

# Todd Mansfield

**This man of many hats has expanded Crosland's focus and reach, garnering numerous accolades along the way.**



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**Underway in Charlotte is Blakeney, a 270-acre, horizontal mixed-use retail, residential, and office park community. Blakeney is currently three-fourths completed.**



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TODD MANSFIELD, the chief executive officer of Charlotte, North Carolina-based Crosland, Inc., dons many hats—as conservation leader, health care advocate, and aviation enthusiast, for starters. But to many in Charlotte, the 48-year-old wunderkind is also the man who, since joining the decades-old real estate development and management firm in 1999, has retained its culture and soul and is now transporting what he calls the company's "wonderful platform" throughout the Southeast, where it has become a major regional player in acquiring, developing, and managing a diversity of projects.

Crosland, founded nearly 70 years ago by the venerable John Crosland, Sr., has a long, solid history in affordable housing and prides itself on community-oriented development and responsible stewardship. Mansfield, who spearheaded planning and development for the Walt Disney Company's innovative town of Celebration, brought those skills to Crosland.

"One of the things he has really tried to do is press the Crosland agenda. Crosland was a very reputable company before Todd got there; he has just enhanced it and



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**Birkdale Village is a \$90 million vertical retail, office, and residential community north of Charlotte that was a finalist in the ULI Awards for Excellence program in 2003 and named Best Mixed-Use Development in America by the National Association of Home Builders.**

brought more of a regional focus," offers Jeff Bradsher, president of Bradsher Properties, a minority-owned real estate development and services firm in Charlotte. "Wherever he goes, he wants to bring the full complement to the company, whether it's management, development, or acquisitions. He's a great businessman and really understands the importance of what Crosland does and how it fits into the overall sphere of things. I'm impressed by his vision."

Bradsher, who joined with Crosland in 2003 to create the Southeast Affordable Housing Initiative—which provides attractive, high-quality

homes for working people of modest means throughout the Southeast—is not alone in his admiration. Many gawked and extended kudos and awards when two HOPE VI communities, produced by the companies' housing initiative in Charlotte, Arbor Glen, and the Park at Oaklawn, came on line.

Crosland manages both developments immaculately and

efficiently. The Park at Oaklawn is a multiphase initiative that receives excellent marks for its design and aesthetic appeal. Once a problematic public housing complex, the Park at Oaklawn will, upon completion of its final phase, have a total of 178 units for families, 80 units for seniors, and 79 single-family homes. Arbor Glen, formerly the wayward Dalton Village housing complex, has become a community comprising 256 multifamily units, several dozen single-family homes and senior cottages, a swimming pool, a community outreach center, and attractive walking trails. The first development in the Crosland/Bradsher partnership, it has sparked reinvestment and revitalization in an area long resigned to blight.

Says Bradsher: "Arbor Glen was very complex and had a lot of different financing issues and nuances to deal with. But Crosland brought development and management experience to the table and a vision for how it could work. If not for Crosland, I don't think it would have worked."

Under Mansfield, a former board member at the local Habitat for Humanity, Crosland has extended its purview beyond Charlotte. It has opened offices in Raleigh, Nashville, Tampa, and Orlando and conducts



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business in several other Southeast cities. Mansfield, who holds an MBA from Harvard, has also re-amalgamated the company and positioned it to leverage its retail and multifamily experience into mixed-use development, a growing but taxing sector of the development market. The move is paying dividends; the company's portfolio has grown from less than \$300 million in 1999 to more than \$1 billion today.

To its credit is the well-known and well-regarded development of Birkdale Village, a \$90 million vertical retail, office, and residential community north of Charlotte that was a finalist in the ULI Awards for Excellence program in 2003 and named Best Mixed-Use Development in America by the National Association of Home Builders. Underway in Charlotte is Blakeney, a 270-acre, horizontal mixed-use retail, residential, and office park community that is three-fourths completed.

Last year, in Tennessee, where Crosland purchased Armistead Barkley, Inc., a Nashville firm specializing in urban revitalization, plans call for breaking ground this spring on the Terrazzo project. Located in Nashville's Gulch area, the 14-story, mid-rise building will offer for-sale condominiums on top of first-class office space, restaurants, and shops. Phase I of Providence Marketplace in Mt. Juliet, the largest open-air center in central Tennessee, with 830,000 square feet of retail space, opened this year.

