



Jackie Kinealy/Index  
Blossom Shop employee Don Pevehouse sits at his work space at the back of the flower shop last week. Early February is the busiest time of year for the shop because of Valentine's Day, he said. Below, Pevehouse makes a bow at the Blossom Shop where he has worked for more than 20 years and at various Kirksville florists and greenhouses for more than 50.

# Blooming love

**Local florist Don Pevehouse creates arrangements for more than 50 years**

BY JACKIE KINEALY  
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Don Pevehouse has something in common with the orchid species he collected throughout his life — both are rare breeds.

The Kirksville florist for more than 50 years is the last Pevehouse in Missouri, and the longest-working florist in Kirksville. He never married or had children, but he said his legacy will be the plants he nurtured and his knowledge of flowers he passed down.

Pevehouse started in the flower industry as a 16-year-old sophomore in high school at a Kirksville greenhouse, he said. In his senior yearbook, he said he wanted to be a florist, which he said was unusual for a boy in 1960.

During the more than 50 years since, Pevehouse lived his teenage ambition, working in almost every flower shop in Kirksville.

He also amassed a large personal collection of flowers, including a zoo of orchids he housed in a greenhouse next to the home he shared with his mother.

But after his mother died 28 years ago, Pevehouse donated 25 rare orchid plants to the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St. Louis.

"It really came down to the point where I lost my mom in '84 and it was either me going to get warm or the orchids going to get warm," said Pevehouse, sitting at a counter covered with deflated Valentine's Day balloons and half-constructed bouquets in the back of the Blossom Shop where he's worked for the last 23 years.

Soon after his mother died, the greenhouse attached to the home they shared was expensive to heat, and fuel prices were especially high that year. Rather than paying to keep the botanicals warm through the winter, Pevehouse donated his collection to the Botanical Gardens orchid collection.

Every year, the Botanical Gardens displays an Orchid Show. This year's show began Saturday and continues through March 25. During the past, Pevehouse has traveled to St. Louis to see his flowers on display in the garden's Climatron. He won't make it this year, he said, but it feels good to know visitors are enjoying the beautiful and rare



orchid species he no longer owns.

"Now, they don't have my name on them, but I know where they came from," he said. "I was really proud to see something that I'd grown and other people could enjoy too."

Some plants he donated were rare species not easily available in the United States because of the risk of depletion, Pevehouse said.

All orchid species are rare, but more species are becoming endangered, mostly because of climate change and deforestation, said Babs Wagner, the Botanical Garden's orchid specialist and curator of the annual orchid exhibition of more than 800 plants.

The exhibit is changing constantly — some species blossom only a few days of the year, but they can live for more than a century if a healthy part of the plant is clipped and re-potted, she said. The Botanical Gardens owns an orchid from the late 1800s, she said.

"It's not the offspring of the orchid — it's actually a piece of the plant that continues growing," she said. "You can take a healthy part of the plant and it continues growing."

The Plant Records department at the Missouri Botanical Gardens couldn't locate the Pevehouse donation from the 1980s in its database because the filing system has changed several times during the last two decades, said Rebecca Sucher, Plant Re-

ords Coordinator.

But it's possible the Pevehouse donation still is part of the collection, given the potential longevity of orchids, Wagner said. If they're not, the Botanical Gardens donates plants it releases from the collection, she said.

Throughout his career, Pevehouse has worked for almost every flower shop in town, and he's spread his knowledge

"I think I've taught about 36 people to arrange bouquets in my life," he said.

He's worked at the Blossom Shop since 1988, and current owner Melodie Sevits said she's seen him teach delivery-truck drivers and store employees who knew nothing about flowers the basics of floral design and bow making during downtime.

"He's started a lot of people in the business working from the ground up," she said. "There's been so many people in and out of the shop that's he's taught. A lot of them have moved but he's given them a start with different techniques that they couldn't have got without working hands-on with him."

Sevits said she met Pevehouse after he donated his orchid collection, so she never got to see the exotic plants. But even without orchids, his house is filled with flowers.

"Now I've gotten over the orchids and I've got Christmas cactus blooming," Pevehouse said.

## Student continues to ride

**Freshman Elizabeth Miller achieves success as a part of Truman's Equestrian Team**

BY DAVID HUTCHINSON  
Staff Reporter

Two or three times each week, freshman Elizabeth Miller puts down her biology homework and treks to the University Farm to practice her jumps and control for nearly two hours with one of Truman's 32 horses. This weekly ritual allows Miller to continue her love of riding horses.

Miller is an Equestrian Team member, but her passion for riding started as a family affair. Now, Miller enjoys success as she competes in horseback riding because of her childhood experience and she shares her love and knowledge with others, she said.

Miller shares a long history of horseback riding with her mother, Lynne Miller, and has experienced success as a freshman rider.

Elizabeth rode her first horse when she was 2 years old with the help of her mother, Elizabeth said. But her experience with horses began before she was born.

Lynne has been riding horses for much of her life, she said, and like Elizabeth, Lynne was a member of her university's equestrian team. Just two weeks after Elizabeth was born, Lynne said she was eager to get back to her barn in Union, Mo.

"As soon I was allowed to go back to riding, [Elizabeth] went out to the barn with me," Lynne said.

Early during her youth, Elizabeth expressed interest in horseback riding, Lynne said. She took lessons for horseback riding and always helped with feeding the horses and any other chores she was old enough to handle.

"She always worked hard at her lessons, so we looked for a pony that she could ride," Lynne said.

Elizabeth was given her first pony, BayStar, when she was 8 years old. Elizabeth no longer rides with BayStar, but currently rides with the horses of Truman's Equestrian Team.

She still regularly demonstrates her skill in collegiate horseshows. As a freshman, Miller was placed in the most competitive division of the team by Equestrian Team coach Emily Costello.

The Equestrian Team comprises both an English-style hunt team, a faster paced team that works with jumps, and a Western-style stock team, which focuses more on the seat of the rider.

Elizabeth competes in the hunt division, in which the goal is to ride smoothly and make movements look effortless. Although a rider might exert immense effort to control the horse, to those watching, it should appear as though the rider and horse are communicating telepathically, she said.

Attempting to control such large animals can be difficult, Elizabeth said.

"They're horses, they have minds of their own, and they're really big," Elizabeth said. "Sometimes you fall off. Sometimes you get hurt. They're just unpredictable sometimes."

This is Elizabeth's first year as a competitor in the Intercollegiate Horseshows Association, and she already has garnered 10 individual awards for her riding. Of the three horseshows Elizabeth has competed in at Truman, she placed first in her division at the Illinois State University Show and the Northern Illinois University Show.

Costello said she attributes this uncommon amount of early success to her riding experience.

Elizabeth has been riding competitively since she was at least 8 years old, and her lengthy time on the backs of horses has aided her judgments in competition. For instance, Costello said when Elizabeth competes in jumping her experience helps her to determine how far ahead of the fence she and her horse must leap.

Equestrian Team members have varying experience levels, and Elizabeth does not hoard her knowledge, Costello said. She shares her advice with the less experienced members and remains a humble and supportive team member, she said.

"The team is really good," Elizabeth said. "We have a lot of fun. Everyone has their good days and bad days, but in general, we're pretty good."

Elizabeth's horseback riding, however, doesn't stop when she leaves campus. On Feb. 3, when Elizabeth returns to the St. Louis area, she will be competing in a local horseshow with her mother cheering her along. Although Lynne no longer rides competitively, she said it still is fun to be able to share the sport with her daughter.

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