

Dr. Joseph W. Love Flower Grower of the Year Award

The North Carolina Commercial Flower Growers' Association is proud to announce the beginning of a new award of excellence. It is the Dr. Joseph W. Love Flower Grower of the Year Award. Professor Joseph W. Love was involved with greenhouse crops extension for 25 years. The award will be given annually at the June Southeast Greenhouse Conference.

The procedure for the award will include nominating an individual, followed by having that individual fill out the application form. Any NCCFGA members can nominate an individual. Nominations are due by January 7th. Those people who are nominated will then be sent an application which is due to the NCCFGA Office February 15th. The grower awards committee will then review the applications and select the winner. Nomination forms are available from the NCCFGA website (www.ncfga.org).

Background Information About Dr. Joseph W. Love

In 1963 funding was made available for the establishment of a floriculture extension specialist position in the Department of Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University. Until then one person had the responsibilities for both nursery and floriculture crops. Forecasts indicated that in the very near future there would be a substantial increase in the numbers and economic values of both industries. The forecasts were correct, except perhaps no one realized how great those increases would be. Dr. Joseph W. Love was the first person selected for the floriculture position.

Joe had received his PhD degree from the Ohio State University in 1962 and Dr. D. C. Kiplinger was his advisor. His first position was at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he was involved in Floriculture Teaching and Research. When the Floriculture Extension Specialist position at N. C. State became available Joe applied, was offered the position, and retired after over 25 years of outstanding service.

“Service” is the appropriate word to use in describing the philosophy of Joe Love as a floriculture extension specialist. No grower was ever rebuked by him for a telephone call late in the evening, or on a Saturday or Sunday. His office door was always open for growers with a problem, students seeking advice on job opportunities, or sales representatives who wanted his opinion on a new product, a new variety, or information on plant culture.

On many occasions a grower would call Joe with a desperate plea for help. There were no digital cameras for the grower to show the crop electronically so Joe would go to the individual's greenhouse and almost always correctly assess the problem and recommend the proper action needed.

Many of the people now leaders in the industry were just children when Joe would visit the family business. They witnessed the way Joe helped their parents, and how welcome he was on the premises. Many of the people now in floriculture industry were members of the intercollegiate flower judging teams which Joe coached for many years. That activity wasn't in Joe's job description, but he saw great value in teaching students how to judge quality in products they might someday be producing for selling. The team members would meet in the evening and on Saturday morning so Joe could fulfill his other responsibilities. The North Carolina Commercial Flower Growers' Association generously helped fund the trips the students took to the judging contests.

His original assignment was 100% extension but Joe developed a new course in the department, HS 440 Greenhouse Operations and Management, to supplement the production courses. Joe had every student develop a greenhouse plan as if they were going into the business, and when some of the students decided to start their own

operation they used that model to get a bank loan. Joe's tremendous ability to remember almost everything he saw or read made his information current and accurate.

Joe conducted applied pioneering research on the use of growth regulators to control height and flowering of floriculture crops, the use of slow-release fertilizer, and pine bark media. He also was involved in the publication of poinsettia and azalea manuals, initiated the Holiday Plant Day which was first held in Raleigh in December but later was held in Shelby, Asheville, Wilmington, Smithfield, Charlotte and other locations. The annual Flower Growers' Short Course also was Joe's responsibility, and he was Chairman of the Bedding Plant Growers annual conference when it was held in Raleigh.

When Joe retired in 1989, the Association made him an Honorary Life Member. Naming the Grower of the Year Award as the Joseph W. Love Award is a verification of his outstanding service to growers.

A Profile of Joseph W. Love's Achievements

- President, Southern Region, American Society for Horticultural Science, 1986-87.
- Recipient of the Henry M. Covington Extension Award, 1988
- Recipient of the Paul Ecke, Sr. Award in 1983 and 1984 when his intercollegiate flower judging teams won first place in the national competition.
- Recognized by Pi Alpha Xi National in 1991 for his devotion to students and teaching and dedication to floriculture.
- Developed a new course in the department, HS 440, which covered greenhouse operations and management.
- Given an Honorary Life Membership in the North Carolina Commercial Flower Growers' Association in 1989.