



Interiorscape Hall of Fame



Alfred Emsig

2007 Posthumous Inductee



Alfred Seth Emsig, otherwise known by all of his friends and business acquaintances as Alf, is being honored as the 2007 Posthumous inductee into the Interiorscape Hall of Fame.

Alf began his professional education in New York, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Fine Arts from Bard College, in 1969. He continued his education at the Boston Architectural Center, MA, from 1970 to

1975, during which time he worked with The Architects Collaborative, Inc., in Cambridge, in the design of special needs projects. In providing architectural design services, he had the opportunity to use his social science training to pioneer the development of award-winning special needs projects.

In 1974 Alf purchased a small greenhouse operation in Brookline, MA. About the same time, together with partners, Richard Berry, a landscape contractor, and Nelson Hammer, a landscape architect, they founded Bough Haus, Inc.

Bough Haus was an interior-exterior landscape design/build/service firm that ultimately employed 120 well-trained professionals. They consistently provided quality plantscaping services for a wide range of discerning corporate clients.

By 1980, the company had outgrown its small greenhouses in Brookline, and moved to larger quarters in Medway, MA. The business grew to a 3-1/2 million dollar enterprise by 1989 at which time it merged with City Gardens, Inc. The combined enterprise made it one of the largest American-owned interiorscape companies in the country. Two years later, City Gardens was sold to Rentokil, and Alf embarked on the next phase of his professional career

Over the next ten years, Alf was involved with, and worked on, many special projects, including the supervision of the design and the actual planting of "Camp Snoopy" in the Mall of America, with McRae Anderson. He also was a consultant to McRae Anderson for the Tennessee Aquarium, the Denver Airport with Michael Singer, and the Cleveland Metroparks Rain Forest.

He also consulted on numerous innovative projects, including the “look” of the 1996 Summer Olympics for Favermann Design, of Boston, MA. His other projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Embassy Suites/Guest Quarters Hotels and Resorts,
- Sonesta Hotels and Resorts Worldwide,
- Meridien Hotel, in Boston, MA,
- L.L.Bean, in Freeport, Maine,
- Various commercial properties for The Beacon Companies, of Boston, MA.

Alf consulted on the permanent galleries and special exhibits for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the tea garden of the Japanese House for the Boston Children’s Museum. Alf was very active with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and its many projects and served as an Overseer for this same organization. He served as a past Director and Board member of the Interior Plantscape Association. He was honored with invitations to speak on landscape design at Harvard University and the University of Ohio. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society has awarded his work two Gold medals.

In 2005, Alf returned to the interior landscape industry he loved so much, accepting the position of General Manager for Cityscapes Plant Care, Inc. in Boston. Always the innovator, he was fervently working on the development of a vertical living wall design for interior commercial spaces. But, regrettably, Alf became ill in the middle of the year and passed away on October 25th, 2005.

The following three quotes, attributed to Alf in 1986 give insight into his approach to plant design in the interior environment.

"The elements of beauty, grace and style are the cornerstones of effective interior landscape design. Learning how to combine them to create a living work of art is indeed the essence of this practice we have come to call interior landscaping."

"Many interior plantings today have come to reflect too great a sameness. The prevalent style tends to make no allowances for motifs or individuality, characteristics that distinguish style in other art forms."

"Beauty, grace and style – they're three intangibles that receive tangible representation when transformed into a completed planting. Mastering the skills needed to harness these elements is the key in becoming an artist at this craft we know as interior landscaping."

We honor Alf Emsig, a special individual who helped define and move our industry forward.

