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Alumni Profile

Riding retirement

Working after retirement is nothing new these days. Some take part-time jobs at golf courses to score free rounds. Others volunteer at the local historical society to pass time. Bob McCullough launches theme parks.

“Getting people to have fun isn’t such a bad job,” says McCullough, MA ’72, of Camp Verde, Texas. “It brings out the kid in me.”

Before he retired, McCullough’s career in corporate communications included leading the communications team for Sea World’s construction and launch of a 250-acre, \$170 million park in San Antonio.

Then, after settling into retirement, a call came from Gordon Hartman, a San Antonio builder-turned-philanthropist, to help start a one-of-a-kind, completely accessible theme park called [Morgan’s Wonderland](#).

Hartman’s daughter Morgan has special needs, so he set out to build a theme park where no person would be turned away. Everyone, including those in wheelchairs, can ride the rides at Morgan’s Wonderland, which opened in 2010 to fanfare from ABC’s *World News*, *People* magazine and *USA Today*.



Bob McCullough, MA ’72, helped launch Morgan’s Wonderland, a one-of-a-kind, completely accessible theme park in San Antonio.

McCullough pounced on the opportunity to open Morgan's Wonderland, along with other SeaWorld retirees. It wasn't just another chance for him to get in on something big from the ground floor — this project also hit close to home. In spring 2000, he and his wife adopted a special needs child from China.

Twelve-year-old Connally, who has cognitive challenges and speech delays, lives with McCullough and his wife, Shelley, along with 9-year-old Beverly, another daughter adopted from China.




“To help start a place that doesn't draw attention to the ways Connally might be different is very rewarding,” McCullough says. “Our entire family can relax and have fun at Morgan's Wonderland. The focus is inclusion.”

Admission for special needs guests is free, and tickets for all others range from \$10 to \$15. Individuals and groups from about 20 U.S. cities and abroad interested in replicating the idea have come to tour Morgan's Wonderland.

“It's a model we can take around the world to benefit those with special needs,” McCullough says.

— *David Earl*

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