

Deane Hundley is New AHS President

by Viveka Neveln

WHEN KATY MOSS WARNER stepped down as the American Horticultural Society's president in June 2006, the AHS Board of Directors faced the challenge of finding just the right person to become its next president and CEO. "With this organization's distinguished history and ambitious future plans in mind, the selection committee took its role very seriously," says AHS Board Chair **Susie Usrey**. After an extensive six-month national search, the Board ultimately found the leadership skills and experience it was looking for in someone who was already a familiar face.



Deane Hundley

Deane H. Hundley, who was selected from a pool of extremely talented and well-qualified applicants, had been serving as a consultant for the AHS with the fundraising firm Ketchum, Inc. since the spring of 2006. "The more I worked with the AHS," says Deane, "the more I saw

the incredible potential it has." Excited by the opportunity to bring this potential to fruition, he accepted the position of the AHS's 33rd president last December.

"Deane not only brings with him an enthusiasm for the AHS's goals and mission," says **Tom Underwood**, the AHS's chief operating officer, "he also brings a diverse skill set that will help him to guide the organization in the next phase of its history."

A FLAIR FOR FUNDRAISING

Born and raised in rural Virginia, Deane graduated from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg with degrees in business and education. He began his career as a teacher and director of development at a boarding school, then worked with his father in his family's insurance agency for a decade. Over the years, he found time to volunteer with numerous organizations and discovered he had an aptitude for fundraising.

Deane's next move was to Florida, where he served as the chief development officer at Ransom Everglades School in Miami, orchestrating a successful \$10 million capital campaign. Nearby Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden then recruited him as their chief operating officer. During his tenure there, he helped the garden launch its first capital campaign, raising more than \$13 million over two years, while also supervising the construction phase.

With the AHS poised to begin its own capital campaign, Deane's many years of fundraising experience will be invaluable. "My role," says Deane, "is to assist in procuring the re-

sources the AHS needs to accomplish its mission and to work with the Board to secure the organization's future."

Over the course of his career, Deane has observed that "people give to people, organizations, and causes they believe in." Because of that, he feels that raising the funds the AHS needs is as much about cultivating people as it is about cultivating plants. The AHS's donors and members tend to be "people who believe very strongly in environmental issues, nature, and plants, and in educating youth about their importance, as well as people who are simply wild about gardening," he says. "The AHS must work to serve the needs of these people as well as to encourage others to become more interested in plants and gardening."

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One way to increase the AHS's ability to reach a diverse national audience, says Deane, is to use technology in innovative ways. "This will help make the AHS's strong educational programs more accessible and useful across a broad geographic range." He also believes this strategy will be particularly important for connecting with youth. "The next generation is just as interested in plants and gardening, just in a different way, so the AHS must find ways to use technology to engage people of all ages."

GARDENING ROOTS

Deane's own interest in gardening began at an early age. He has fond memories from his childhood of visiting his grandfather's farm and helping with the harvest as well as from his experiences at home. "We had a big vegetable garden when I was growing up, and we were always working on landscaping the yard, so it came naturally to me when I had my own garden," he says. "I also have developed a tremendous appreciation for landscape and landscape design. During my time at Fairchild and since, I have enjoyed reading and learning about the Olmsted brothers, William Lyman Phillips, and Liberty Hyde Bailey, to mention a few. Additionally, I have thoroughly enjoyed the planning and implementation of my home garden first in Virginia and then in Florida."

While gardening can mean different things to different people, the word often makes Americans think of their backyards, observes Deane. "I see it as a much broader term. There are so many different applications of gardening and we should embrace them all."

Viveka Neveln is assistant editor for *The American Gardener*.