

by Fred Russell

BORN TO Design

Scott Edwards, AFF, AIFD, of Scott's Floral, Gifts and Greenhouse knew early on just what he wanted to do

Starting in the basement there's only one direction to go and that's up!

Scott Edwards of Scott's Floral, Gifts and Greenhouse start may have been modest, but now he has two stores in central Pennsylvania and has been serving the community for over 30 years.

Scott's career also includes serving on an elite design team which created floral decorations for the Statue of Liberty Centennial Celebration in New York City and for the presidential inaugurations of both George Bush and

mother would come in take it all down and wash our clothes. The next day I would get up and do the same thing all over again. Then, when I was 17, I opened my first flower shop in the basement of my parent's house.

● **WHAT'S BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?**

Without question our biggest challenge was back in 2003 when our original store where we had been since 1979 burned to the ground. It was March 31, about 9:00 in the evening and I was at home tying bows for Easter when I get a call from a relative who knew someone at the fire department and told me the shop was on fire. One day before April 1, and I thought for sure it was an April fool's prank. Just 45 minutes later I was standing in front of the building totally engulfed in flames. My wife, Judy and I were completely distraught and were ready to throw in the sponge and say we're done. However time heals and with the insurance money and overwhelming emotional support of our family we built a 15,000 square foot floral and garden center and our business has thrived.

● **DISCUSS PARTICULAR BUSINESS STRATEGIES THAT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL**

The best thing we ever did was start buying our fresh floral products direct. I'm not saying there isn't a need for wholesalers, but we started buying straight from the farms and use an expedited trucking service for our floral delivery. We save a lot of money and more importantly the quality can't be beat. We're getting fresh product in just days after being in the farms. We developed relationships with several different growers in the Miami area that own the farms and ship directly to my store in a matter of days. I would suggest to any florist to explore this avenue.

● **WHAT GOALS HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED?**

My goal has always been the same ever since opening the flower shop in my parent's basement—getting more flowers in more people's hands, more often. We are located in a very rural part of central Pennsylvania and we have made our store a destination place. People from all of the surrounding areas come in to see what going on at Scott's place!

One thing we have learned is that you can't be everything to everybody, but you have to try. Whether it is the \$20,000 bride or a single rose purchaser you have to treat them all as a valued customer. One thing we do is we have "design center tables" immediately accessible to customers as they walk in the door. They can either create their own arrangement from a bucket of 99 cent flowers or we'll create one for them. This is an idea we came up with to compete with the low prices of the big box outfits.



>>> Scott's has become a destination place for folks who live nearby.

Bill Clinton. In 2006, Scott received the high honor of "Wedding of the Year," from *Florists' Review*.

● **HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?**

When I was very young I used to transpose the family laundry room into a showroom of different arrangements and creations. I would use the washer, dryer, and ironing board for display stands and at the end of they day my

● WHAT WOULD YOU STILL LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH?

I want to educate. Be a voice in the industry. The goal I would give to any florist or someone coming into our community is they need to be a true professional florist. No basement Betties—hey, I was just 17 when I worked in the basement, LOL!—or fly-by-night florists who are looking to make a quick buck. These people have hurt our industry and damaged our reputation as being professionals. True florists need as much help as they can possibly get in order to get their feet on the ground and also learn from the mistakes that others have made. Every florist should feel the obligation to give every person interested in being a florist help on getting started and becoming better. It will only strengthen the floral community.

● WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE?

It all starts with customer service, literally. As soon as a customer walks through the door they are greeted with a smile and “feel free to look around and if we can help you with anything let us know.” Customer service seems like its becoming a lost art. You have to give your customers a reason to come back. If you provide them with a pleasant shopping experience, quality products and a fair price you’ll have a customer for life. With our Point-of-Sale System we keep a customer database on file so if one of our regulars comes in and asks what he gave his wife on Valentine’s Day last year we can tell him. To have that knowledge on hand helps build trust and confidence. 📌

Owner:
Scott Edwards,
AIFD, AAF

Shop:
Scott’s Floral, Gifts
and Greenhouse

Locations:
Danville, PA &
Lewisburg, PA

Year Established:
1979

Employees:
12



Interesting Tidbit:

* Twin daughters, **Holly and Heather** also work in the shop. After graduating from college shortly after the fire, they realized their hearts belonged in the family business. Holly emulates her father and does a lot of the designing and consulting while Heather follows more closely with the role of her mother and does all the communications and bookkeeping.

>>> Scott and his wife Judy Edwards