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## Augusto Solano Inducted Into SAF's Floriculture Hall Of Fame



**ALEXANDRIA, VA – AUGUST 20, 2025** – For more than a quarter of a century, Augusto Solano, AAF, has been the driving force behind Colombian floriculture's rise to global prominence, leading with equal parts vision, diplomacy, and compassion. As executive president of Asocolflores (the Colombian Association of Flower Exporters) since 2000, Solano has not only shaped the future of Colombia's floral export industry but forged enduring partnerships across borders — including the United States — and cemented his place among the industry's most influential figures.

For his unmatched contributions to the flower world, Solano now receives its highest honor: induction into the Society of American Florists' Floriculture Hall of Fame.

### About Augusto

Throughout his career, Solano has embodied the qualities that define a transformative leader: strategic foresight, unwavering dedication, and a deep understanding of the delicate balance between commerce and community. "Augusto sees the big picture while still focusing on the people behind the flowers," said Stan Pohmer, AAF, former executive director of the Flower Promotion Organization. "He understands that relationships, not just trade agreements, are what sustain this industry."

Solano took the helm at Asocolflores during turbulent times. The collapse of major exporters, shifting international trade policies, and internal violence threatened Colombia's floral industry. Solano met each challenge head-on. In the wake of the USA Floral disintegration and U.S. anti-dumping suits, he played a key role in establishing the Flower Promotion Organization, a joint American-Colombian initiative that replaced litigation with collaboration to increase flower consumption. Under his stewardship, Colombia emerged not just as a floral powerhouse, but as a reliable, responsible trade partner.

He also safeguarded the industry through the COVID-19 pandemic. With flowers deemed non-essential, farms faced closure. Solano worked with the Colombian government to obtain critical transport and work permits, preserving tens of thousands of jobs and reinforcing Colombia's reputation as a consistent, quality supplier. "This wasn't just about economics," said Asocolflores President José Antonio Restrepo. "It was about protecting livelihoods and keeping families and communities intact."

Solano's forward-thinking leadership revitalized Colombia's premier trade event, Proflora. When violence forced the show's relocation from Bogotá to Cartagena in 2001, he seamlessly orchestrated the transition. The move proved fruitful—four successful editions of Proflora followed, showcasing Colombia's resilience and reinforcing its central role in the global floral community.

But Solano's influence extends far beyond Colombia. Under his tenure, Asocolflores has become a steadfast supporter of the Society of American Florists — both financially and through strategic collaboration. In 2022, the association entered the prestigious \$2 Million Club for cumulative contributions to the American Floral Endowment. “His support of AFE research helped bring cut flower studies to the forefront,” said fellow Hall of Fame member Terril Nell, Ph.D., AAF, former SAF president and AFE research director. “He's strengthened ties between our industries and elevated the role of science in sustainable floral production.”

Indeed, sustainability has been a cornerstone of Solano's legacy. He expanded Asocolflores's fledgling Florverde program into Florverde Sustainable Flowers® (FSF), a respected global standard that promotes social equity, environmental responsibility, and economic resilience. FSF certification is now widely adopted, impacting not just flower quality, but healthcare access, education, and worker safety for thousands of farm employees.

Solano also led the creation of Ceniflores, the Colombian Center for Floriculture Innovation, a virtual research hub connecting scientists, growers, and exporters to address challenges and drive competitiveness. Thanks to his advocacy, AFE broadened its focus to include cut flowers and consumer behavior — generating insights that have benefited the entire hemisphere.

Under Solano's inclusive vision, Asocolflores expanded to represent small and regional producers beyond Bogotá and Medellín. In 2008, he opened an office in Pereira — heart of the coffee region — that soon evolved into a support center for small-scale growers producing tropicals and foliage for larger exporters.

Solano's influence also reached the diplomatic sphere. He was integral to securing Colombia's free trade agreements with the United States, Canada, the European Union, and others. Symbolically, the first product to enter the U.S. under the Colombia-U.S. FTA in 2012 was a bouquet of flowers, an enduring emblem of his work.

His leadership has garnered wide respect. He served on the boards of Union Fleurs, AIPH, and the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative, and was honored with AFE's Ambassador Award, the Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association's Leland T. Kintzele Award, and SAF's John Walker Award. Yet, amid such accolades, those who know Solano best speak first of his character. “He listens. He connects. He solves problems,” said Restrepo. “He makes people feel seen — and then he helps them succeed.”

Beyond floriculture, Solano's philanthropic reach includes efforts for displaced populations, children's welfare, and education through initiatives like “Cultivating Peace in the Family,” which has touched over 200,000 workers and families in Colombia. He has served on the boards of universities and local non-governmental organizations, always with an eye toward empowerment and community impact.

*Event photos will be available here: [SAF Photo albums](#) | [Flickr](#)*

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## About The Society of American Florists

The Society of American Florists is the association that connects and cultivates a thriving floral community through training, education, marketing resources and advocacy. Our vision: The power of flowers in every life. For more information, visit [safnow.org](https://safnow.org).