



## **MEET OUR 2024 CONVENTION DISTINGUISHED GUEST PRESENTERS**

### **OUR HEADLINE ARTISTS –**



**Bjorn Bjorholm** was born in 1986 and grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee. At the early age of 13, he received his first bonsai tree inspired by the movie *The Karate Kid*. Although the tree was dead within a few months, Bjorholm was hooked on the Japanese artform, which would prove to be his life's calling. In 2001, he and his father, Tom Bjorholm, founded the Knoxville Bonsai Society.

At age 16, Bjorholm visited Japan as part of a student group. There, he met bonsai master Keiichi Fujikawa who would later become his teacher and mentor. Before beginning a formal apprenticeship, Bjorholm studied the artform with several bonsai professionals in the United States.

After graduating from college in 2008 at age 22, Bjorholm applied and became an apprentice under Keiichi Fujikawa at Kouka-en Bonsai Nursery in Osaka, Japan. He apprenticed for six years before becoming certified as a bonsai professional by the Nippon Bonsai Association. Thereafter, he worked as an artist-in-residence at Kouka-en, making him Japan's first foreign-born working bonsai artist. As part of his job at Kouka-en, Bjorholm styled and maintained many trees registered as "masterpieces" by Japan's Nippon Bonsai Association, and other important trees that would subsequently enter the prestigious Kokufu-ten bonsai exhibition, Japan's premier showcase of the artform.

On his return to the United States, in 2018, Bjorholm established Eisei-en (永青園) Bonsai Garden in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, where he teaches bonsai, styles and cares for privately-owned trees and for his own collection. He also sells and brokers bonsai for a discerning clientele.

As part of his work spreading bonsai art, Bjorholm has an active *YouTube* channel with a base of over 200,000 subscribers around the world, as well as a subscription-based online learning platform, *Bonsai-U*.

In 2019, Bjorholm dealt several bonsai trees for the Government of the United Arab Emirates, which the nation gave as gifts to various recipients, including the Central Intelligence Agency.

In September 2023, Bjorn announced that he will be permanently relocating with his family to Kyoto, Japan, in mid-2024. As a result, his Tennessee-based bonsai garden, Eisei-en, will close and he will establish Eisei-en Kyoto, his new bonsai garden. Bjorholm will continue to operate his online learning platform, *Bonsai-U*.



**Sergio Cuan** is a Cuban American visual artist who graduated with a BFA in Art and Design from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. He has a passion for painting and horticulture alike, and when he realized early on that bonsai was the ideal synthesis of both, he became fascinated with bonsai as an art form. Sergio is a largely self-taught bonsai artist leaning on his artistic background to help hone his bonsai skills. Sergio has taken workshops with prominent bonsai masters Bill Valavanis, Mauro Stemberger, and Bjorn Bjorholm to further his education. Although he works on a wide range of species, Sergio has developed a particular interest and passion for the deciduous genre.

In 2014 he built a bonsai garden in northern New Jersey, in a beautiful setting surrounded by rolling hills, lakes, and deciduous forests which continues to influence his work. The garden, inspired primarily by Japanese aesthetics, features a diverse bonsai collection of various sizes and styles. Sergio believes that bonsai as a true art form shares commonalities with painting, drawing, and sculpture. Although the artist is bound by the physical limitations of the plant material itself, bonsai can be effective vehicles for self-expression. But unlike other art forms, bonsai is alive and in a constant state of flux. The bonsai practice is an intimate and continued dialogue between artist and nature. This relationship gives this art form its own unique dimension. Sergio also believes that one must allow the tree to guide us as we strive to capture a nuanced but powerful expression of nature in its most essential form.

Sergio travels throughout the US and abroad leading in-person lectures, demos and workshops as well as offering virtual consultations and a digital bonsai design service. He also conducts several workshops throughout the year from his own studio and garden. Sergio most recently illustrated Michael Hagedorn's latest and much celebrated book *BONSAI HERESY*. In 2023 he was chosen by Walter Pall to participate in the annual Master Class held at the Bonsaigarten München in Germany. His bonsai have appeared in many publications including *International Bonsai Magazine*, *Bonsai Focus* and *Bonsai Bark* blog. He has shown at numerous exhibitions and has received several awards including "Finest Deciduous Award" at the 4th US National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY, and "Best in Show" at the 2016 Winter Silhouette Expo in Kannapolis, NC.



