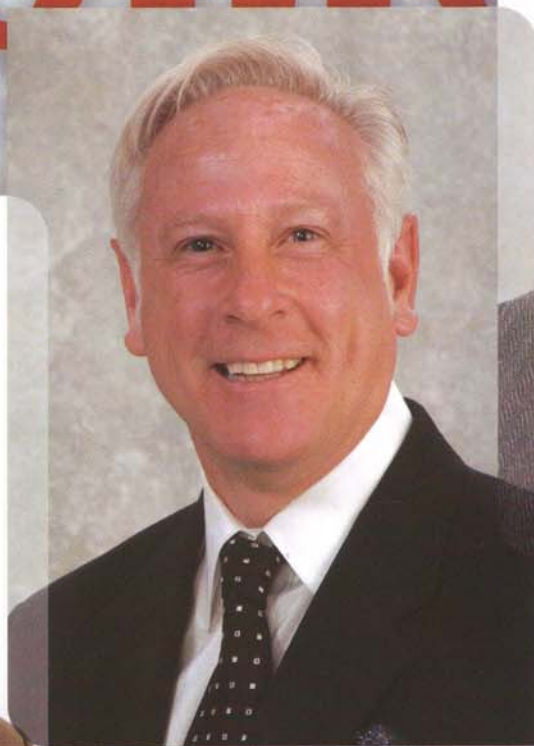


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# downriver profile



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People Profile

(L to R) Robert Howey, R.J. Howey Architects, Inc.;  
Doug Henry, Foliage Concepts, Inc.; and Gregory Holbrook,  
Holbrook Roofing Co. have each left their mark on Downriver.

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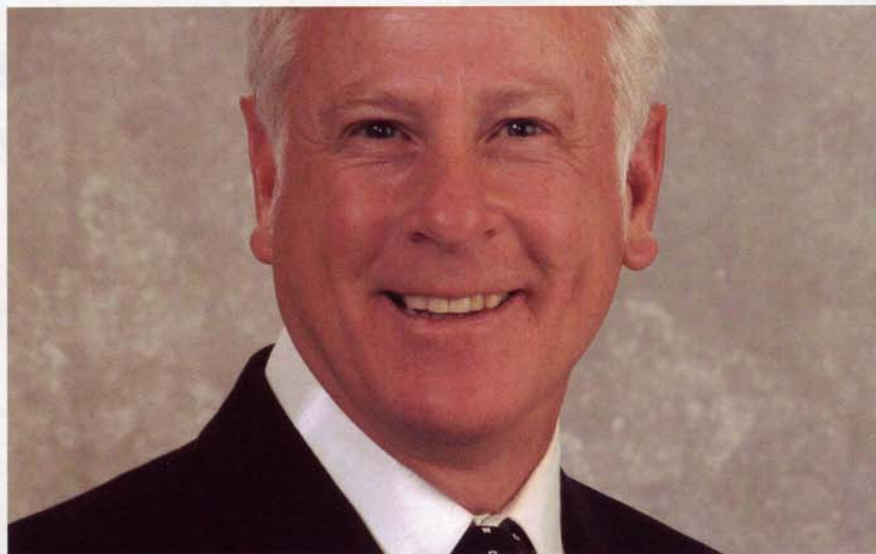


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## Landscaping

# Third Generation of Design and Installation Innovation



**N**OT YOUR AVERAGE landscaping company, Foliage Concepts, Inc. brings a little exotic flair to its projects.

Traditional customers can opt for a concrete fountain or birdbath to highlight their home or business, while those who'd like a more adventurous vista can turn their piece of Earth into an Asian utopia.

"We do everything across the board—English gardens, Japanese gardening, sensory and meditation gardens," owner Doug Henry said.

Recreating nature, he added, is very powerful from a spiritual standpoint.

"You almost feel like an alchemist,

and the bulldozers are your paintbrushes," he said. "My whole life I've made a living by being creative."

Said Henry, 53, who's also a singer/songwriter and musician: "You have to be driven by your passion."

Not only does Henry have nearly three decades of experience with the business, but he's also the third generation of the family to work in landscaping.

In the 1920s, his grandfather, the late Edwin Henry, began the business as the Garden Shop in Lincoln Park.

According to his grandson, landscaping became a sideline for him while building homes on Grosse Ile.

"Grandfather did a lot of churches in the city of Detroit and it's interesting to see how the style of landscaping, like clothes or any fashion oriented thing, changes," he said.

The business eventually was passed on to Dewey Henry, Doug's father and a former Grosse Ile Township supervisor.

When the youngest Henry took over, he began incorporating some of his own style into the work, including Asian-influenced designs.

"I've lived in Asia in the winter months for the last 12 years," he said.

About a year ago, he began importing decorative pottery from Asia.

"They're handmade, sun-dried concrete...and they're good in cold climates so they won't break," he added.

The unique pottery—available in various colors and sizes—is quite a conversation piece among his customers.

"I stopped at a Thai rest in Dearborn and had one in the back of my truck, and a lady bought three on the spot, he said.

Henry and his 15-member staff beautify homes and businesses with an array of landscaping ornamentation, including trees and plants, wood and water features and retaining walls.

"It doesn't matter the size of the job, we try to service (people) the best we can."

And that philosophy has boded well for both Henry and the business on a financial and personal level.

"You establish a good connection with people," he said. "It makes you feel good to know you're making other people happy."

And, Henry has found building a good rapport with clients can lead to more extensive jobs.

"Some of these homes aren't that big, but they sort of give you carte blanche if they know your work." ➤

One project at a private residence on Grosse Ile cost \$150,000 for a home that was roughly 3,000 sq. ft.

Projects run the gamut from homes to churches to schools, and several stand out in Henry's mind as show-pieces of his crew's talents.

An educational garden the company built for a Livonia school featured an elevated circular brick patio and a "philosophy" garden.

"We called the patio a circle of learning, and they'd have field days where the young kids would come out and talk about the plant material in the garden and the plants that we use in our daily lives," he said.

A Japanese garden created for a restaurant in Novi incorporated water features and stone lanterns.

"Even though the space wasn't large...the detail was something."

Having lived in Japan helped Henry draw on those influences.

"We want to feel like we can set ourselves apart from other people in our industry," he said. "My background as a third generation landscaper adds to our ability and the traveling I've done around the world helps."

Setting up master plans for projects also gives Foliage Concepts a step up in the industry.

"A lot of people have us draw that up before the homes are even built," he said, "and bringing in things from overseas adds to the hardscapes."

In the future, Henry would like to take the business onto an international scale. "I'd really like to get into doing work for major hotel chains all over world," he said. "I love to travel, and that would be real exciting for me." ■