

I Am A Landscaper: Mick Ribault



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Having grown up on the rugged coastline of Brittany, France, Mick Ribault says he can date his love for the water back to his childhood. He spent a lot of time playing on the beach in tidal pools. Ribault says he loved creating pools and dams in the sand and watching the tide flow in and out. When he was 11, his family moved to the U.S., where he has been ever since. After graduating from North Carolina State University, Ribault ultimately wound up working in lake and pond management.

In 2006 as waterway regulations grew, Ribault recognized a need for more service work and branched off to form his own business. Since that time, Dragonfly Pond Works has experienced rapid growth, adding three branches in 2016 with plans to add two more this year. The company is headquartered in North Carolina but serves from Maryland all the way down to Florida. Ribault says he feels fortunate to have known from such an early age what he was meant to do. But even before he got into lake and pond management, Ribault always had a strong work ethic.

From the time I was a kid up through college, I held 14 different jobs. That included everything from being on an assembly line building school buses to working in a plant nursery to cleaning school buses to working at Walmart. I always loved the idea of being able to get a job and earn a paycheck – even from an early age.

I think having a lot of different jobs has helped me understand the mechanics of business. I did not start my business from the businessman side or with business metrics or analytics. I came at it knowing what it takes to do the work. From its very start, Dragonfly has been built on the principles of hard work – making everything as efficient and as high quality for the customer as possible.



All through college I played Ultimate Frisbee. In 1999, the North Carolina

State men's team made it to the national championship, which was exciting. After that I played on a local team called the Ring of Fire. It taught me a lot about team work and how when you work toward a common goal, and put in the time, you can achieve whatever you've put your mind toward. Today I'm still involved with helping out at the NC State men's team.

I enjoy outdoor activities like mountain biking and skiing when I have the time. We took a family ski trip in December and enjoy traveling when we can. I was able to get back to France last summer with my family. As I get older, the value of returning to my roots and exposing my children to the experiences I had growing up have become important to me. I currently have a 2 1/2-year old daughter and a son on the way.

We have chickens and a big garden and I love it. I love being able to take my daughter outside and pick tomatoes right from the vine. And I love having fresh eggs. I'm not the type of person who likes to sit inside. As the business has grown, more office work has been a necessity. But I still get outside as much as I can whether it's to work in the garden or even just do some yard work.

I never take for granted how lucky I am to have moved to the U.S. There is a lot of opportunity here – whether it's finding a job or starting your own business. I have family in France that have started their own businesses and it is not the same – it's much harder there to have the opportunities that are available here. I feel very lucky to live in a place where you truly can control your own destiny.