**Min Hsuan Lo** is a second-generation bonsai nurseryman from Tianwei, a nationally known bonsai and plant center in the central part of Taiwan. He studied Chinese Literature in Tamkang University.

Mr. Lo is a world-renowned artist who has won numerous national and international awards. The bonsai world has been awed by his technical skills creating award winning bonsai such as Tiger Bark Ficus, Jaboticaba and Chinese Pistachio. He is highly in demand as a featured artist and judge in bonsai conventions around the world from Australia, China, to Austria, Italy, Poland, Argentina, Mexico, and the USA, to name a few.

Mr. Lo wrote his famous and highly acclaimed book *Bonsai Journey* in 2010. The book is widely acclaimed by bonsai enthusiasts. Critics called the artist and his book, "...on the cutting edge of bonsai," and, "...incredible," with an "amazing range of photographs of his spectacular trees. The transformation of some of these trees is incredible."

In 2010, he established the “Lo Bonsai School”, and taught bonsai classes in several universities and colleges. In 1998, he cofounded the Taiwan Bonsai Creators Association and had served as its President in 2007. Since 2019 he is the Second Vice President of Bonsai Club International.



**Sean Smith** lives in the United States in Marysville Pennsylvania, where he owns and operates Custom Oriental Wood-craft. With a passion for Bonsai and Suiseki for more than 20 years, and an extensive background in carpentry, Sean took the two, put them together, and started his own business in 1994. He makes Bonsai display tables, and carves daiza for renowned Bonsai and Suiseki enthusiasts from around the world. He has lectured on Suiseki as well as Bonsai in the United States and Europe, and is internationally known for his skills in Bonsai and Suiseki.

Sean has won several Suiseki and Bonsai awards. In 2001, Mr. Arishige Matsuura, President of the Japanese Suiseki Association, proclaimed Sean the number one daiza carver outside of Japan. In 2003, Sean was the first American to exhibit an American Suiseki in the Japanese National Suiseki Show at the Meji Shrine in Tokyo, Japan. In 2004 Sean was asked by Senji Morimae to come to Japan to study Bonsai and Suiseki at his nursery outside of Tokyo a few weeks a year, and Sean continues to travel there each year. In 2005, Sean was invited to study Zen in Daitokuji-in, at the sub temple of Hoshyu-in in Kyoto, Japan. Sean also studied daiza carving in Hamamatsu Japan, with Japan’s leading daiza carver, Mr. Koji Suzuki. Sean was his 1st and only student. In 2007 Sean Studied Kiri Bako making with Japan’s top box maker, Mr. Akira Shiraishi in Tokyo. In 2008 Sean continues as head organizer of the International Stone Appreciation Symposium held every 2 years in Harrisburg, PA. In 2009 Sean got the opportunity to study scroll making, with Mr. Seizi Maruoka, one of Japans leading scroll makers. In 2010 he studied the art of pot repair with Mr. Nakada Tomohide in Tokyo. In 2011 Sean studied the art of Display with Mr. Negishi in Hanyu City, Japan.

Sean serves as a contributor to many international Bonsai and Suiseki magazines as well as the North American Viewing Stone Society, the International Stone Appreciation Society, the Nippon Suiseki and European Suiseki Associations. Sean is past president of the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He is a director of the National Bonsai Federation in Washington, DC, and the Lead Organizer for the International Stone Appreciation Symposium held every two years since 2002 in Harrisburg, PA.

## **THE REST OF OUR OUTSTANDING BONSAI PRESENTERS --**



**Dr. Scott Barboza** was introduced to bonsai by a close friend while living in California in 1990. Bonsai neatly married his passion for hiking and the outdoors with his love of gardening and a longtime fascination was born. He took introductory classes through the Sacramento Bonsai Society, but his serious study began in Seattle where, as a member of the Puget Sound Bonsai Association, he took workshops at Elandan Garden and Weyerhaeuser’s Pacific Rim Bonsai Exhibit.

