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Florist Todd Bachman Slain at Olympics

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The tragic murder of an American visitor on the first day of the Olympic Games on August 9 in Beijing, China, took the life of one of floriculture's own, Todd Bachman, Chairman and CEO of Bachman's Floral, Home & Garden in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Todd and his wife, Barbara, and their daughter Elisabeth Bachman McCutcheon, a 2004 Olympian in volleyball who's married to U.S. men's volleyball coach Hugh McCutcheon, were walking with a tour guide at Drum Tower, a popular tourist destination in Beijing, when they were attacked by a knife-wielding assailant. Todd died shortly after being stabbed; Barbara sustained multiple lacerations and stab wounds and underwent eight hours of surgery. At press time, she remains in serious but stable condition. Their guide was also injured in the attack. Elisabeth was not harmed.

The attacker, identified as 47-year-old Tang Yongming, jumped to his death from the 130-foot balcony of the tower. The murder is being called "a random attack by a deranged man."

Bachman's, a 123-year-old florist, garden center and greenhouse business, is an institution in American garden center retailing, and the Bachman family members, most certainly including Todd, have long been institutions in their own right. Todd shared management responsibilities with his second cousins Dale and Lee Bachman and first cousin Paul Bachman.

Todd, 62, spent his life serving floriculture. A look at his biography shows an amazing list of positions, directorships and presidencies throughout our industry, including the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association, the American Floral Endowment, The Ohio State Florists' Association (now OFA), Hortica Insurance Company, the Society of American Florists, the North Central Florists' Association and the Minnesota Commercial Flower Growers.

Dale Bachman held a press conference after the tragedy and made this statement:

"Bachman's is in the business of helping families express their sentiments at times of joy ... and at times of sorrow. And we are simply overwhelmed with gratitude at the outpouring of sympathy and well wishes from all over the world. The USOC and the United States Government have been and continue to be extremely helpful. The calls and e-mails we're receiving are from people's hearts ... and they speak so well of this extraordinary

man.”

Those of us in floriculture are fortunate that so much of what we do reflects happiness, joy, peace and contentment. But sometimes we take that for granted. It’s in times of sorrow like these—which thankfully are rare—that we are reminded of what a wonderful, close-knit family we are.