

Hemphill grateful for life's twists

Fate has a way of providing twists and turns on the pathway of life. Suddenly you don't end up where you thought you might have.

Tim Hemphill knows this all too well. The Hemphills — wife Paula, two grown kids and Tim — are transplants from Niles, Mich., who found their way to Sparkle City in 1997.

Tim met Paula, a registered nurse, in high school, fell in love and got married.

Tim is an architectural designer. When the bottom fell out of the construction industry in 1996, the couple decided to move somewhere warmer. Paula worked for Liberty Mutual, and a move with a new job brought the Hemphills to Spartanburg.

Tim wound up going to work for an architectural firm in Greenville. After eight months, Paula decided to stay home with their two children, ages 4 and 6.

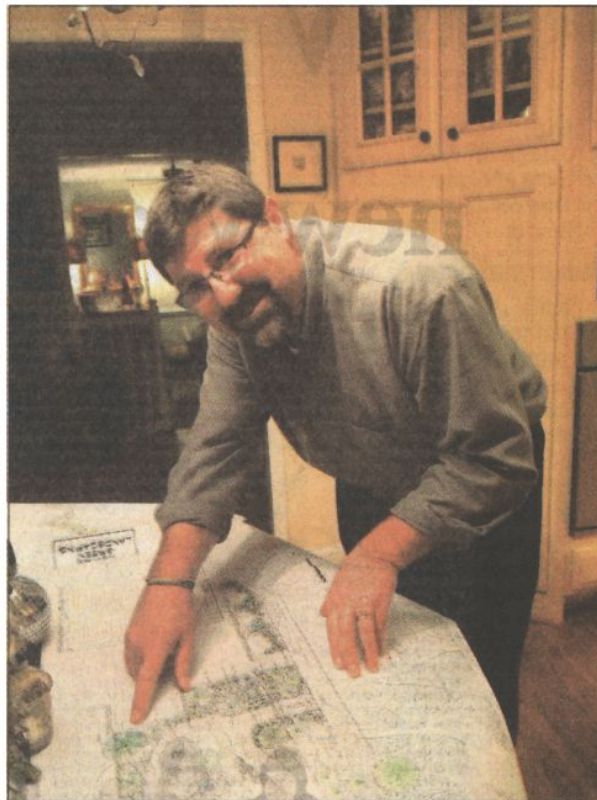
Tim's job called for travel for weeks on end, which was very hard on his young family. Then the recession hit, and he was laid off. Luckily, Paula was able to work to support them.

After sending out an endless stream of resumes with no luck, Tim got hired to work on short-term projects. The Hemphills did not want to uproot their kids from school, as everyone loved living in Spartanburg.

Tim asked himself, "Do I change professions or move?"

This is when his lifelong love of plants kicked in. Tim's mother loved flowers, and Paula's mother was an avid gardener and vegetable grower. Gardening comes naturally for Tim.

"Even though I love the design process in creating buildings," he said, "there



COURTESY OF LINDA COBB

Tim Hemphill of Spartanburg enjoys both his architectural and landscape design work.

is nothing more rewarding than creating landscaping to go with those buildings. I love working with my hands."

Tim had wanted to jump into landscaping for many years. In 2005, Hemphill saw that a job change was on the horizon, so he signed up to take the Master Gardener course with Clemson Extension Service. It was during his volunteer hours for the Master Gardener certification that he volunteered at the Kudzu Coalition.

The family moved to the Thornhill development on the west side of Spartanburg and dug its heels in, with Tim spending a lot of time volunteering in the community. This, he says, was his effort to show his family what it means to get involved and try your best. He has always wanted his

family to get involved in something good, feeling that it improves your life.

By 2009, after completing the Master Gardener course, Tim decided to enroll in the horticulture program at Spartanburg Community College and get his degree, becoming a full-time student at 43.

When Tim finished his degree, he felt armed and dangerous, so to speak. After the first year, Tim went to work for a landscaper, doing everything from working with customers to installation. While still sending out resumes and looking for an architectural job, he continued to work around the clock in landscaping.

Ultimately, his hard work and diligence paid off, and he found a job in architecture in Greenville. Now he does a little of both



Linda Cobb

Garden Cameos

fields — architecture and landscape design work.

He says he's thankful for his landscaping degree. The work is unique, he says, and he loves working with his hands. Hemphill has named his landscape design firm Inspire Green Spaces. He does it part time and through word-of-mouth, and it has changed the direction of his life.

It wasn't long before Hemphill met Joe Maple, who encouraged him to join the Spartanburg Men's Garden Club. Tim is now a board member at the club. He's also nursery and container chairman, and he spends hours and hours taking care of the plants that the club puts up for sale twice a year.

In addition, he spends hours helping organize and manage the Gardening 101 course the club offers twice a year.

Volunteering takes understanding from one's family, and for that, Tim is grateful. His police officer dad taught Tim that if he was going to do anything, to make sure he was "all in."

"I enjoy what I do," Tim says. "I love landscaping work. I love architecture. I love my family. My glass is always half full, and without my family, I am nothing! They allow me to be all in, full throttle."

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