

## WINNER: LANDSCAPE CONTRACTING

# Bruce Hunt

**Vice President, The Brickman Group, Ltd.,  
Langhorne, PA**

BY JASON STAHL

### Career highlights

#### 1961

Hired by The Brickman Group

#### 1968

Promoted to general manager

#### 1980

Joins ALCA's Crystal Ball Committee

#### 1980

Establishes design/build office in Philadelphia

#### 1984

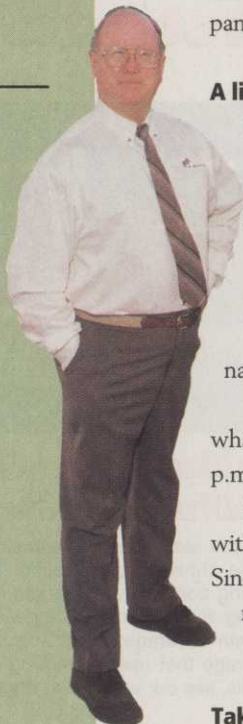
Establishes design/build office in Baltimore

#### 1988

Elected president of ALCA

#### 1994

Honored with ALCA's Landscape Service Award



When Bruce Hunt first arrived on the campus of Michigan State University in 1956, he didn't even realize there was such a thing as a degree in landscape architecture.

"I was more interested in business and design," Hunt says, admitting that his math skills were extremely weak but that design and drafting came easy to him.

His first interview with The Brickman Group, Ltd., happened by chance. His college roommate had scheduled an interview with the company, but had already taken another job and decided to skip it. Hunt and his wife, Cammie, who had just married in their last year of college, were planning to travel to St. Louis to visit friends, so he smelled an opportunity.

"I figured I'd take a short detour to Chicago and take my roommate's place in the interview," Hunt says.

Hunt was interviewed by Dick Brickman, and, in 1961, became one of The Brickman Group's five full-time employees. Little did he know that he would stay with the company for the rest of his career — in fact, he would eventually rise to vice president

### A little bit of everything

Hunt was originally hired on as a landscape designer, but since the company was so small, he ended up performing many duties — designing, estimating, production management, supervision, and client contact, to name a few. "I've probably had every job that's ever existed in this company," Hunt says. Within five years, he became general manager, having evolved out of design and into project and people management.

Today, at 62, Hunt says he is as busy as he has ever been, but his focus is much more narrow — primarily on client development and large project sales and management.

Scott Brickman, Dick Brickman's son and president of the company, knows firsthand what kind of worker Hunt is. "He's still gets to the office at 6 a.m. and is here until 7 p.m.," he says.

Scott wasn't even born when Hunt was first interviewed — Hunt's first encounter with him was at the office, when Scott's parents brought him in shortly after he was born. Since then, Hunt has come to know him as a leader and a friend. "It was always Dick's mission to see the company grow and grow. He was a visionary," Hunt says. "Scott has taken on that ability, which is unusual in a third generation business."

### Taking an active role

Hunt says Dick Brickman, a lifelong friend and mentor, was always active in Green Indus-

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try goings-on and encouraged him to participate in industry activities as well. Hunt took what Brickman said to heart — he's been a member of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America's (ALCA) Crystal Ball Committee since 1980, and served as ALCA's president in 1988. At the time, Ron Kujawa, who is currently chairman of the board of KEI Inc. in Cudahy, WI, was president-elect of ALCA under Hunt.

"We went through some difficult times in the association's early days," Kujawa says. "Bruce and I were the two oldest members when ALCA was restructured. We were able to add the resource of institutional and traditional knowledge — sort of like, 'Been there, done that.' Bruce coined the term 'ALCA magic' for what we had."

Hunt joined a national association like ALCA for a reason. "I was a little reluctant to join local associations because there were competitors as members," he says. "With ALCA, I could participate and contribute knowing I wasn't doing so with competitors."

And participate Hunt did. He was rewarded for his service and commitment in 1994 when ALCA bestowed its Landscape Service Award on him.

"He has a true love of the industry, and he's very much interested in education and the youth coming into the industry," says ALCA president Debra Holder, who noted Hunt's year-to-year involvement with the association's Student Career Days. "He has been instrumental as one of the leaders who helped to make ALCA what it is today."

Gary Thornton, an ALCA member and president of Slice Technologies, not only knows Hunt for his industry contributions but his sense of humor as well. One year, Hunt was in charge of the nominating committee, and Thornton was up for nomination to the executive committee. "He sent me a fax that said a whole bunch of people didn't want me nominated," Thornton says. "He followed it up with another fax that said, 'April Fool's!'"

#### **A lifetime with the Brickmans**

With 2000 revenues expected to be in the \$230 million range, The Brickman Group has come a long



**Bruce Hunt has been with The Brickman Group since the very beginning.**

way since Bruce Hunt first walked in the door in 1961. Originally a design/build firm, the company now offers a full range of landscape services. Recently, it established a West Coast presence for the first time with the purchase of two San Diego-based companies.

Asked why he stayed with the same company for so long, Hunt asked why not? "As long as a company fulfills your need for growth and motivation and stimulation," he says. "I've always had all I've wanted with them. I had a couple opportunities to leave or buy a family business, and I decided not to simply because I saw something in Brickman that was different."

As far as choosing the Green Industry to pursue a professional career in, Hunt has no regrets. He admits that it wasn't necessarily a love of nature that motivated him to enter the industry, but his ability to use his design talents. "What also attracted me was the ability to create something and, 20 years later, drive by a project and see something you've done," Hunt says. "Also, the people and competition in this industry are perceived to be a cut above other industries. The work ethic and integrity seem to attract good people."