

The Talented Dallas Zoo GM Cheryl Cobb

When a Baylor music student suffers from painful hand tendonitis and has to abandon her goal of becoming a professional classical pianist, what does she do?

She switches her major.

And that's what Texas-born and Georgia-raised Cheryl Cobb did. With input from her daddy, who told her to switch to a major that would allow her to take care of herself, she changed her major from music to business. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in marketing and management with a minor in music from Baylor University, the oldest, continually operating university in the state of Texas. In her southern drawl, Cheryl explained that the smartest thing she probably did was to switch her major from music to business. "This decision opened a whole world of things to do," she said, "It was the springboard for the rest of my life."

Cheryl used her skills to become a success in the amusement and leisure industry. Her career started at Six Flags over Texas where she was a hostess in a curio shop. She survived her first



The popular Disney characters join the Cobb family.

day when the park had a record crowd of over 40,000 guests. She remembered that she got in trouble with her supervisor for not doing a very good job her first day, but she persisted and went back the second day -- that was over 30 years ago. In 2001, she went to work for the Fort Worth Zoo as manager of its food service, group sales, catering and retail operations. In 2008, she took a job with SSA as

"This business is the type of business if you like it, you're a lifer."

the Dallas Zoo General Manager.

While Cheryl likes her career, she loves her family and time away from work. Her family is number one. Her husband, Kirk, is a partner in a law firm with a specialty in taxes.

They've raised three daughters: Lacy, Casi and Ashley. And as you can imagine, her pride and joy are her two grandbabies. Cheryl shared that her biggest personal accomplishment was raising three happy, well-adjusted daughters. "It's very rewarding watching three kids become a success. Each one is very unique, even

though you can see yourself and their father in their behavior," she said.

Her youngest daughter still lives at home, but



Cheryl believes that Bella, Levi and Zoe, her three schnauzers will be her answer to the "empty nest syndrome" that she'll experience when her youngest daughter goes off to college.

that's soon to change when Ashley graduates from high school and heads to Denver to attend Colorado Christian College. But it won't be an empty nest as there is practically a zoo at the Cobbs' house with four dogs, three miniature schnauzers and one mutt as well as a cat and a 50-gallon aquarium filled with Oscars.

Cheryl said people would describe her as a very passionate person who's very loyal, yet stubborn and hard-headed. She describes herself as a devoted mom. "I would do anything for my kids and grandbabies," she added.

As a kid, Cheryl said she was a "great big tomboy" who climbed trees and played outside. "I was not the Barbie type," she shared. She claims she got good grades in school except for the "Cs" in conduct because she was always talking.



Cheryl is devoted to her grandkids.

The toys she enjoyed as a child are toys she still enjoys today. Her favorite was her bike since it gave her a feeling of empowerment as she could get on her bike and go somewhere. Bike riding is still a favorite activity, along with playing golf and tennis. Cheryl claims she's real competitive! The self-proclaimed tomboy and outdoor enthusiast still plays the



Cheryl describes herself as a devoted mom — going as far to enjoying a sensational 3-D ride with her daughters.

piano. Cheryl started playing when she was three years old. She would hear songs that her mom was listening to on the radio and then would sit down at the piano to pick out the tunes. When she was in third grade, Cheryl started playing for the church choir and at weddings.

Cheryl thinks she's pretty boring and likes staying at home. But she does enjoy family vacations to the family cabin located in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in southern Colorado. Another dream is to go to Hawaii and Bora Bora as she enjoys the tropical climate that has a nice white sand beach and clear blue waters – she wants a place where she can plant herself in the sand and sit back and relax.

But her definition of relaxation may be different from others as she doesn't like to sit and read nor watch a lot of television. She does watch a lot of Disney movies, and her favorite one is *Lady and the Tramp*. As you would expect, Cheryl likes all types of music, except for rap and when jazz gets annoying.

With her loyalties firmly established deep in the heart of Texas,

Cheryl is an avid supporter of the Dallas Cowboys, the franchise that holds the record for most Super Bowl appearances (8) and most NFC championships (8).

While the music world lost its opportunity to have Cheryl be a part of it, the leisure and amusement industry has benefitted. But when asked what her ideal job was, Cheryl did not reply as you might expect. She would like to be a travel photographer. Cheryl said she loves taking photos of anything and everything. "It would be awesome to take one- or-two-day trips to take pictures of almost anything and then get paid for it," she said.



One of her favorite entertainers is the Queen of Country, Reba McEntire. Cheryl has attended numerous live concerts throughout the years.

