



# Interiorscape Hall of Fame



*Richard Gaines*

*2006 Plantscaper Inductee*



The Interiorscape Hall of Fame is dedicated to those individuals who have given unselfishly of their time, effort, and talents in the development of the interiorscape industry. Unquestionably, during the infancy of the interiorscape industry in the 1970s, one of the individuals who stood out among all others is the 2006 Interiorscape Professional inductee, Richard Gaines.

I suppose that you could say that it was his wife, Catherine, who was indirectly responsible for Richard's introduction to our industry. Richard was formally educated as an architect and received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois in 1972.

After graduation he joined his father-in-law, Robert Scott, at John's Nursery and Plantscape House in Apopka, Florida. A 1983 interview with Richard highlights his vision for the industry and his work for the family firm, "My job, as a registered architect, was to deal directly with the design profession, learn their needs and help solve their problems so that interiorscaping might be promoted on a larger scale." It was during the early 1970s under Richard's direction that John's Nursery became one of the first growers to acclimate large specimen foliage plants for use indoors, shipping and installing truckloads of plants across the US and Canada.

During the mid 1970's Richard authored several papers on foot-candle lighting requirements for interior foliage along, with the advantages and disadvantages of using different types of artificial lighting sources with plants.

In 1977 he authored the cutting edge book, "Interior Plantscaping: Building Design for Interior Foliage Plants", the first and only book of its kind. It became, and still is, an industry standard, and many of the specifications outlined in this book continue to be used by specifiers and interiorscapers around the globe today.

Richard also was responsible for contributing a good percentage of the original material that was included in the first Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) "Guide to Interior Landscape Specifications", which is also still in use today in an updated version.

In 1981 Richard purchased the Plantscape House, Inc. a division of John's Nurseries. Shortly thereafter he merged his operation with The Plant People owned by Michael Lewis.

Richard and Michael remained partners and during the next 15 years their business, Plantscape House, grew into a 2.5 million dollar enterprise, the largest independently owned interior landscaping company in Central Florida.

One of Richard's many accomplishments is the 1982 installation of a quarter million dollar atrium in the NOVA world headquarters building in Alberta, Canada, an ALCA Grand Award Winner.

Always a design leader, Richard was one of the first people to successfully incorporate high light exterior specimen palms such as *Phoenix reclinata*, and *Sabal palmetto*, into an interior atrium in 1985, winning another of many ALCA Grand Awards.

Plantscape House accumulated over 16 major awards in the 16 years they were in business from such organizations as ALCA, Interior Plantscape Association (IPA), and *Interiorscape Magazine*.

Richard and Mike opened a US division of LENI Hydroculture with the parent firm from Germany. For several years in the mid 1980s they promoted hydroculture within the interiorscape industry, producing the plants and matching them up with the unique containers and related supplies from their German partner. As their interiorscape business continued to grow and consume much of their time, they ultimately decided to drop the marketing and promotion of the LENI Hydroculture system.

In 1996 the partners sold Plantscape House to TruGreen ChemLawn, which has subsequently become a branch of Initial Tropical Plants. Richard continued to work for TruGreen for a couple of years until he decided to take a position an Orlando design/build construction firm called McCree. During the past eight years Richard has risen to the position of Vice President of McCree and now oversees much of the in-house architectural work for this rapidly growing 50 million dollar firm.

Richard has also greatly contributed to the interiorscape industry through his involvement in regional and national industry associations. He served for many years on the Interior Plantscape Association Board of Directors, chairing several of its committees; and is a past president of the Central Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Richard's current participation as an active interiorscaper is missed by his colleagues; however his past contributions to the industry continue to have an influence today.

