

## AHS PARTNERS IN PROFILE

# Chapel Valley: Landscaping the Mid-Atlantic Region

by Caroline Bentley

ITS CLIENT LIST reads like a grand tour of beautiful landscapes in the mid-Atlantic area: the National Geographic Society, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Howard Hughes Medical Center, Baltimore's Inner Harbor. These clients, along with countless private residences and corporate offices in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., rely on Chapel Valley Landscape Company to beautify their landscapes.



Above: Chapel Valley Landscape Company's projects include the grounds of the National Shrine in Washington, D.C. Right: Chapel Valley founder J. Landon Reeve IV.

Successfully managing sites like these requires expertise, vision, and the flexibility to adapt to new horticultural trends. With \$46 million in annual sales, three offices, and 475 employees, Chapel Valley is now the 16th largest full-service landscape firm in the country. And along the way the company has picked up 250 national and regional awards for its work.

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

"In 1968, I started Chapel Valley with goodwill and a prayer," says **J. Landon Reeve IV**, the company's founder. He also had a new green Volkswagen Bug and a horticulture degree from the University of Maryland. In the second year, Reeve bought some land and built a tiny office for his staff of three, along with space to store equipment and trucks.

According to Reeve, his late wife, Janet, was "a driving force" in the company's formative period. Initially the company was a residential design/build firm, but over the next 20 years, they steadily added services for commercial clients, irrigation and lighting installation, and residential maintenance.

At age 13, Reeve's daughter, Deonne, started working part-time in the family garden caring for plants. During high school and college, she honed this experience at Chapel Valley. While she was in college, she took a human resources/management course that "inspired me to develop a strong HR department and a more formal internship program," says Deonne. Now, Chapel Valley's internship program is recognized as one of the best in the industry.

James, Reeve's son, also got involved with horticulture at an early age. Reeve encouraged him to "learn by doing," so James started his career at Chapel Valley as a laborer before eventually moving up through the ranks to his current position as the company's CEO and president.

The company's commitment to applying the best practices, hiring talented people, and supporting continued employee education has served them well through four decades.

For more information about Chapel Valley, visit [www.chapelvalley.com](http://www.chapelvalley.com). To find out more about the AHS's corporate partnerships, e-mail Laura Alexander at [development@ahs.org](mailto:development@ahs.org).

### INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

In addition to building his business, Reeve has held prominent leadership roles in regional and national green industry groups. He is a past president of the Maryland Nursery & Landscape Association and the Professional Landcare Network.

Reeve has been an AHS member since the 1960s, but three years ago he took a more active role when longtime friend **Kurt Bluemel**, owner of Kurt Bluemel Nursery, invited him to join the AHS Board of Directors. "I originally joined the AHS as an opportunity to meet people in the industry and learn more about horticulture on a national level," says Reeve. "As a board member, I support the AHS's mission, especially educational programs that demonstrate how important plants and horticulture are to our health and well-being."

Through his participation with the AHS's Executive and River Farm committees, Reeve "truly leads by example and helps us to weigh options to make the best decisions for River Farm and the AHS," says AHS Chief Operating Officer **Tom Underwood**.

"Landon is a consummate gentleman and a real voice of reason on our Board," says AHS President and CEO **Deane H. Hundley**. "The AHS is benefiting from his business background and from the landscaping services Chapel Valley has provided here at River Farm as a participant in the Society's Corporate Partnership program."

Among the projects Chapel Valley has facilitated at River Farm are the installation of an irrigation system for the André Bluemel Meadow, renovation of a circular walkway in front of the Estate House, and design assistance on the recently installed Meadow Overlook (see page 10).

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