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Memorial tribute established honoring Herman Meinders

April 8, 2025

The [American Floral Endowment](#) has announced a memorial tribute to honor the life and contributions of Herman Meinders, a visionary entrepreneur, devoted philanthropist and esteemed leader in the floral industry. Herman died March 30, 2025, at the age of 87. This tribute was established by AFE Past Chairman Red Kennicott of Kennicott Brothers, a longtime friend of Herman's, in recognition of his profound impact.

Born and raised in Pipestone, Minnesota, Herman's journey from a small farming community to a leader in the floral industry is a testament to his determination and vision. With just 20 cents to his name, he set out on a path that led him to establish American Floral Services (AFS) in 1970 in Oklahoma City. Under his leadership, AFS became one of the largest and most successful flowers-by-wire services, growing to include tens of thousands of florist members across North America and internationally. AFS merged with Teleflora in 2000.

Herman's commitment to floriculture extended far beyond his business success. As a former Chairman (2000-2001), Treasurer, and trustee of AFE, he played a key role in advancing education, research, and industry development for nearly a decade. In 2011, he and his wife, LaDonna, created AFE's first-ever undesignated named fund, which provided support for the industry's most critical needs. This pioneering initiative paved the way for other industry leaders to follow suit. The couple also established the Meinders Retail Florist Education Grant Fund, ensuring that retail florists could access educational opportunities. With contributions now surpassing \$500,000, the program awarded over \$10,000 in grants in its first year alone, with continued growth expected. He was preceded in death by his loving wife in October 2024.

Always a champion of the floral industry and a member of the Legacy Circle, Herman shared this about his ongoing commitment, "As a past Chairman of AFE, I can attest to the importance of the work the Endowment does and the support it provides for all aspects of the floral industry. I'm proud to have been a founding part of helping broaden AFE's reach in the early days, and now to continue to support them with this focus on retail education." This tribute continues this legacy in a lasting way that allows the floral community to continue his memory.

Herman's dedication to the floral industry was recognized through dozens of prestigious honors and awards, celebrating both his business achievements and his unwavering commitment to giving back. In 2012, he received the Floriculture Hall of Fame Award by the Society of American Florists. He also received the Leland T. Kintzele Distinguished Service Award (1994) and many others. His generosity helped develop and establish numerous floral industry programs that will continue to support florists and business leaders for generations to come.

"Herman was a true example of the American Dream and an inspirational role model in how he conducted his professional and personal life," says Red Kennicott.

Beyond the floral industry, Herman was deeply committed to philanthropy and community service. He and LaDonna were [passionate supporters of Oklahoma City University \(OCU\)](#), where they both attended college. Their contributions led to the establishment of the Meinders School of Business, ensuring future generations have access to quality education. Their philanthropic reach also extended to Meinders Gardens, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, and the

Oklahoma City Zoo, among many others. His charitable efforts impacted not only Oklahoma but more than 20 states, supporting causes in higher education, health care and nonprofit initiatives.

Herman Meinders will be remembered not only for his business leadership but also for his kindness, generosity, and dedication to making a lasting difference. His legacy continues to inspire and uplift countless individuals, and through this Memorial Tribute Fund, his influence will endure for generations.

You can honor Herman's memory with a donation to the Herman Meinders Memorial Tribute that can be made [online here](#) or by sending a check with [this form](#) to:

American Floral Endowment
c/o Herman Meinders Memorial Tribute
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