After moving to Houston in the late 1990s, Scott became a member of the Houston Bonsai Society and began studying with Boonyarat Manakitivipart with whom he has worked for many years. Scott held many positions in Houston, including Vice President. He has lectured extensively, taught numerous classes and workshops, and helped to organize several conventions and exhibitions.

Scott's trees have won numerous awards at local, state, and regional competitions. He has exhibited trees at the Bay Island Bonsai Exhibition in San Francisco, and the US National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, NY. He is currently building his home and garden in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia.



**Randy Bennett** is a retired middle school principal. He is a visual artist and a 4<sup>th</sup> degree blackbelt in Sibpalgee kung fu. He began studying bonsai in 1971. He studied extensively under Vaughn Banting, but also had such teachers as John Naka, Daivid DeGroot, Ben Oki, Dennis Makishima and others. In 1982, he started Bennett's Bonsai Nursery which operated until 2005. During those years, he began teaching, writing articles on bonsai, managing individual bonsai collections, and further developing his bonsai skills. Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, killing his entire bonsai collection of over 200 trees. He sold the nursery and after a brief respite, began collecting again and rebuilding his collection. Since that time, he has concentrated on his personal trees, and continues to write articles and teach bonsai.



**Enrique Castaño de la Serna** literally wrote the book on the botany of bonsai. Born in Mexico City, Enrique is the son of Yolanda de la Serna, and Guillermo Castaño, a well-known sculptor and bonsai artist. Enrique's exposure to and passion for bonsai and the visual arts began at an early age. His love for bonsai and nature led to his studies in biology, and he subsequently received a PhD in Biochemistry and Biophysics from the University of Rochester, NY, in 1997. He continued post-doctoral work at Harvard and the Marie Curie Research Institute in Oxted, England.

Enrique resides in southern Mexico where he collects, grows and trains numerous tropical bonsai species. Enrique founded Bonsái Tropical de México to promote bonsai in the US and Latin America, and has presented lectures and demos around the world, including China, Cuba, Germany, Taiwan, Mexico, USA, England, Czech Republic, and Lithuania. His book *Botany for Bonsai, the Science Behind the Art*, has been well received, and is in its second edition. In addition to his book, Enrique teaches and gives demonstrations around the world and has written numerous articles for various bonsai publications. His trees have been featured by The World Bonsai Friendship Federation and BCI over the years. He has earned numerous awards including WBFF, Chase Rosade distinction award, John Naka award, Bonsai Olympics gold and silver awards, and FEMEXBO award. He currently serves as professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the Center Investigacion Cientifica, Merida, Mexico and is the Chief Executive Officer Vivero International Dedicado Arte.



**Angela Chandler** is a lifelong gardener and bonsai enthusiast with a passion for learning and teaching. She and her husband Fred tend a ½ acre organic micro-homestead in Highlands, Texas. They raise vegetables, fruits, chickens, goats, bees, and a pair of rescued dogs. She has numerous publications in local and national print media. She and her husband Fred tend a ½ acre organic micro-homestead in Highlands, Texas. They raise vegetables, fruits, chickens, goats, bees, a few select bonsai trees, and a pair of rescued dogs. Angela is a member of the Harris County Master Gardener Association (Retired), and a member of the Garden Writer's Association. She has been published in local and national print media, and her background includes: Texas Master Gardener 2000, Certified Propagation Specialist, Certified Greenhouse Management Specialist, Certified Rainwater Harvesting Specialist, Certified Entomology Specialist, Former Coordinator Precinct 2 Master Gardener Satellite, Former President Harris County Master Gardener Association, Texas State Master Gardener of the Year (Awarded 2004), and Texas Master Naturalist 2001. Website: [www.thegardenacademy.com](http://www.thegardenacademy.com) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/thegardenacademy](http://www.facebook.com/thegardenacademy)



