF was a perfect fit for my intent to grow my career and share my love for the floral industry and floral education.

“These Organizations are Investments, Not Costs”

The level of involvement linked to the organizations above may seem overwhelming. For those that feel like they're not quite ready to jump in the deep end of the pool, there is endless support and resources available from local floral associations. During my time of service on the board of the [Floral Association of the Rockies \(FAR\)](#), I was able to mentor members of the floral community who actively strive to improve their floral careers and businesses. I have had the opportunity to help so many florists and teach them new ideas help them step outside of the box. That's what FAR and other local floral associations do: **educate, learn, and grow as an association**. Be sure to reach out to your local floral associations in your area to take advantage of these opportunities.

I have only mentioned a few of the many avenues you could take to build connections and strengthen your knowledge and position in the industry. I do, however, want to leave you with one more quote from Lisa Weddel AIFD, CFD, IMF, PFCI; “My thought has always been that **if you don't put yourself out there, you won't have a**



return. These organizations are all investments, not costs—what you invest in time and money you will receive in support, knowledge, and networking. **If a florist sits within their four walls, that is where they will stay: in the confines of their world. You need to be active in the industry to meet people and keep abreast of trends, laws and anything pertaining to the industry.”**

My involvement in these associations has made me proud to own Westminster Flowers and Gifts and honored to be part of the AIFD family. I have so much to be grateful for, and I can honestly say that active participation in the floral community has given me a voice and awareness to handle this constantly changing industry.

TAGS: AIFD, CERTIFICATION, PFCI, SAF, SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS



ABOUT THADDEUS SERVANTEZ, AIFD, CFD

Thaddeus Servantez AIFD, CFD traveled the world as an entertainer for over 20 years with his travels leading him back to his home of Westminster, Colorado. Thaddeus has always pushed to be the best, whether decorating wedding cakes at the tender age of 12, working for the world famous Radio City Rockettes, or working in the Floral industry from the time he was in high school. Thaddeus owned a successful Flower Shop in Las Vegas, Nevada where he worked with corporate events, weddings, movie sets, and celebrity performers. Thaddeus currently owns Westminster Flowers and Gifts and My Denver Wedding Planner in his home state of Colorado. He specializes in Weddings and Event Planning. Westminster Flowers prides itself in the quality and presentation of their products.

Thaddeus was recently inducted into the American Institute of Floral Design. He is currently the Vice President of the Floral Association of the Rockies and has been featured in multiple magazines. Thaddeus strives to continue his education in the Floral Industry and enjoys being around those that share his passion for Flowers.

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