

Keeping an Eye on 40

The Reynolds Family of Businesses Celebrate a Milestone Birthday

Written by Elaine Sisko, Reynolds Landscaping Photo by Ann Coen



In 1980, Mark and Peg Reynolds entered married life on a stable foundation; Mark had a good job in the Atlantic City casino industry while Peg contributed to the family income working as the surgical assistant to a local doctor. Things changed one day, however, when Mark called Peg at work. “I think I’m going to quit this job,” Mark announced, “the smoke in here is killing me.” Peg considered his decision and asked, “but then what will you do?” “I’m going to be a landscaper,” he had decided.

She may not have been exactly sure at the time what this involved, however, the seed for what would eventually become *Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop* was planted. Thirty-nine years later, the Reynolds family of businesses has grown and morphed into a multi-dimensional ‘one-stop-shop’ retail/service center stretching over 4 store fronts on Bay Avenue in Manahawkin. Yet throughout this evolution, the guiding principles in the birth, growth and success of this thriving family business have remained the same—steadfast reliance on family, the kindness of friends and an unwavering ear to the wants and needs of the community.

In the beginning, as with all fledgling businesses, times were tough and business was slow. Mark supplemented the meager family earnings by chopping firewood

during the winter months. In season, Peg made routine trips to Bayville—buying flats of flowers with her young family in tow and placing them on the laps of her young children for safekeeping on the ride home. As time went on, Mark and Peg were able to expand and diversify their plant offerings to shrubs, perennials and annual flats on a small plot of land given to them by Peg’s parents, on the site of what was once the family golf course on Bay Avenue. *Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Center* had become a reality.

Their small business survived and thrived and, eventually, relocated to its present location on Bay Avenue. Dedication, hard work and tireless energy made this dream a reality, however, Mark and Peg Reynolds both acknowledge that, without the help of the Cullen family (Peg’s parents), none of their hopes and aspirations would have been possible. They provided child support, unloaded trucks, assisted with clients, drove tractors and swept floors—doing whatever they could to lend a hand. The success of *Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop* is a tribute to them and their unwavering support and belief in the dreams of their children.

The sale of plant material grew to include garden-related merchandise and seasonal offerings of fresh-cut Christmas trees and Halloween pumpkins; as a need



was realized in the community, so was the ability of Reynolds to fill a void and satisfy client demand. Their willingness to listen to the wants and needs of the customer extended to landscape services as well, with the establishment of landscape installation and design, automatic irrigation and garden maintenance services—built upon the cornerstone of impeccable service and customer satisfaction.

The purchase of land comprising what would eventually become *Reynolds Garden Center* included several buildings and accessory structures. Again, by listening to their customers, Mark and Peg discovered an under-served need in the local community for high quality and unique interior home furnishings and accessories. Taking to heart their customer feedback, these series of out-buildings and barns were conjoined to create the quaint and inviting *Reynolds Garden Shop*. Unique, one-of-a-kind home décor supplemented by indoor house plants, women’s clothing, jewelry, children’s clothing and pet accessories—the Reynolds family expanded their inventory to keep pace with emerging trends in the marketplace.

Outdoor showers and kitchens, pergolas and fire features—Reynolds Landscaping honed their expertise and skill set beyond landscaping to include exterior construction and accessory structures. Again, detecting an opportunity to expand construction services to the home and interior, Reynolds created a new company—*Mark Reynolds Project Management Inc*—to address the needs of existing clients for quality home renovations, new home construction and additions—flawlessly bridging the gap between interior and exterior living.

When asked about their greatest success, however, Mark and Peg Reynolds both cite the growth and development



of their children as being their most prized accomplishment. Pride is palpable when they speak of the growth and development of their family from toddlers to adult with individual talents and interests of their own. Untapped potential was always encouraged in their children and led to new specialty niches in the Reynolds business. Emerging skills were nurtured as both parents and children learned from each other.

Daughter, Katie, expanded upon talents learned while working alongside her mother in the Garden Shop to manage the *Reynolds Floral Market*—offering fresh-cut flowers and bridal floral / design services. Her husband, Tanek Hood, developed the Reynolds low-voltage outdoor lighting division. Son, Luke, took over the installation aspects of *Reynolds Landscaping* and together with his father, Mark, created *The Reynolds Group*. Licensed through G. Anderson, the firm assists clients with the buying and selling of local real estate. Meanwhile,

daughter-in-law, Ashley, became merchandise buyer for the *Garden Shop*, while daughter Ashley, a teacher by profession, continues to lend a hand at the family business during summer breaks.

With an emphasis on exemplary custom service, quality craftsmanship and steady communication, Mark and Peg credit the long-term success of *Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop*, in part, to their core group of dedicated, hard-work and reliable employees—many on staff for over 30 years. More like extended family than employees, and encompassing in some cases *several generations of family members*, staff members stand ready and willing to offer expertise, education and years of experience. They create an environment of collegiality and teamwork so evident to any and all customers of the Reynolds family of businesses.

Any talk of Reynolds’ tight-knit family of employees would be incomplete without mention of their beloved and iconic figurehead Ronald, patriarch of the Jamaican contingent of this devoted Reynolds family. With Mark and Peg from inception, Ronald retired last year at the age of 82 from *Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop*, though leaves behind two generations of family members ready to carry on the family

tradition in his footsteps. His charming personality and incredible charisma, however, will be hard to replace and he will be undeniably missed by the avid members of his Garden Center ‘fan club.’

Looking back over the past forty years, Mark and Peg are grateful for the kindness and support they have received from those in the community who have followed their progress and participated in their journey. They have delighted in watching the development of their children and young employees from teenagers to adults with new families of their own. They continue to derive great pleasure and boundless satisfaction coming to work each day and serving their patrons and the community they love.

As they enter into a new unprecedented future forever scarred by the effects of an unprecedented pandemic, Mark, Peg and the entire Reynolds family continue to endure, standing firm behind the principles that have guided their success and longevity for thirty-nine years—strength from family and service to community. As they inch their way toward forty years of business, Mark and Peg Reynolds are filled with the hopes of a continued recovery and the promise of a dedicated, lasting partnership with the community they serve.



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