**Sooncheng Cheah** or "Soon" to her friends is an avid gardener. About ten years ago, Soon became interested in kusamono and applied her horticultural skills in this new venture. She said, "Since my husband works on big trees, why don't I work on small plantings like kusamono." Soon's work was recognized when she won the 2016 Best Companion Planting Award at the 5th U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition in Rochester, New York. Soon's unique style draws on inspirations from nature. The result is best summed up by Colin Lewis who critiqued her kusamono at the 2013 Lone Star Bonsai Federation Show. Colin said that her works look very natural, like an English wildflower meadow, where he could just lie down and enjoy nature. Besides the more delicate and complex kusamono, Soon also creates simple, minimalist kusamono from single plants. She is a popular speaker, teaching classes for Houston, Austin, Dallas, and Corpus Christi bonsai clubs, and in Houston she has conducted presentations and workshops at Timeless Trees Bonsai Nursery and several community centers. Soon's works were featured in the online Chinese magazine "Penjing World," and she received invitations to present workshops in Shanghai and Yunnan, China.



**Dave Kreutz** started in bonsai in 1990 as a hobby. After several years he began working solely with satsuki azaleas and hired Joe Harris to teach him more about them. Eventually, he started a program titled "Satsuki Weekends" that he conducted for seven years, offering several different levels of workshops for satsuki azalea enthusiasts. There were several people who were known for their skills with satsuki hired to conduct the workshops. Then, David enrolled in a class held in California at El Dorado Bonsai Inc., that were three-year, seven weekends each year, intensives on the care and culture of satsuki azaleas taught by Tatemori Gondo from Osaka, Japan. At the end of the three-year class, Gondo administered a test to the participants, and David earned a certificate that stated he was considered a first level teacher of satsuki azaleas. After the USDA stopped all imports of material used in bonsai, David was awarded a permit to import plants into an approved quarantine house, he began importing his own trees. Today, David imports outstanding material from five nurseries in Japan. He also conducts workshops and demos for many clubs and conventions in the United States. David continues his study as student of satsuki azaleas, and admits he is still learning new things every year. <http://www.satsukibonsai-en.com> Satsuki Bonsai-en, Imports LLC, St. Louis, Missouri.



**Mike Lane's** journey in Bonsai began late in 2008, after receiving a small juniper as a gift. Following this tree's untimely demise caused by his ignorance, he began looking for classes online and stumbled upon Wigert's Bonsai Nursery in North Fort Myers, Florida. Shortly after his first few visits, Mike began working under the tutelage of Erik Wigert. After a short period of time, he began assisting him in both traveling workshops, regular classes, and all aspects of managing the bonsai nursery.

Mike has been honored with many prizes. In 2010, he was awarded a scholarship by the Bonsai Societies of Florida after placing first in the state's annual styling competition. Using this scholarship, he traveled with his teacher to Mexico for the 2010 FELAB convention where he met and learned from artists such as Mauro Stemberger, Min Lo, Robert Steven, Vlad Novak, and Enrique Castano.

2012 marked the year Mike began teaching, starting with several workshops and demonstrations throughout the state of Florida, as well as teaching a monthly help session aimed at providing continuing education for students finishing the beginner and intermediate classes. Over the years, he has dedicated himself to shoin and tropical bonsai design, and has been working toward spreading their appeal and understanding. His work has appeared in the popular publication *Bonsai Focus* on numerous occasions.

Mike has displayed at the state level several times as well as having his work accepted to the U.S. National Bonsai show on two occasions. In the past 5 years, Mike has traveled all over the country giving lectures, demonstrations, and exhibit critiques. He has visited clubs in New York, Knoxville, San Antonio, Houston, Austin, and New Orleans as well as many other states and cities. During the Pandemic, Mike expanded his services to include online and zoom presentations engaging and educating bonsai students from around the world. During this time, he continued traveling and appeared in two, 15-day tours throughout Texas and Louisiana. He was recently invited to Hyderabad, India, to share his teachings, and is currently booking new tours to New England and California, as well as recurring classes in Austin, Houston, and New Orleans.

