

HARN PARTNER Feature

with...

Joan Prange
Owner, Prange's Florist



Joan Prange of Prange's Florist is a soul sensitive to the world surrounding the life she has made for herself. A local business owner, realtor, and alpaca farm owner, her adoring spirit is present in everything she does. Joan's passion and generosity has certainly not been lost on the Harn. For many years, she has artfully curated show-stopping, floral arrangements for museum events including centerpieces for the pARTies. Inspired by the exhibitions on view, Joan meets often in-person with museum staff to brainstorm and then she thoughtfully incorporates the central themes of an exhibition into her one-of-a-kind designs.

Surprisingly, she never intended to be a florist. For 17 years, she worked as a horticulturist with a forestry background, conducting research at Michigan Tech, Purdue, and even UF. However, the creative spirit within Joan ached to do something beyond the lab setting, and she soon found herself working at the Nature Conservancy, as a logger, at a walnut plantation, nurseries, and then eventually breaking into the plant business. She realized she had an eye for draping rooms in fabric and light in an aesthetically pleasing manner, and then arranging flowers in an artful way to complete the designs. Joan soon found herself working primarily with flowers. She's never looked back.

Art has always been a part of Joan's life. As a teenager growing up in Detroit, she visited the museum as a quiet place to escape the minutiae of daily life and to gather her thoughts. To this day, she is a firm believer that walking around an art gallery helps people to become unstuck from their problems and to think of things in a new light. She encourages people to do the same at the Harn.

"It is well documented that art and music capabilities are linked in the brain to mathematical problem solving capabilities," she shared. "We know that children exposed to and involved in art develop better math and problem solving skills. The Harn has made its treasures very accessible to the children and young adults in our community who might not otherwise be exposed to different perspectives on life."

When asked how art influences her business, Joan said, "We are the same as others in that we sell flowers and plants. But we contend that a florist is a person who uses cut flowers as a medium for artistic expression, and sells their art. Staff here work with color and design every day; it is part of the fabric of who we are."