



# Interiorscape Hall of Fame



**Richard Parker**

*2009 Plantscape Professional Inductee*



Richard Parker grew up in the nursery business two minutes away from his Mom and Dad's wholesale greenhouse in New Jersey. After graduating Texas Tech University, Rich trained under the tutelage of his mother, Beatrice, who handled the finances, and father, Leonard, a maverick in the wholesale greenhouse industry. From them he learned the importance of innovation and hard work needed to be successful.

In 1977 Rich took over the fledgling interiorscape division, Parker Interior Plantscape. At the time there were four employees and it was losing money. From those early beginnings Parker Interior Plantscape grew so that today it is the largest privately held interior plantscape business in the U.S.

In 1981 Rich married Vicki, who came into the family business. They carefully selected and groomed a strong, unified team of horticultural experts who would grow the company. To this day, over 40 employees have been with Parker for over 15 years! In 2008 the companies had a (non-seasonal) employee retention rate of 98.7%

Rich and Vicki developed a quality control program based on client feedback that continues to this day. As the staff grew in experience, Rich and Vicki kept delegating what they were doing and were able to keep a controlled but quick growth rate. Their "out of the box" thinking has always kept Parker in the front of the industry.

Rich has always welcomed a challenge. He built the largest shade house in the world, at that time, to acclimatize palms that were installed in the original World Financial Center. He built a 25' horse out of flowers. He had the distinguished honor as the vendor who was able to work the longest with Leona Helmsley (the queen of mean). Rich has also worked for over 23 years with Donald Trump and has done consulting for Steve Wynn.

Over the years the company, under Rich's leadership and forward thinking, has evolved and diversified but never forgotten its horticultural roots. The company has four divisions, the main one being Parker Interior Plantscape followed by Parker Holiday, Parker3d, that

offers hi tech light and sound shows, and Parker Urban Greenscapes for green roofs and walls.

I'd like to give you just a taste of Rich and Parker Company's Achievements.

Parker has won over 50 industry awards; two environmental improvement awards at the Whitehouse: one from Barbara Bush and the other from Hillary Clinton. They are the only vendor ever to win the Atlantic City top Allied vendor award, not once but twice. Parker InteriorPlantscape has also won the ICSC Maxi award – The highest award given by the shopping mall industry association.

Success is also evident in the numerous write-ups in local and industry magazines and 350 letters of praise from satisfied clients. One example of achieving the near impossible happened when the company took over a large job that was abandoned by another 'scaper mid installation. Parker was hired with a \$1000.00 day fine if he could not complete the job in a week. 75 people worked 24 hours a day installing 130 trucks of soil and plants. Not only did they finish the job, they did so a full day early!

Another time Parker was asked by a large client to deliver a single rose to over 400 clients in a 150-mile radius. The roses were ordered from Colombia and were confiscated enroute due to illegal drugs snuck into the shipment. To meet the deadline Parker bought out every wholesaler and florist in a 20-mile radius and delivered every last rose and on time.

Parker Interior Plantscape is a company with international scope as well. They've installed jobs in 18 states, Paradise Island, Bermuda, Hong Kong and Canada. He also trained a Japanese company in Interior Plantscaping.

One of Rich's strong points has been his willingness to adopt the newest techniques and products. His company was the first to commercially utilize controlled watering systems on large-scale installations and one of the first to use preserved plants. He helped edit PLANETS Guide to Interior landscape Specifications as well.

**Richard has been a strong supporter of industry networks and associations;**

He is a member of the following professional organizations: PIA, PLANET, FFA, OFA, GPGB, AAN, NJLA, USGBC, IFMA, NIN.

**Parker has also been a leader in community affairs;**

He was on the Advisory Board of Delaware Valley College and raised a service dog for people with disabilities. Richard and Vicki have been married 28 years and have a son Nathan who is also semi-active in the business. A technology buff, Nathan designed Parker's first web site.

We welcome Rich as this year's Plantscaping Professional inductee to the 2009 Plantscape Hall of Fame.

