Richard Seaboldt, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, Receives Tommy Bright Award for Achievement in Floral Presentation

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Sept. 14, 2015 — Richard Seaboldt, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, was honored for lifetime achievement in floral presentation as the recipient of the 2015 Tommy Bright Award. The Society of American Florists (SAF) Professional Floral Communicators - International (PFCI) presented the honor on Sept. 12 during SAF Amelia Island 2015, the association’s 131st Annual Convention in Amelia Island, Florida.

The Tommy Bright Award is the highest honor presented by PFCI to its members. It is named after Ethel “Tommy” Bright, whose motto “Learn More, Teach Others” reflects PFCI values as the floral industry’s speakers bureau and the only network of professional floral business educators certified by SAF.

“Richard is a professional speaker and educator who is often referred to as entertaining, funny, exciting, and even feisty,” said PFCI Chairman Lisa Weddel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of L. Weddel Design in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. “Colleagues note Richard’s passion, charm and enthusiasm, and cite what an inspiration he has been to audiences around the world.”

About Richard Seaboldt, AAF, AIFD, PFCI

One of the floral industry’s most beloved designers and presenters, Richard Seaboldt, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, has been entertaining, educating and surprising audiences for five decades.

A risk-taker and true artist, Seaboldt has long been celebrated for his ability to push the bounds of what is possible in design — particularly when marrying concepts from the floral and culinary worlds — but he is also revered as a person dedicated to sharing his deep well of knowledge and committed to helping those in need, often through unheralded acts of kindness.

Over the years, Seaboldt and his partner, Robert Salsman, have owned a number of successful businesses in the Midwest, including fine dining establishments, catering companies and flower and gift shops. Seaboldt himself began his career with Schnell’s Florist in Fayette, Missouri. Upon arriving in Kansas City, he secured a position as a manager of Liesveld’s Florist. He spent 10 years there before moving to manage Trapp & Co.’s Crown Center operation. In 1975, he opened his own store, R.V. Seaboldt’s Custom Florist.
Sixteen years later, Seaboldt embarked upon yet another exciting journey when he closed R.V. Seaboldt’s and opened Poor Richard’s, a business that allowed him to concentrate on the intersection of his many loves and talents — including floral design, antiques, gourmet cooking and party planning and special events — and one of the most progressive industry businesses of its time. As Jo Ellen Schwanke, AAF, NAFD, PFCI, winner of the 2003 Tommy Bright Award, explained: “Richard was doing special events before special events was a buzzword.”

As a presenter, Seaboldt has traveled the world and engaged thousands of people with his one-of-a-kind speaking style and penchant for both high drama and lighthearted whimsy on stage: He once created a “sandcastle” made entirely of brown sugar while the audience watched, delighted. Seaboldt also ensures that each of his presentations reinforced best practices and principles of design, underscoring the talents and abilities of professional florists and floral designers.

A supporter of the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) for more than 35 years, Seaboldt was a national board member for the group for four years and has designed more than 10 programs for the organization’s Regional and National Symposia. He was a board member and president of AIFD’s South Central Region for eight years and started the group’s “Friends in Need” program to help fellow members. He also has been a member of the AIFD Foundation board and, for many years, served as auctioneer extraordinaire for the popular fundraising auction, rallying AIFD members to support the foundation through thousands and thousands of dollars in donated funds. In 2014, AIFD presented Seaboldt with its Award of Distinguished Service to the Floral Industry.

Beyond AIFD, Seaboldt is a past president of Missouri State Florists Association, a former board member of NEMOKAN and member of the American Floral Services’ Education Team. Among many other community roles, he has been on the advisory board of the Rose Brooks Center, which provides emergency support services to women and children, and founded the “Gourmet Gala” in Kansas City to benefit the March of Dimes.

An avid antique collector, Seaboldt has an expansive collection of Santa Claus toys and figurines, which has been displayed at the Kansas City Museum and featured in Smithsonian magazine.

Seaboldt majored in art education at Northeast Missouri State College and the University of Missouri and was once a commercial artist for the American Academy of Family Physicians.

EDITORS: Images from the SAF Awards Presentation and SAF Amelia Island 2015 will be posted on Flickr at Flickr.com/SocietyOfAmericanFlorists.