

Club Submitted by: Garden Club of Oak Park and River Forest

Date: October 27, 2025      Award Name: Gloria Greene Advanced Designer Award

Number of members: 119

1. New project: Yes    Beginning date: June 6, 2025      Completion date: June 6, 2025

2. Brief summary and objectives of project: Our Field Trips Co-Chairs, Kathy English and Marilyn Giles, initiated a summer seasonal program “Fridays With Flowers” for members to enjoy socializing once a month on Fridays at a member’s home or a public space. For a special treat, Kathy arranged a floral design workshop on Friday, June 6, at Robert’s Floral Design Studio. Mr. Robert Neri, the owner, is also a member of the Galewood Garden Club. He has been in the industry for over 30 years and has owned several floral businesses. He is now semi-retired and only creates floral pieces for events, besides teaching at local colleges and organizational events. He gave Kathy a concept photo (pictured below) to present to the Club.

The project was a potted topiary with main elements consisting of a glazed pot, wet floral foam and alstroemeria. The group had refreshments provided by Club members and Mr. Neri, and then they headed to the workshop where they each assembled their own topiaries with Mr. Neri demonstrating the complete assembly process. The materials were chosen for quality and longevity. The pots were glazed, and alstroemeria have sturdy stems and long-lasting bloom. The alstromeria stems were stripped of leaves, arranged and inserted into the foam, and tied with raffia. Additional flowers and ornaments were added to cover the foam. Each member took home her lovely arrangement.

3. Involvement of club members, other organizations, etc.: Over 30 members of the Club registered for the event, although a few canceled at the last minute. Other Club members completed the absentees’ topiaries.

4. Project expenses and means of funding: Club members each paid \$35 in advance for the cost of the workshop. Kathy spent approximately \$40 of the Club Field Trips budget for refreshments.

5. Continuing involvement, follow-up, maintenance: This project requires no follow-up. Mr. Neri will be our guest presenter demonstrating Holiday Florals at the Club meeting in December.

6. Attach or insert photos, digital photos, and/or landscape plan (does not need to be professionally drawn)



*Concept Piece*

Top left: Members enjoying refreshments before the workshop.

Top right: Robert Neri demonstrating the topiary construction.



Bottom left: Club members working on their arrangements.

Bottom right: closeup of a completed topiary.



Some of the Club members with their completed topiaries.