

## Amenities Consultant Mark Permar



Earlier this year, KICA announced the hiring of land-planning consultant and architect Mark Permar to advise the association on its amenities improvement projects. An Ohio native, Mark lived in Nuremberg, Germany for two years in his early teens, and that exposure to European art and architecture is largely responsible for his becoming an architect. After beginning his career in Washington, DC and Savannah, he has been affiliated with Kiawah as a resident, employee, and independent consultant for 35 years and has sat on the Architectural Review Board for most of that time. He has been a key proponent of the Kiawah philosophy of designing with nature and of preserving and enhancing natural beauty with the highest quality of design and construction possible. His work is widely admired.

Mark's wife and business partner Diana came to Kiawah first, and raved to him about the island. He was already wondering, he said, about the possibility of creating "man-made places in environmentally sensitive areas," when in 1978 he accompanied her to a meeting on Kiawah and "was awestruck." He determined to become involved in the development of Kiawah, and the following year he joined the Kuwaiti's Kiawah Island Company (KIC), eventually becoming vice president of planning and design. At that time, Kiawah already had the Kiawah Island Inn, since demolished after construction of the Sanctuary; the Straw Market; the West Beach tennis center; Marsh Point golf course, now Cougar Point; these neighborhoods' surrounding homesites, condos and villas; and an environmentally friendly master plan.

Mark and Diana both worked for KIC for the next six years until leaving to form their own consulting company, which they still operate today. The vast majority of Mark's time in the intervening years has been spent working on Kiawah and other coastal settings. As a KIC employee and as consultant to both recent developers and

the resort, he has been a part of professional teams focused on future Kiawah development, including but not limited to these projects listed in roughly chronological order.

- The Inlet Cove cottage site.
- East Beach, including Night Heron Park, The Night Heron, Mariners Watch, and Windswept villas (but not the large 4-story Windswept building), East Beach conference and retail center, and Turtle Point/Beach residential development and golf course.
- The Osprey golf course and surrounding residential areas.
- The Kiawah Island Club, including the Beach Club, the River Course and clubhouse, and the Settlement (the residential area behind the River Course gate).
- The "finger areas" of Summer Island, Otter Island and The Preserve.
- Cassique.
- Freshfields Village.
- Ocean Park.
- Future development of resort property in West Beach, in an advisory capacity.

Besides advising KICA on the proposed amenities projects at the Sandcastle and Rhett's Bluff, Mark is currently designing or consulting on several projects for the developer and the resort, including:

- Kiawah Partners' tract of land at the end of Beachwalker Road, to the east of Beachwalker Park.
- Continued development of Ocean Park and its Marsh House community center.
- Remaining undeveloped property at Freshfields Village.

He is delighted to now be working for the community association on amenities projects that he thinks are important for Kiawah's future. "We are on the cusp of being able to evolve, while other communities are frozen at one point in time because they like that point. This course may be messy and hard, but it is totally worth it," Mark remarked. He will help KICA to adhere to the high design standards set by the developers and the resort. "I love the pressure of developing under very high standards," he said.

*Article contributed by Digest Feature Reporter Sue Schaffer.*



*Mark and his daughter Cara help cut the ribbon at the opening of Night Heron Park in the summer of 1980.*