Crosland also has initiated a number of land development projects in Florida, where it set up shop two years ago. Its first project, Oak Creek, a 550-home community in north Tampa that preserves several creeks and natural areas, was immediately followed by a 350-acre community with 800 homes. The company is in the process of developing five other communities in central Florida.

That Mansfield has been able to bring about Crosland's expansion and also foray into mixed-use development comes as no surprise. "He's

a complete package," says Peter Rummell, chairman and chief executive officer of the St. Joe Company, a publicly traded real estate operating company based in Jacksonville, Florida. "He has superb intellect; he's smart as hell. Todd has a great strategic sense. There are some people who can see around corners, and he's one of them. He can see what's there and what's not there. Not everyone has that."

Rummell should know. Mansfield was one of his first hires back in 1986 when both worked with the Walt Disney Company, where Mansfield went on to supervise resort and corporate real estate development worldwide as executive vice president and general manager of the Disney Development Company. It was there that Mansfield persuaded Disney to enter the community development business. "[Former Disney CEO Michael] Eisner kept saying, 'That's not our business. We're in the entertainment business,'" recalls Rummell. "But Todd was relentless and showed that land development was an area in which the company could prosper."

The \$2.5 billion community of Celebration, a traditional neighborhood sprawled across 5,000 acres, has many founding fathers. But Mansfield, formerly president of the Celebration Company, deserves much of the credit for its development. He worked on Celebration for about a decade, and nearly ten years following his departure, it is still being developed. Mansfield concedes it was the most challenging project of his career, not so much because of its scope but because of the dynamics involved in getting the Walt Disney Company's approval. To the delight of those in the conservation arena, the development also spawned the Disney Wilderness Preserve, made up of thousands of acres set aside from Celebration for conservation at Mansfield's urging.

"People followed conservation rules [back then] but didn't go too much beyond that. Todd did," says Don Killoren, a principal with Cele-



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bration Associates, a community development firm in Fort Mill, South Carolina. "He was able to convince Disney that good conservation was good business as well."

In 2002, Celebration Associates acquired 11,500 acres of mountain and valley landscape in and around the Warm Springs Valley of Virginia's Allegheny Mountains, which it is developing in partnership with Crosland. The companies have elected to leave "a light footprint" on the land. They conveyed 9,200 acres to the Nature Conservancy and used only 325 acres to develop 450 homes on what is now the Homestead Preserve.

Strongly believing in conservation, Mansfield chairs the board of trustees for the Nature Conservancy of North Carolina. Crosland is involved in sustainable, environmentally friendly communities outside Charlottesville, Virginia, and near the U.S. National Whitewater Center in North Carolina, where it is developing a community on about 643 acres.

A ULI trustee and vice chairman, Mansfield also is a fervid crusader for health care and has been involved in health care delivery for 15 years. He was instrumental in bringing Florida Hospital to the town of Celebration, was a former board member of Florida Hospital, and currently serves on the board of the Carolinas HealthCare System, a multi-state health care provider. In addition, he played a key role in establishing Shepard's Hope, a community-based initiative of the Methodist Church that delivers free health care to the working poor in eight central Florida locations.

**Crosland redeveloped the blighted Dalton Village housing complex in Charlotte into Arbor Glen, a much acclaimed HOPE VI community comprising 256 multifamily units, several dozen single-family homes and seniors' cottages, a swimming pool, a community outreach center, and attractive walking trails.**

Very much like John Crosland before him, Mansfield is committed to community-oriented development in several measurable ways. Summing up, he says, "Our tag line at Crosland is: 'It's our place to improve yours.' We take that very seriously." **UL**

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To create year-round interest in the **ULI/J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development**, the prize

management committee is sponsoring a series of columns in *Urban Land* magazine, called "Community Builder." The purpose of the series is to focus on the people behind the projects—those individuals who are dedicated to building better communities and whose individual projects are contributing economic and social benefits to the greater community. To nominate someone from your community, E-mail [hbroadus@uli.org](mailto:hbroadus@uli.org).

