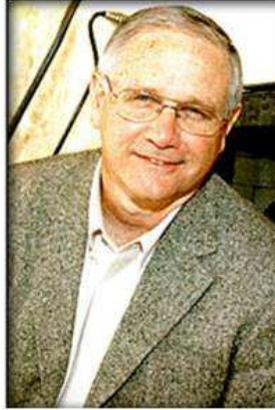


Rand Southard Pampa High School Class of 1971



Rand Southard was born and raised in Pampa. He is the only son of Edwin and Molly Bernice Southard. Edwin worked 41 years at Cabot Corp in carbon black, and at one time owned a used car lot near downtown. Rand was born with a leg that at age 5 required amputation. Credit is given to his parents for never using the word “can’t” relating to that disability and allowing him to do anything that he or other children could do. Rand grew up playing all of the usual sports both organized and “disorganized”. At Pampa High School, he played football until a knee injury prevented further participation, and then became the trainer for the football team. He also participated in the field events in track, sang in the concert choir, and participated in student council.

In 1962 and 1964, Rand was sent by the Pampa Lions Club to a camp in Kerrville, Texas for children with physical disabilities. This became a life-changing event as the die was cast for a desire to work with disabled populations. While at Pampa High School, he worked at camps for children with muscular dystrophy, and encouraged others to work there as well. After his freshman year at Southwest Texas State University, he again attended the Lions Camp as a counselor and served there two summers working with children and further cementing his commitment to work with children with disabilities. Rand obtained a job in Austin at the Texas School for the Deaf, where he met Colleen Witt. They were married in 1975, and have worked together for 33 years to establish programs for children with varying handicaps.

For the next 15 years, he worked with children who were deaf, had orthopedic handicaps, epilepsy, and multitudes of other disabilities in education, recreation, and summer camp fields. He was runner up for Outstanding Young Man of Fort Worth, and was elected Special Olympic Coach of the Year after winning a state basketball championship at Como School of Occupational Orientation. Rand was eventually appointed Program Director at the Texas Lions Camp. He finished his M.Ed. at Southwest Texas State University in 1987.

In 1989, Rand and Colleen bought a hay field and began what was to become Star Programs Inc. By 2005, Star Ranch (SPI) was operating a summer camp that served 5,000 children and trained almost 400 counselors, had established a treatment program which served over 425 emotionally disturbed boys, and a foster care agency that eventually served several hundred children. A charter school was

established in conjunction with the University of Texas Charter School System. These programs were the focus of activity for 17 years.

In 2007, Rand and Colleen again started to dream about the camping industry and began a new camp called Charis Hills. This camp is for children with learning differences, and is one of the very few Bible campuses for children with disabilities. In the two summers Charis Hills has operated, it has served almost 500 children, providing a unique program opportunity for children who otherwise would not be able to attend a camp.

The Southards have been recognized for their service to the camping industry by the Kerr County of Commerce. Rand has served as Deacon and is an Elder at Kerrville Bible Church. They have two daughters and four grandchildren.