



Interiorscape Hall of Fame



Karl Robert Korstad 2003 Posthumous Inductee

Karl Robert Korstad was born on May 19, 1915 in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. There, Karl and his brother Dick, grew up on an Indian reservation where his father ran the general store and later the local movie theater.

Karl graduated from Lincoln High School in 1931 at the age of 16. He continued his education at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and in 1935 graduated with a BA degree in English. Karl continued his education at Syracuse University and in 1938 received his Masters Degree in English Literature. After graduation, Karl was offered a teaching position in the English department at Syracuse University where he taught until 1942 when he joined the Army.

The army stationed Karl in Charleston, South Carolina, where he met Frances Rodgers, who was to become his wife. She introduced him to what would be his future career. As luck would have it, her father owned a nursery in Charleston. Karl and Frances were married in 1944. The Army honorably discharged Karl in 1946.

Karl and Frances began their family in 1948, when first son, Robert, was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. The family then moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1951 where David was born. The next move took the family to Greensboro, North Carolina and Karl opened Sedgfield Garden Center.

The garden center prospered. Karl continued to learn more about the nursery business and horticulture in general. As the years passed, Sedgfield Garden Center became more involved in landscape contracting, eventually incorporating as Sedgfield Landscape Nursery. With hard work, the company became one of the largest landscape contractors in North Carolina, specializing in large commercial projects throughout the state.

One of the first large projects was for the Westinghouse Corporation. Westinghouse had a contract with George Bauman, who was in the process of buying Leaf Nurseries in Florida. Mr. Bauman was also a business associate of Karl's brother in South Dakota. He asked Dick Korstad if he knew anyone in North Carolina and Dick told him his brother had a nursery in Greensboro. Mr. Bauman then contacted Karl to see if Sedgfield's was interested in installing and maintaining the interior plants for Westinghouse.

Mr. Bauman invited Karl to visit his nursery in Florida to learn more about interior plants. Karl spent almost two weeks at Leaf Nurseries and other nurseries discussing tropical plants and how to maintain them in interior environments. Sedgfield installed the plants for Westinghouse in 1969 and to this day, still maintains a business relationship with Westinghouse. Sedgfield Landscape Nursery now began to market their growing interior landscaping services, and over time, branch offices in Charlotte, North Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia and Chattanooga, Tennessee were opened. The company became so involved with interior landscaping that the exterior business was sold in 1980.

As an ALCA member, Karl believed that the association could do more to help the new interiorscape segment of the 'green industry'. In 1980, as Chairman of the Interior Committee he headed the successful effort to have the Interior Committee reorganized as a separate division of ALCA. The Interior Landscape Division of ALCA was born, with its own Board of Directors and budget. Karl's vision, along with many others, was to develop training seminars to help increase the professionalism and business expertise of the companies providing interior landscaping services. His efforts, as well as the efforts of many others, bore fruit in 1982, when ALCA began offering training seminars throughout the country on Interior Landscape Design and Interior Maintenance Practices. These seminars, along with others focused on financial management and personnel management, toured the country for many years offering guidance and improving business skills for hundreds of owners and employees.

Karl was the first 'interior only' landscaper to serve as an officer of ALCA. He continued his commitment to the interior industry tirelessly serving on the ALCA Board as the treasurer, secretary and first vice-president. He was an outspoken champion for needs and recognition of the interior industry. In 1985, Karl was named an ALCA lifetime honorary member, one of ALCA's highest honors.

Karl continued to speak at seminars and write articles for various publications until his retirement in 1991. On May 15, 1994 Karl passed away. In 1998, the Florida Nurseryman and Growers Association posthumously inducted Karl into the Foliage Hall of Fame.

Karl truly was one of the first champions of the interiorscape industry. He will be remembered for his belief in and dedication to the interior landscape industry.

We, as an industry, are his legacy.

