



THE GARDEN CLUB *of* AMERICA
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**THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA ANNOUNCES
NEWEST HONORARY MEMBERS**

The Garden Club of America (GCA) welcomes three honorary members this year. Honorary members of The Garden Club of America are men and women of distinction in fields including horticulture and conservation who are not, nor ever have been, members of a GCA club. Honorary membership is an honor awarded to a maximum of four outstanding recipients each year. Allen Bush, Michele S. Byers and Christopher Norwood will join other noted GCA honorary members including Paul Redman, executive director of Longwood Gardens, Doug Tallamy, professor, author and voice for native plants, and Penelope Hobhouse, legendary English garden writer and designer.

The GCA is pleased to welcome the following honorary members:

Allen Bush is an internationally recognized horticulturist who introduced and popularized perennial plants in the United States. After spending fifteen years running Holbrook Farm and Nursery in North Carolina, which became a mail order source for rare and unusual perennials, he established the North American office of Jelitto Perennial Seeds. Mr. Bush traveled the world seeking new perennial seeds to produce and market, and he served as its director of special projects. He has introduced seven new plants into the commercial market, including *Heuchera* ‘Molly Bush’ which was an RHS Award Winner in 2002. The Perennial Plant Association bestowed its highest honor, The Award of Merit, to him in 2011. Since 2013 he has contributed writings to *Garden Rant*, an online blog for gardeners and garden professionals. In 2017, he received The American Horticultural Society’s Paul Ecke Jr. Commercial Award.

Michele S. Byers is passionately dedicated to preserving New Jersey's lands and natural resources. She is currently the executive director of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF). Her work with NJCF began in 1982 and in 1999 she was asked to move into the top position. Through the years she has made a significant impact on the state's Farmland Preservation Program, Camden City's Cooper River Greenway and thousands of acres of preserved lands throughout the state. Landmark environmental laws were passed with NJCF guidance including the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act and the Pinelands and Highlands regional planning acts. Michele has fostered partnerships to strengthen and expand the reach of land conservation efforts and founded over six non profit organizations. She is called upon to share her expertise in planning and legislative strategies. Several of her positions have been gubernatorial appointments. In 2006 she was recognized with a GCA Zone IV Conservation Commendation.

Christopher Norwood serves as vice president of floral operations at Tipton Hurst, Arkansas' largest and oldest florist. He has served as the national president of the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD), as well as the CEO and chairman of the AIFD Foundation. He was recently recognized as a fellow of the American Institute of Floral Designers, honoring his dedication to the floral industry. He currently serves as president of the Arkansas Florist Association and the AIFD Foundation. Mr. Norwood has made numerous presentations at floral conventions nationwide on wedding and party design. He was most recently recognized by the Society of American Florists as a "professional floral communicator" and was recognized as the best event planner in *Soiree* and *Inviting Arkansas*. His work has been featured in *Flowers & Florist's Review*, as well as many wire services and national publications, including *Southern Accents* and *Veranda*. On the local level, he is featured weekly on KATV Good Morning Arkansas. He has won the Arkansas Florist Association's "Arkansas Cup" three times.

The GCA is a nonprofit national organization composed of 201 clubs with nearly 18,000 club members who devote energy and expertise to projects in their communities and across the United States. Founded in 1913, the GCA is a leader in horticulture, conservation, creative arts, historic preservation, and environmental protection. www.gcamerica.org

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