



Interiorscape Hall of Fame



Donald Wilson

2008 Allied Trade Professional



We are honored to induct Donald Wilson into the Interior Plantscape Hall of Fame as the 2008 Allied Trade Inductee, recognizing his significant contributions to our industry.

When Don graduated from Fresno State in 1959 as a mechanical engineer, tropical plants were cheaper than furniture, so he used tropical plants to furnish his first apartment. Of course the first group of plants he bought died, and then the next group of plants also died. He eventually came to realize that he needed professional help. This was nothing short of a fortuitous accident.

After college Don entered the corporate world in the computer field, and also started taking horticulture courses at night at the local community college to better understand his "green" investment. This attempt to better understand how to take care of his own tropical plants culminated in an investment in an interiorscape company in Dallas.

One night while having cocktails with a friend, the two decided to help out his friend's friend who was starting this interiorscape business. Each invested \$5000 in the new company. The plant person had no business plan and was not familiar with either accounts receivable, nor accounts payable. After many discussions on the subject, she left the business. This left Don and his friend with the new enterprise, Plant Care Co.

Since Don knew other students at the community college who were interested and knowledgeable about plants, he started recruiting and took on the maintenance division of this budding new company. His friend, the other investor, was already connected with the local business purchasing agents and assumed responsibility for the sales. When his friend moved to Chicago, the management of the whole company was left to Don.

By this time Don was tired of the corporate life, and jumped at the chance to not only steer his own company, but be able to wear jeans, a beard and long hair while doing it. Don operated Plant Care Co., one of the first three major plantscape companies in Dallas, TX from 1974 until 1986 when he sold the interior plantscape portion of the business.

During that time, under Don's management, Plant Care Company grew into a multimillion dollar interiorscape and exterior landscape company. Plant Care had over 100 employees providing services to over 1000 customers including hotels, malls, corporate headquarters and countless other businesses. Over the years, Plant Care Co won many awards of excellence for design and installation of interior and exterior landscapes in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metropolitan area.

At the time of the sale of Plant Care Company, Don retained ownership of the products side of his business, "Inscape Supply" which has continued to supply interiorscapers nationwide with containers and many other products.

Dallas area plantscapers gravitated to Don with their questions about how to find the true cost of a job and other key components to business success. Over the years Don and his management team at Inscape Supply shared their business experience and mentored many interiorscapers. Don's "open door" and the generosity with which he shared his knowledge was responsible for raising the level of industry professionalism in the Dallas Fort Worth area.

Possibly the greatest contribution Don has made to the Interiorscape industry is the mentoring he has provided which prepared his employees, as well as many others, to go into business for themselves.

Don always carefully mentored his employees, they were called "family" not employees and he held weekly management coaching sessions. Don preached this family approach to management – don't treat an employee any differently than you would treat your own family members. This resulted in high morale and productivity within the company.

Don was active with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, attending meetings, offering suggestions and mentoring others, especially on financial matters, organization and cost controls. He continued to mentor other plantscapers for 12 years after he sold his company.

As the ALCA-Interior Plant Division chairman in 1986, Don cemented the merger between the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and Interior Plantscape Association bringing these two organizations together as one. Although our industry has grown in many directions since the beginning days of plantscaping, none of us would be where we are today without the hard work and generosity of predecessors like Don Wilson.

When asked about his greatest accomplishment in business Don replied: "Meeting so many wonderful friends in the industry and creating jobs that people love. And making a difference."

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