In 2022 and 2023, Mike launched a website and education center, [www.kitsunebonsai.com](http://www.kitsunebonsai.com). The site is an online resource for classes, programs, and merchandise.



**Alex Leong** has a long history of blending his outstanding artistic skills with technical bonsai expertise. Born in Malaysia, Alex lived in Louisiana before moving to Houston. He is a humble man who prefers to be referred to as, "just a local bonsai lover." But if you've ever seen his work, you can appreciate the beautiful artistry and his "eye" for outstanding bonsai design.

At age 18, Alex began to work as a carpenter and cabinet builder, but not the hammer and nail sort. Alex learned the fine skill of groove and tenon from a teacher who he described as just a quiet man with a watchful eye, much like Alex. "When I worked, he would watch over me and teach his skills that I use until this day though I'm now retired," Alex said. "If he thought I needed help, he would explain what he expected. And if he liked what I did, he wouldn't say a thing." Alex always did his "homework" seeking out ways to master carpentry, and says in bonsai too, you must do lots of homework in order to progress. "And you have to ask lots of questions and take advice from your teacher," he added.

In addition to his carpentry career, Alex explored his love to paint as an artist. Doing his homework, he studied in detail the paintings of the Chinese and Japanese cultures, and developed a real love for what he saw

in Chinese paintings. “I reflected on images in Japanese paintings, but grew to really appreciate what I saw in bunjing and penjing paintings.” He appreciated paintings exhibiting the Japanese style tree as more compact, but enjoyed more the freer style he saw in Chinese works. And that’s how he approached and developed his artistic bonsai style which is reflected in his trees.

While in Louisiana, Alex was asked to construct a bonsai stand for Vaughn Banting, often recognized as the creator of flat top bald cypress bonsai. It was then that Alex was exposed to bonsai. He was fortunate to know and study with the likes of widely known and respected bonsai artists including Banting, Guy Guidry, and Gary Marshall. Alex said that he learned all the basics from them in their weekly study group named “Thursday Knights.”

Alex later moved to Houston, and currently serves as mentor and teacher for the local bonsai community. “Given the warm weather, my stylistic method fits right in,” Alex said. “You must wire as a tool, but you also need to learn the tool of clipping and growing in our longer warm seasons. The tree will tell you if it needs wire, or if it needs a haircut. For me, it’s less wire and more clipping.” And in a nutshell, focusing most on “clip and grow” sums up Alex’s bonsai technique.

In a search for bonsai material that grows in this area, Alex found Loblolly Pines. For the past 10 years, he has been cultivating and studying the species that produces four to five growth flushes each year. Known for their long and delicate needles, Alex has developed techniques to shorten them. His love for the Loblolly runs deep. In fact, one of Alex’s Loblolly Pines is on display as part of our convention’s “living logo,” designed and built by Alex, a three-dimensional work that you can appreciate all weekend long.



**Joey McCoy** has always had an intense fascination with both art and nature for as long as he can remember. Joey graduated from the University of Texas with a BFA in Studio Art (painting, photography, sculpture), and has worked in the family business McCoy Jewelcraft as a gold & silversmith in northwest Austin, Texas. He recalls first seeing bonsai at the age of about 3 while living in Hawaii. The owner of a sushi restaurant, Pearl City Tavern, displayed his collection on his rooftop and Joey remembered being completely mesmerized at such a young age. That love of bonsai stayed with him. His interest in creating bonsai started in the mid 1980's, where he tried his hand at replicating nature in miniature while working to keep them alive. Joey joined the Austin Bonsai Society in 2003, and said he benefited greatly from the vast knowledge base and resources in the club. Joey has served as President, Vice President, Programs, Exhibit Chair, and he also chaired the state LSBF Convention in 2013. Joey has served on the Texas State Bonsai Exhibit Board since 2006, serving first as Treasurer before being elected Chairman. While there are some amazing and ancient examples of exotic bonsai out there in the world, Joey’s heart is in creating from the material locally available, whether it is collected from the wild or dug from the urban landscape. For Joey, bonsai is not just a hobby, but a passion that often feels like a second job. “Bonsai is thoroughly enjoyable and takes people out of their daily troubles into a world of natural beauty,” Joey said.



