

# 2021 SUCCESS STORY

MINOT



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## FLOWER CENTRAL & BROSE FUNERAL HOME

**MOHALL** -- Husband and wife duo Jeff and Niki Brose know how to run a business. In fact, they do it so well that they run two. Niki is the owner and face of Flower Central in Minot, North Dakota while Jeff, who shared that he is affectionately known as "Mr. Niki," owns and operates Brose Funeral Home located in Mohall, North Dakota. It's a synergy that works for the two who have been married for over twenty years.

While Flower Central opened its doors on April 13th, 2012, Jeff became the owner and operator of Brose Funeral Home in 2004 after buying it from the previous owners. Jeff became a licensed funeral director in 1989 and jumped

at the opportunity to purchase his Funeral Home, which has been serving the community and local families for, in some cases, generations.

Jeff was vastly experienced in the Funeral Home service in 2004, he had no experience buying or operating a business himself. His banker suggested he contact business advisor Mary Beth Votava of the North Dakota Small Business Development Centers to prepare for buying, owning, and operating a business. He was particularly thankful for her assistance with projections and overall knowledge, ensuring that he thought of everything before buying and running a business.

When asked how the business has grown, Jeff responded, "I wouldn't say it has grown; it has maintained... It's not so much 'my' funeral home as it is 'their' [the families who have lost loved ones] funeral home."



Years after Jeff Brose bought his business, two tragedies spurred Niki into action to pursue her own business dreams. The first was the death of their son in 2002, and the second was the loss and re-building of their home in 2011 due to flooding. She shared, "I realized that life is too short, and it was time to be happy again. That was March 12th, 2012. On March 13th, I gave my boss my keys and shop vehicle and walked out the door. It was the best decision I have ever made for my career."

Jeff's encouragement, along with that of other family members, helped Niki gain the confidence she needed to trust that she could run a successful business on her own. With Jeff's referral, Niki contacted Mary Beth Votava for her assistance.

At first, Niki had planned to buy the flower shop - where she had worked since high school - from her previous boss. Working with Mary Beth, she helped create a forecast budget based on operating the business as a new owner. "She broke it down and showed us the sales numbers we would have to generate to make the business profitable and sustainable each month. Those numbers showed us that based on the





purchase price and our costs, this wasn't going to be a successful venture for us [to buy the flower shop from the previous employer]. We met with our banker and lawyer after working with Mary Beth and they agreed with everything Mary Beth showed us," reflected Niki. Jeff shared that walking into a lender's office with a Mary Beth approved business plan and other required documents opened doors for loans and support that may have otherwise been closed – the lending and banking community know and trust her work.

A month after walking out the door from her previous place of employment, Niki opened the doors of Flower Central on April 13th, 2012. The only thing Mary Beth hadn't projected for the business, Jeff shared, was an outdoor sign. Otherwise, she'd made them think of everything needed to successfully run the business.



For the first six months Niki made herself sick worrying about the new business. It was different from Jeff's venture; she had a brand-new shop instead of an establishment people had been going to for generations. But the community was behind Niki and establishing a business takes time. The relationships that Niki had built with customers at the old flower shop became apparent as those customers sought her out and walked through her flower shop doors to support her business.

Since 2012 Flower Central has only grown, with order volume increasing year over year and more employees than ever

Since 2004, Brose Funeral Home has operated successfully in Mohall, where Jeff is thankful for the community that

has "allowed me to serve their families during their time of need."

Jeff and Niki Brose are quite the pair. Two strong individual business owners who support one another and their ambitions, each successfully running businesses in their respective fields.

They may not have been experts in business ownership to start, but after all these years they certainly are experts at running successful businesses now. Their advice to other business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs is to, "Do your homework... if you don't know the answers there are people out there that do, and want to help you" [Niki] and that, "Your personal finances matter... If you can't manage your own finances, don't expect to get the loan or start your business" [Jeff].

