William Cutting, 76, the former owner of renowned Jacksonville, Fla., retailer Kuhn Flowers, who was among the first winners of Floral Management’s annual Marketer of the Year award, died Sat., Aug. 26.

With his “common sense, old school New Englander attitude,” Cutting grew the business to well over 60 percent of the Jacksonville market, said Andy Graham, Kuhn’s longtime marketing director.

Cutting’s no-nonsense approach to business, Graham said, earned Cutting a reputation “for better or worse” throughout the industry.

Cutting studied at the Rittner School of Floral Design in Boston, before beginning his career at Kuhn’s, a business he eventually ran and then purchased in the 1990s.

In between his years with Kuhn’s, Cutting had a seven-year stint as FTD’s national field services supervisor, in Livonia, Mich. There he worked alongside Bill Schodowski, now of Florist Buying Club, who called Cutting “tough as nails,” but also said, “he was a also said, “he was a man who gave willingly and openly.”

Graham, too, recalled an affable demeanor to honor Cutting’s serious ambition. The campaign that won Kuhn Flowers the 1998 Marketer of the Year Award was a series of commercials starring a goofy, friendly character named “Dave the Delivery Guy.” The concept reflected Cutting’s desire to convey the joy of receiving flowers and his appreciation of humor. It worked: The shop experienced a 9 percent growth in sales each month the the year the ads aired and customers started requesting “Dave” to deliver their flowers. To play up the hype, Cutting had “Dave” embroidered on all his drivers’ shirts. “Why not?” he said. “Business should be fun.”

Graham credited the shop’s success to Cutting’s unrelenting work ethic and leadership. “He was a tough businessman who wasn’t afraid to fight for what he thought was best for Kuhn Flowers,” he said. “And he always emphasized that we were not individuals when we walked through those doors. We were collectively Kuhn Flowers.”

Cutting sold Kuhn Flowers in 2008 to retire in Royalston, Mass., near his birth-town of Templeton, where he enjoyed golf, reading, cooking and gardening.

Ecke Ranch, a leading breeder and producer of vegetative plants famous for its poinsettias, has been sold to the Agribio Group, a Dutch plant breeder and propagator. At pre-stime, the transaction was expected to close by mid-September. The company sold its ranch land in Encintas, Calif., last April to the Leichtag Foundation.

Fourth-generation owner Paul Ecke III said he had been looking for the right opportunity “to elevate Ecke Ranch to a new level of excellence.” He called the Agribio Group, which includes as a subsidiary Fides, a major breeder and producer of chrysanthemums and bedding plants, “the ideal fit.” (For more on his deliberation behind the decision, see p. 32.)

Agribio will keep the Ecke Ranch brand and name as a subsidiary, and Ecke Ranch’s employees will keep their jobs. Andy Higgins, Ecke Ranch president, said the acquisition positions the company to better address the needs of the supply chain. “Agribio Group will further our efforts ... through enhanced breeding, innovative supply chain solutions and more focused retail programs,” he said.

The acquisition positions the company to better address the needs of the supply chain. “Agribio Group will further our efforts ... through enhanced breeding, innovative supply chain solutions and more focused retail programs,” he said.

“Agribio Group will keep the Ecke Ranch brand and name as a subsidiary, and Ecke Ranch’s employees will keep their jobs,” Higgins said. Andy Higgins, Ecke Ranch president, said the acquisition positions the company to better address the needs of the supply chain. “Agribio Group will further our efforts ... through enhanced breeding, innovative supply chain solutions and more focused retail programs,” he said.

Legislation that would make it illegal to misrepresent the geographic location of a retail florist online or in print has made it to Gov. Jerry Brown’s desk in California. Bill AB 1581 passed the California State Senate Aug. 13 by a 29-7 majority, and was presented to Brown Aug. 20.

Bill AB 1581 was introduced after SAF member Dirk Lorenz of Fremont Flowers in Fremont, Calif., won his local “There Oughta Be a Law” contest put on by Bob Wieckowski, a member of the California State Assembly.

Twenty-eight states have enacted laws prohibiting deceptive print advertising; five have laws prohibiting deceptive Internet advertising.

Katie Hendrick

Katie Hendrick

A LITTLE LEVITY
Kuhn’s “Dave the Delivery Guy” campaign revealed his appreciation for humor.

Bill Cutting believed that “great product at a great price with great service” would help any retailer achieve success.

COMMON SENSE

WILLIAM H. CUTTING, 1935–2012

FLORAL MANAGEMENT | OCTOBER 2012 | WWW.SAFNOW.ORG

38
Your One Source Floral Supplier

One 66-year-old company, six fresh and innovative brands – FloraCraft® is your single-source supplier for floral foam, supplies and accessories. We’re all about making your job easier and your creativity more impactful. Visit our website to learn how at www.floracraft.com.

Bright design idea!

Design it® Simple Style® helps florists, decorators and event planners take their floral designs to the next level with a wide range of eye-catching accessories. Our LED Light Strand features 15 white lights to add a delicate twinkle to centerpieces, bouquets and more. The lights last for many hours on a single set of replaceable batteries, and both lights and battery pack are safely submersible in water.

Design it® Simple Style® Submersible LED lights are also available in a 2 pack of 7-color LED Light Globes.

FloraCraft®
ONE LONGFELLOW PLACE
LIVONIA, MI 48151
www.floracraft.com