**Frank Mihalic** is a 2nd generation Bonsai Artist. He is also a sculptor and jewelry artist specializing in the Lost Wax carving.

Frank studied the Art of Cameo carving in Torre del Greco Italy. He also has taught workshops at the Polish National Bonsai Show, South Korea National Bonsai Show, and the BCI Australia Bonsai Show. Frank has participated in many Golden State California Bonsai shows, and ABS national Bonsai Shows.

In 1999, 2001, and 2006, Frank had his tree selected as one of the top one hundred Bonsai trees in the world by Japan Airlines and the Nippon Bonsai Associations, BCI, WBFF, worldwide bonsai contest, held in Japan. In 2000, Japan Airlines & the Nippon Bonsai Association, awarded the top 100 winners a copy of Franks Bonsai Book and CD ROM. Also in 2000, Frank was the first and only foreigner to be awarded a Special Membership in the Cheju Bonsai Growers Association in Cheju Korea. In 2006, one of his trees was First runner up in the North American "John Naka Award, " presented By the American Bonsai Society (ABS). Also in 2006, one of his trees was first runner up in the World, in the Bonsai Clubs International & Centre' sponsored worldwide contest in Italy.

In 2001, Frank founded the first Bonsai Magazine on the Internet: [www.bonsaionlinemagazine.com](http://www.bonsaionlinemagazine.com). In 2004, Frank Published the first bonsai book for children *Bonsai For Kids*. In 2005, he published the first computer CD ROM for Children "Bonsai for Kids." That same year, Frank translated *Bonsai for Kids* into Spanish, *Bonsai Para Los Ninos*. In 2006, his book *Bonsai for Kids* was published in Japanese in Japan, and French in Europe. Frank published a book titled *The Art of Bonsai Made Easy*, another book for children that was produced in 10 different languages.

A very active leader, Frank also has served on the Board of Directors of American Bonsai Society (ABS) and Bonsai Clubs International (BCI).



**Pedro J. Morales** was born in Chicago, IL. His parents, native to Puerto Rico, moved to live there when he was three months old. His family settled in Trujillo Alto, where they have always lived. He belongs to a large family, all lovers of plants and dedicated to life in agriculture, especially in the ornamental field, where Pedro also started as a child.

During his studies of computer programming at the University of P.R., he started to work part-time in Jardin Selecto, a place where he remained permanently for 36 years until June 2015. This is one of the bigger garden centers in the San Juan area. Now he works full time at his own *Futago Bonsai Nursery* in Trujillo Alto.

In 1980 during his first year at the University of Puerto Rico, his Spanish class teacher, Maria Rivera, assigned the subject of bonsai for a research program. This is when Pedro met Hugo Storer with whom he shared his time as he prepared his work. He then found the Club Bonsai of P.R. and became a member in 1986. He took classes under the supervision of Mr. Adan Montalvo who was considered one of the strongest members of the local club and the great Master of Puerto Rico. Pedro kept seeking more information and knowledge, becoming more passionate about Bonsai.



In 1993, Pedro started *Futago Bonsai Juyku*, an educational program that has become one of the most important Bonsai schools in Latin America, and now also popular worldwide. His school of bonsai is the only one recognized as a Bonsai School by the World Bonsai Federation, Bonsai Clubs International, and the Latin American Bonsai Federation of Puerto Rico.

Pedro's trees are recognized as great masterpieces of the tropical world. Eight of them were selected in the World Bonsai Contest, and one of them was second runner up in 2005. In January 2015, one of his smallest bonsai won the first price on the Gafu Ten show in Japan.

