



From left:
Jesse Catron,
Phil Catron and
Theresa Smith.

BUILDING A LAWN CARE LEGACY

PHIL CATRON has spent the better half of his life working in the turf-grass world. He graduated with a degree in Agronomy from the University of Delaware went on to complete his graduate work in soil & plant science at Rutgers. He then was recruited to work for one of the first major chemical lawn care companies in the 1970s. But when Catron realized there was potential to thrive in a segment of the industry that no one else seemed to care about, he took it upon himself to get the job done.

Catron, along with a business partner, started NaturaLawn of America in 1987

and set out to provide organic lawn care for his local community in Damascus, Maryland – something that was basically unheard of at the time. Today, NaturaLawn of America has grown to surpass \$74 million in annual sales with a growing network of franchises across the U.S.

Phil bootstrapped his way into a world of lawn care not quite explored or accepted by the industry at the time. “It was an interesting concept that I figured, if it has any legs to it, then okay, you will have to do it yourself,” he says. In 1987, NaturaLawn of America was the first ever to coin and use the term “organic-

based.” With NaturaLawn’s line of proprietary products, Phil found a way to provide lawn care services to his customers with less cancellations and better results. “Our average customer has been with us 8 years,” he says. “And our cancellation ratio is below 15%.”

From day one, NaturaLawn has had proprietary products. Senior Vice President Jesse Catron explains, “We’re not your average run of the mill lawn care company. We have developed and expanded a line of products which are formulated and made specifically for us and only for us. We can deliver a very unique and proprietary array of products which no other company is able to do.”

Phil’s son Jesse and daughter Theresa Smith, both Senior Vice Presidents who are transitioning to assume the leadership roles of the business, want to be sure they stay ahead of the “norm” as their father did when he began NaturaLawn. “He’s created a company that is very



The NaturaLawn team is continually looking for business-minded individuals to expand their franchise footprint.

far ahead of its time in terms of its philosophies and beliefs,” Jesse says. “He established the company as the leader in organic-based lawn care 30 some years before it became popular.”

Theresa adds, “He went against the grain and started with a strong foundation based on taking care of our people first above all. If we do that, we know our employees will take care of our customers and in return, our customers will take care of the business by buying our services.” The culture Phil instilled 30+ years ago has definitely carried through to the next generation of the NaturaLawn business’ leadership.

“We’re excited that we can have the opportunity to really progress and push the needle forward through internal growth

and franchise growth so that we can expand the boundaries of what this business is capable of doing,” Jesse says.

“Franchising has been the focus from day one,” Phil says. “To help grow the system we’ve created a structure to help us identify internal personnel who may either want to manage a company owned location or their personal franchise.”

A NaturaLawn franchise also offers a business-minded individual the chance to operate three businesses under one franchise agreement. Not only is the organic lawn care an option but also the two additional services of their Federally owned trademarked brands of Mosquito Ranger® and Tick Ranger®. “We believe in helping our people succeed.” Theresa says. “We want to support them and pre-



pare them for their future in this industry by providing them with solid and proven financial opportunities.”

The Senior Leadership Team sees NaturaLawn as an excellent prospect for those already involved in a service industry and wanting to grow their business.

“We are aggressively looking to expand into major markets by partnering with those who understand what it takes to own and operate a business but may not have the overall support systems and processes in place,” says Blaine Young, VP of Franchise & Business Development. “We are very interested in identifying people who may be in a lawn care service or the landscape industry. Some Green Industry people may want to move into the lawn care, mosquito and flea and tick business opportunity. With a NaturaLawn franchise you get the option of having all three business opportunities for the investment price of one.”

FROM THE FRANCHISEE

Jim Laramee • North Attleboro, Mass.

“Wanting to own a business and be a leader along with enjoying to outdoors NaturaLawn of America seemed like a perfect fit in 1992. The franchise system has exceeded my original expectations, when you can look back after 28 years of business and not once did we have a year where our net revenue or profits did not increase from the year before, that say a lot about the franchise system.”

Jay Belt • Westminster, Md.

“When we joined NaturaLawn, our program improved, and our focus changed to growing lawns from the soil up using and building the soil environment to make it healthy. The franchise system and the people involved in it has helped us build a business that is much larger and more successful than I could have established on my own.”

Jon Bennett • Scranton, Pa.

“I debated about starting my own business and did a lot of research on franchises. I came across NaturaLawn of America and felt the connection for using safer products. I wanted to be a part of a company who was a successful and leader in the green industry. They provide a team of individuals that are experts in their departments that are willing to help every area (marketing, sales, IT, financially, etc.) to successfully run and grow your business.”