

HISTORY OF TAMPA AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY

Tampa African Violet Society was organized April 1970 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Warman by James Rubottom, Pat Yon, Dora Lee Dorsey, Myrtle Warman, Mrs. V. O. Lowery, Alice Moore, and Mrs. Edward O'Donnel. By 1971 there were fourteen additional members. Initially meetings were held in members' homes, but later the Club was permitted use of a classroom at Seminole Heights United Methodist Church. In 1973 the move was made to Seminole Heights Garden Center. In 2009 we had to find alternate meeting space because of renovations being made at the Garden Center.

1976 our first show -- a sort of dress rehearsal -- was staged in preparation for our 1977 Standard Show when we received a Green Rosette under National Judges and was held at the Seminole Garden Center. By 1978 our show was much improved and we received the Blue Rosette. TAVS has sponsored shows every year during the last weekend in February: In 1982 we had our show at University Square Mall and for several years thereafter. East Lake Square Mall then hosted our shows until the Mall closed. Westshore Mall was our show place until 2002 when we moved to the Farm Bureau in Valrico, Florida. When the Farm Bureau building was sold in 2017, we were once again forced to move and our shows are currently being held in Tampa.

On January 14, 1978, TAVS hosted the charter meeting for the African Violet Council of Florida, of which Lucille Chester is a Charter Member. Several of our members, Mary Lou Harden, Jo Anne Martinez, Carolee Carter and Lynne Wilson have served as AVCF President, and Jim Boyer is currently serving as president.

Many of our members continue to bring honor to us by serving in leadership roles in the African Violet Society of America, Inc. Lynne Wilson has served AVSA as its Affiliate Chair as well as its Publications Chair, Mary Lou Harden has served for many years as Bylaws Chair, has served as a Director and a member of its Internet Committee. Carolee Carter has served as a Director and continues as a member of the Internet Committee.

In 1987 TAVS played a significant role in hosting the AVSA Convention which convened at the Sheraton Twin Towers in Orlando, Florida. Again in June 1997, when the State of Florida hosted the AVSA'S fifty-first annual convention at the Tradewinds Hotel on St. Pete Beach, our club members handled many important aspects of the convention. Jo Anne Martinez was TAVS President and served as the AVSA Show Chair and Mary Lou Harden was Convention Chair. Members of TAVS made significant contributions to AVSA in 2017 when its annual convention and show were held at the Wyndham Hotel on International Drive in Orlando. Jim Boyer taught the judging school. Two TAVS members took the school and are now certified AVSA Student Judges.

TAVS members continue to bring honor to us by serving in leadership roles in our sister societies. Lynne Wilson is currently serving a second term as President of Dixie African Violet Society, and Mary Lou Harden continues to serve as Editor of The Dixie News. Members of TAVS served in many important roles when the Dixie Convention came to Tampa in March 2001 and to Clearwater in 2015.

Nancy Kast and JoAnne Martinez serve on committees with the Gesneriad Society and they, as well as Charles Fisher and Barbara Matthews have served as officers with the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society of which Robert Cameron serves as a Director.

TAVS continues to be a pacesetter in providing financial support and awards to the AVSA and our sister societies and councils. We optimistically enter the new Club year, mindful of our motto..."Forward and upward to a bigger and better year!"