



NEWS

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SAF's 2007 Paul Ecke, Jr. Award Given to Veteran Ecke Ranch Employee

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Sept. 27, 2007 – The Society of American Florists (SAF) presented the 2007 SAF Paul Ecke, Jr. Award to Edgar Engert, blooming plants sales manager of Paul Ecke Ranch in Encinitas, Calif., on Sept. 27 at the Industry Awards Dinner during SAF Palm Springs 2007, SAF's 123rd Annual Convention in Palm Springs, Calif. First presented in 1984 as the Golden Bouquet Award, the honor was renamed in 2002 to honor Paul Ecke, Jr., AAF, of Paul Ecke Ranch in Encinitas, Calif. -- an accomplished businessman and true leader. The award is a symbol of exemplary devotion to the floral profession, industry and community.

Paul Ecke III, owner and CEO of Paul Ecke Ranch, who was on hand to present the award at the Awards Dinner, says "I am thrilled that Edgar is receiving this award ... There really is no one more passionate about our industry and community service." As the blooming plants sales manager, Engert is responsible for blooming poinsettia sales and has traveled all over the world promoting poinsettias at trade shows. "He is energetic, enthusiastic ... and very motivated. He likes to get things done," says Andy Higgins, president of Paul Ecke Ranch, of this year's award winner. "He has been a big force in the evolution of the Ranch over the years," agrees Ecke. Engert also helped bring New Guinea impatiens from Germany to Ecke as an expansion of its offerings. "One of his greatest assets is [his ability] to match customer needs with product," says Higgins, "He

has done a great job managing customer relations and helping our customers have more success with our product.”

For the last 17 years, he has been the coordinator of the Paul Ecke, Jr., Flower & Garden Show at the San Diego County Fair, which attracts more than one million visitors in a three-week period. The show is “a big deal -- a mainstay for our company ... he spends a better part of the year planning [it],” says Higgins.

Started in the 1940’s, the show used to be held in a smaller building on the fairgrounds. But Engert, along with Paul Ecke, Jr., lobbied to have it moved to a larger, outdoor venue within the fairgrounds. The new space provided room for more exhibits, which, in turn, allowed the flower show to grow.

Engert’s responsibilities include the entry and maintenance of more than 60 gardens in a 4-1/2 acre area, as well as managing floral arrangement competitions and thousands of specimen blooms. He also began the tradition of having an industry celebrity speaker, such as Karen Hedges, the director of horticulture and resort enhancement at Disneyland, on the opening day of the Flower Show. “The show has grown in prominence,” says Higgins, “His involvement really put it on the map.”

In addition, Engert is the president-elect of the California State Floral Association, a board member of the Quail Botanical Garden and is a member of the San Diego County Flower and Plant Association and Los Angeles Men’s Garden Club.

Engert has won numerous awards, including The San Diego County Flower and Plant Association’s Outstanding Person of the Year Award, The San Diego Horticultural Society’s Horticulturalist of the Year Award, the Jonathan Tarr Foundation’s Humanitarian of the Year Award and the Paul Ecke III Encinitas Chamber of Commerce Community Hero Award.

He is also very involved in the local community. Engert has been on the Encinitas Chamber of Commerce board of directors for more than 30 years, is a past-president and puts on an Oktoberfest fundraiser for the Chamber of Commerce every year. He also is a Magdalena Ecke YMCA board member and is a member of the YMCA's Men's Club. In addition, he served as a past parks and recreation commissioner and helped beautify downtown Encinitas.

Born in Germany in 1936, Engert moved to New York in 1958. In 1968, he moved to California and has been working for the Paul Ecke Ranch for the last 39 years. He has also owned two florist shops since the 1970's, which are now owned and run by his children, Jim and Anne Engert.

For more information or to nominate an industry member for SAF's Paul Ecke, Jr. Award, visit www.safnow.org/awards or contact SAF's Debi Aker at (800) 336-4743; daker@safnow.org. Contact Shelley Estersohn at (800) 336-4743, or sestersohn@safnow.org for photographs from the SAF 2007 Industry Awards Dinner.

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The Society of American Florists is the association leader for all segments of the floral industry including wholesalers, growers and retailers. SAF is proud to provide marketing, business and government services for more than 12,000 participants in the U.S. floral industry.