Pedro grew to be one of the most talented artists in the tropical world and his accomplishments include traveling to Latin America, Australia, China, Japan, Korea, India, Spain, Thailand, Indonesia, Slovakia, Germany. He has made extensive trips to the United States as a demonstrator, lecturer, and exhibitor. He is actively involved in the bonsai movement in Latin American countries and helped them develop their regional groups. He has been a headliner at 4 of the 6 World Bonsai Friendship Federation Conventions, Florida in 1993, Munich in 2001, Washington DC in 2005, and Puerto Rico in 2009. He also served as Chairman of the 2009 WBFF Convention in Puerto Rico. As the President of the Puerto Rico Bonsai Federation, Pedro was proud to host the BCI FELAB Convention in Puerto Rico in July 2007, the World Bonsai Convention in 2009, and the International Bonsai Convention in 2014. He is still the formal President of the Latin American Bonsai Federation.



**Evan Pardue** is the Owner and Nursery Manager at Underhill Bonsai Nursery, providing professional bonsai services in house and onsite. Evan has been practicing the art of bonsai since 2010. He has shown his Louisiana native trees at the US National Bonsai Exhibition, and other regional shows. He has also conducted lectures and workshops across the Gulf Coast area. Evan founded *Little Things for Bonsai People* podcast show in 2021.

Underhill Nursery is a full-service bonsai nursery in Folsom, Louisiana. Underhill grows, sells, and brokers pre-bonsai and specimen bonsai at all levels from entry to serious collector. The company has its own proprietary line of Underhill bonsai products including soil, fertilizer, cut paste, wound seal, fungicide, and insecticide. They sell high quality bonsai tools and wire as well as bonsai pots ranging from entry level plastic growing pots to hand-crafted works of art from American artisans. Services include re-potting, styling, monthly maintenance, installation of irrigation systems and much more. If it relates to bonsai, Underhill helps!



**Alan M. Raymond** has been a member of the Houston Bonsai Society since the 1980s. Alan's interest in gardening was sparked by his grandmother and an aunt long ago. He later developed special interests in bonsai, orchids, plumeria, and bromeliads. Most of his horticultural education has been gained through lots of reading, web browsing, and trial and errors. "I made lots of errors," he says. He completed the Texas Gulf Coast Gardening Program at Mercer Botanic Gardens, and is a member of *The Mercer Society*. An extremely talented and successful air-layering expert, Alan looks forward to demonstrating his skills at the convention. Alan is a native of New Orleans, LA, and moved to Kingwood, TX in 1972. He is a graduate of Louisiana State

University with a BS in Chemical Engineering. A 35-year career with Shell included technical assignments and business management roles in several oil and chemical products businesses, and retail marketing.



**Carlos Gabriel Santiago** is the youngest bonsai grower artist featured in the ABS convention, but in his 30s, Carlos already has been cultivating bonsai with famous bonsai artists for nearly 20 years. Carlos has broad experience with tropicals, boxwoods, junipers and more! He has led workshops on kuramas, root over rock plantings, repotting, styling, and his specialty – wiring. Carlos says one of his biggest passions is wiring junipers. Born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, Carlos was 13 when he visited a friend, noticed the family bonsai collection in their back yard and was immediately fascinated by the living art form. Soon after that, Carlos met Tony Rivera of Puerto Rico’s Jibaro Bonsai School where he studied and apprenticed until Tony said it was time for Carlos to

broaden his experience with new teachers and techniques. At his teacher’s prodding, Carlos met the famous tropical Bonsai Artist Pedro Morales of Puerto Rico’s Futago Bonsai when Carlos was in his early 20s. Carlos attended Pedro’s tropical bonsai school, apprenticed for Pedro at his nursery on Mondays, and developed a deep understanding of tropical bonsai cultivation under Pedro’s wing. Carlos also studied with well-known Latin Bonsai Artist Nacho Marin who taught Carlos the art and skill of deadwood carving and worked with Bonsai Artist Juan Andrade of Costa Rica where Carlos refined his skills in working with junipers. In 2016, Carlos moved his family to Houston. Soon after he learned that the well-known local Timeless Trees Bonsai Nursery was hosting a workshop with Pedro Morales. Carlos contacted Pedro, and Pedro asked him to assist with the kurama workshop that was taking place at the nursery. It was there where Carlos met Timeless Trees Owner Hurley Johnson and has worked for Hurley ever since.