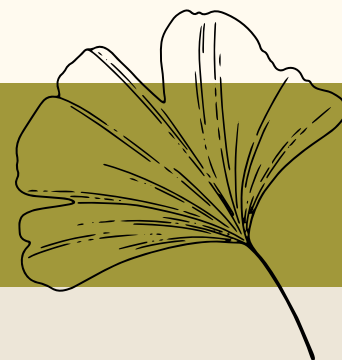


August 2026

NORTH CENTRAL AIFD
Newsletter



Symposium Recap

"Elevate" 2026 was a quick week of great education and time spent with our floral family.

North Central shined, with members Amber Kirkland AIFD and Sarah LoBue AIFD leading hands-on workshops. Julie Poelter AIFD and Kelsey Thompson AIFD both presented on the main stage, and Tom Bowling AIFD taught an immersive design experience.

The real stars are our new inductees and an award winner.... read on for their features below.

A word from the President

My name is Kelsey Thompson, and I am so honored to be stepping into the role of North Central AIFD Regional President. I've been a part of this industry for a long time, and this region has always felt like home to me, so being trusted to lead it means a great deal.

I want to be upfront: I believe in clear communication, practical action, and making sure our members actually feel connected to what this chapter is doing. You'll be hearing from me regularly, because I think a region is only as strong as the people in it, and you deserve to know what's going on.

Chapter Finances

As your new executive board, one of our first responsibilities has been taking an honest look at the chapter's finances. What we found is that our account balances need some attention, and we want to address that proactively rather than wait until it becomes a real problem.

With that in mind, we've made the decision to pause non-essential spending for the next year. This includes scholarships offered through our North Central region. We encourage you to use the resources and scholarships available through the AIFD Foundation, and want to reassure you that this isn't a permanent shift — it's a deliberate, short-term plan to rebuild our reserves and put North Central on solid financial footing going forward.

We don't take this lightly, and we're committed to being transparent with you as we work through it. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out — or volunteer for fundraising events!



Cell Phone:
515-890-0298

Personal Email:
kelsey@petalsandprofits.com



HELP WANTED

We're building out a Fundraising Committee, and we need one enthusiastic volunteer from each of our states and provinces to join us as "scouts".

Here's what the commitment looks like:

- 4 meetings per year (virtual)
- Keep an eye out for events in your area where North Central could sell bouquets as a fundraiser
- Share those leads with the committee so we can plan and coordinate

That's it. You don't even have to run the events, you just need to be plugged in to your state and willing to pass along opportunities when you see them. Think festivals, markets, community gatherings, trade shows, sports competitions, or any event where a flower booth would be a welcome addition.

We're looking for representation from every state/province in our region:

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Ohio
- Wisconsin
- Manitoba
- Saskatchewan

Interested? Email Kelsey at kelsey@petalsandprofits.com to raise your hand. We'd love to have you at the table as either a scout or a full committee member.

Sympathy & Get Well Gifts

One small but meaningful thing our chapter can do is acknowledge our members during difficult times. Going forward, we'll be temporarily "pausing" sending gifts and flowers due to budget cuts, but we will be sending sympathy and get well cards on behalf of North Central.

If you hear that a fellow member, or someone connected to our community, is dealing with a loss or health challenge, please reach out and let me know.

Send a quick email to Kelsey with the person's name, contact info, and situation, and I'll make sure a card goes out from the chapter.

SAVE THE DATE



The Mid-Year meeting is slated for March 20th/21st in Indianapolis IN.

This will coincide with the second weekend of the Indiana Flower and Patio Show, where our chapter will have the opportunity to sell flowers as a fundraiser PLUS share the joy of our industry through various demonstrations and a floral "game show".

Please contact Michelle Soupley AIFD, CFD for more info or to sign up to volunteer for sales or to participate in demos/show.

michelle.soupley@gmail.com



Member Spotlights

A round of applause for our newest AIFD inductees. Welcome to the North Central family, we are proud of you!

Both Eddie and Keith are currently based in the Chicago area, click on their name link to learn more and make sure to follow their social pages!



[Eddie Dooling-Lyon AIFD](#)



[Keith Sprewer AIFD](#)

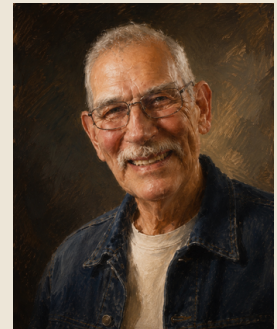


[Loann Burke AIFD](#)

Kudos to Loann Burke AIFD for receiving the 2026 AIFD Special Award of Recognition.

This prestigious honor celebrates her years of leadership, service, education, and lasting impact on our industry. She has volunteered for countless events and committees over the years for both our region and the AIFD organization. We are incredibly fortunate to have her as part of our North Central family.

We are saddened to share the passing of long-time member Rick Orr AIFD, CFD. Rick passed away on Friday, July 24, 2026, in Sonoma, CA. with his family by his side. He was a Laureate of AIFD, inducted into AIFD in 1987 and was a LIFE member of the organization. A card including a hand-painted Japanese Maple – Rick's favorite plant – was sent to his family. Donations in his honor can be made to the AIFD Foundation, tagged to North Central, or to Allerton Park and Retreat Center, 515 Old Timber Rd., Monticello, IL 61856.



This newsletter will come out four times a year, and I want it to actually be worth reading. That means I need your help filling it!

Drop me a line anytime. Our next issue goes out late fall, so start sending your updates now.

Here are a few things I'd love to hear about from members:

- Programs, workshops, or events you've been part of
- Design work you're proud of
- Business milestones or big news
- Industry events coming up in your state or region
- Tips or tricks for your fellow florists

