

## **Northern Piedmont Florists Association**

The Northern Piedmont Florist Association met for Dinner and a very special program at the Durham Hilton on Hillsborough Rd., Tuesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2008. Thirty one (31) members attended with a reception starting at 6:15pm, dinner at 7:00pm and the program at 8:00pm.

During dinner we elected new officers for 2008/2009. Gary O'Connor, President, Flowers by Gary; Larry Wood, Vice President, Ninth Street Flowers; Maggy Sargent, Secretary, Purple Puddle; and Caroline Uyama, Treasurer, Angel Roses. We heard a report from Floral Dimensions' Susan Hughes on the success of our Spring Fund Raiser in conjunction with the Sarah P. Duke Gardens Plant and Craft Sale in April, and a very nice (end of year) report total from our going Treasurer, Michael Turner, Sarah and Michaels Flower Farm.

The program included a floral design presentation on Sympathy Flowers, including Funeral Flowers contributed by the members, in addition to centerpieces for each of the six tables. J.C. Scarborough III represented Scarborough and Hargett, and provided a display casket for a half casket spray. The program was moderated and commented on by our New President; Gary O'Connor, who introduced the subject, and the designers. The program generated a very positive reaction and as Gary indicated, was stimulated by member and program chair Jay Guilford, and the recent publication of new research studies, one at Harvard and another earlier one at Rutgers University, that have documented the emotional value of flowers in the bereavement process. The meeting focused on bereavement/sympathy and the role of Funeral Directors together with Florists in this emotion packed process.

J.C. Scarborough III represented Scarborough and Hargett, and Mark Higgins represented Hall-Wynne Funeral Home, both in Durham. NC. Both funeral directors focused on the changing style for the services and articulated the idea of focus being on the Celebration of Life rather than mourning the passing of the deceased.

The group also focused on efforts to encourage funeral directors and obituary writers to use phrases other than the florist negative phrase, "In lieu of flowers.." in the published obituaries. A suggestion list was provided to all in attendance and sent to all the funeral homes in the members area.

Also we can announce that on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 at Briar Creek CC in Raleigh, NC one of Floral Dimensions at Academy Court's designers, Kristina Reece (Floral Dimensions is a member of both Allied Organizations) entered the Wake County Florist Association's Designer of the Year competition and was the successful winner from among 10 competitors. Shane Smith from Four Seasons Florist and Interiors in Benson, NC was 2nd runner up, and then Brandi Dennison from the Purple Poppy in Wake Forest, NC was 1st runner up. You can check out Wake County's web site at [www.wcfloristassociation.com](http://www.wcfloristassociation.com) for more details about their meeting and their other activities.

Most Sincerely,

JON MILLER, President Outgoing  
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***Kristina Reese, Wake County Florist Association's Designer of the Year***