

September | 2016

EXPRESSIONS OF FLOWERS®

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**INNOVATIVE ARTISTRY**  
SHOWCASING THE IMAGINATIVE  
VISION OF ADAM HAVRILLA, AIFD, CFD, ICPF

**ON THE EDGE**  
ACCLAIMED EVENT DESIGNER  
DAVID BEAHM CREATES AMAZING  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

**OWNER'S CORNER**  
LAKESIDE FLORIST GROWS ITS BUSINESS  
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by Casey Gale

# Teachable Moments

Learning experiences are at the core of every move designer *Adam Havrilla* makes

**More than 20 years ago, Adam Havrilla, AIFD, CFD, ICPF, fell into the floral industry.** Unemployed and unsure which direction to take next, a friend suggested Adam try his hand working in a flower shop. Quickly, he realized this was not merely a stepping-stone on the road to a career, but a career in itself. "I thought, 'This could be what you dedicate your life to, versus just a job,'" Adam says.

Over the past two decades, he has made good on dedicating himself to his craft. After years of working under other florists, he decided to break out on his own nearly five years ago and open a floral event design company, Artistic Blooms Chicago—a career-defining decision that he says is a constant learning experience. "I think everybody is terrified of taking the plunge, but in everything I do, I think, 'What's the worst that can happen?' It doesn't always go exactly how you want, but that doesn't make it bad. It means you learn something from it and you move on."

Learning experiences are at the core of every move Adam makes. As president of the Illinois State Florists' Association, he names education as his greatest passion within the floral industry, and says

he is disheartened by the amount of florists who do not make use of the resources available to them.

"We all know about AIFD. But when I go talk to florists and say I'm president of the Illinois State Florists' Association, many ask what it is. We've been around since 1905—we're the oldest floral organization in the country," he explains. "There are so many tools out there that can help people with business choices, design choices, and how to be stronger in the industry." Each month, the Illinois State Florists' Association offers classes in those areas. While Adam notes that not every state has such an association, he still encourages all florists to connect with other local florists for guidance and inspiration.

"Most important is networking with other floral industry designers," he says. "Because of my standing and location, I know so many industry leaders, and we just bounce ideas off each other to come up with creative solutions. People are so afraid to talk to florists from the next town over, because they're afraid they're going to steal their customers. But instead of worrying, florists should be looking at how they can use communication as a tool to come together and create. That's how I get a lot of my creations: Talking to fellow designers."

As the trends continue to shift, Adam leans on other Chicagoan designers to keep his ideas fresh. He says he is particularly enthused about wedding trends ramping up in Chicago: Bigger bridal parties, lush bouquets, and ceremonies in unique locations. Having not decorated a church wedding in two years, he says ceremonies and receptions that take place in the same room add an extra challenge to his job.

"You've got to plan, plan, plan," he says. "You need to find a way to shift the room, and figure out how you're going to flip it in 35 minutes. Whenever I'm doing a wedding that takes place all in the same room, I think about how I can repurpose every aspect so that it looks different, but can still be redesigned in a good time and manner."

Yet, ever the innovator and student of the craft, Adam says he is always up for the task. "I love to do anything that is unusual and unexpected." ●





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**Designer:** Adam Havrilla, AIFD, CFD, ICPF

**Experience:** 20+ years

**Exposure/Achievements:** President, Illinois State Florists' Association; numerous awards for excellence in design, including first place in wedding bouquets and tablescapes; 2014 Best Business by the River North Business Association