



Charlottesville Aquatics



Christine Graves, Fred von Lewinski, Radha McChristy, MaryBeth Wood and Joe Woodyard

Like countless college kids, Fred von Lewinski needed a job to help him get through school. Should he work at a sub shop? Wash dishes in the student cafeteria? Maybe he could work nights at a canning factory . . . Not Fred. He'd grown up around water his whole life and wanted a job that would keep him close to it, so he decided to get into pool maintenance, a job with the added benefit of allowing him to be his own boss.

"I spent my summers in Canada growing up, and when I was 17 I spent my first summer in the D.C.

area," he explains. "I thought to myself, *Gosh it's hot here*. I'd never experienced heat like that before. So I said, 'I've got to be around water.' That's what got me started."

By the time he graduated from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in 1976, von Lewinski had been doing pool service for a few years and had fallen in love with the area, a place appropriately known as the Jewel of the Commonwealth.

"I graduated with a B.S. in landscape architecture. I didn't want to leave Charlottesville, and since I already had the service business here I decided to start building pools in 1976. I've been doing it ever since," he says.

He opened his first retail store in 1986, where the business remained until three years ago when Charlottesville Aquatics moved into a new 8,000-square-foot facility that in addition to housing warehouse and office space includes a 4,000-square-foot retail showroom.

Today, von Lewinski's company ranks among the top pool and spa companies in the business. And like he did as a young man, von Lewinski still wants to be around water.

"There are certain aspect of the business I can do without, and hopefully I can farm those out," he says. "But I still enjoy it and I'm not planning to retire anytime soon.

"I can't see myself kicking back on a front porch or anything like that."

CHARLOTTESVILLE AQUATICS

Location: Charlottesville, Va.

Principals: Frederick von Lewinski, president

Founded: 1973

Outlets: 1

Employees: 25 year-round, 31 in-season

Products Sold: gunite pools/spas, package vinyl-liner pools, portable spas, billiards, chemicals, supplies, toys