



Malcolm McLaren of McLaren Engineering Group is broadening horizons by sea and by land

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Malcolm McLaren, P.E., is the founder, president and CEO of McLaren Engineering Group P.C., based in West Nyack, N.Y., and with additional offices in Meriden, Conn., Baltimore, Md., Orlando, Fla., and San Luis Obispo, Calif. Founded in 1977, McLaren Engineering Group is one of the country's leading experts in waterborne transportation engineering, specializing in bridge engineering, structural design, marine engineering, underwater investigations, entertainment design, forensic studies and site/civil engineering.

Thirty-two years ago, McLaren was an eager young structural engineer who had just earned his professional engineering license and wanted to design tall buildings and bridges. Looking to expand the original business line of structural engineering for buildings, he decided to parlay his scuba diving skills - acquired as a teenager visiting the Virgin Islands - into a niche inspecting underwater structures. Before long he found himself swimming up a sewer in the Hudson River, "which was not what I had in mind at all," he says, "but it led to great things."

McLaren's first-hand observation of underwater structures gave him a unique perspective - most engineers can visualize and design structures on paper but have no experience seeing the structures up close and personal. That rare combination allowed McLaren to add marine Structural Engineering to his other areas of expertise, building structures and underwater inspections.

McLaren continued to expand his business, adding above-water inspections and bridge engineering to his company's repertoire. "We started wet and got dry," says McLaren, who received his civil engineering degree from Cornell University and his graduate degree in structural engineering from Rutgers University. "We developed a strong portfolio for underwater inspection, and it was only natural to climb out of the water and start doing above-water inspections, then move into bridge engineering."

His firm has done a substantial amount of bridge inspection and rehabilitation, including a major rail freight study on Long Island and significant bridge inspections for state departments of transportation in New York and Connecticut. Because of his expertise in water issues and permits, McLaren and his group also were able to offer waterfront developers marine-type services, working on ferry terminals and other related structures. The firm recently won awards for its state-of-the-art design of ferry terminals in Battery Park City in lower Manhattan and Hoboken, N.J.

McLaren's site/civil engineering division is on the cutting edge of developments in site planning, such as incorporating a site's natural landscape into the layout. Modern mixed-use facilities, such as River Park Center in Yonkers, N.Y., are prime examples. The Saw Mill River, channeled underground in Yonkers for decades, is to be daylighted and will run directly through the urban complex.

Over the years McLaren added divisions for entertainment design, surveying and forensic studies.

Many of his firm's stage set designs have won acclaim for their imaginative flair and engineering precision, including what has been called the world's most dynamic stage, Cirque du Soleil's "KA" stage in Las Vegas. McLaren's firm also played a lead role in the stage design for more than 100 Broadway shows during the past 15 years.

McLaren Engineering Group divisions have collaborated to produce creative and powerful results - something Malcolm McLaren actively encourages. For example, McLaren experts in the entertainment field have partnered with members of the structural and forensic divisions. "When we collaborate and cross lines, we solve each others' problems," McLaren said. "We have a lot of meetings where we ask each other if we've come up with the right answer, the best solution. Each area of expertise brings different ways of looking at things that creates an excitement and synergy and often results in a different approach that delivers exactly what our client is looking for."

Although the company has grown to 120 employees, doubling in size during the past few years, Malcolm McLaren remains very involved at the conceptual design phase, as well as the end process. More than three decades ago, he started his own company because "I wanted to create an organization that would allow me to explore all different facets of engineering." This scuba-diving engineer has certainly accomplished that.

Outside of his engineering business, McLaren is actively engaged in professional and community endeavors. He is especially proud of two major initiatives focused on New York's Lower Hudson Valley: building McLaren's main offices in West Nyack, N.Y., into an educational center for professional development, and co-founding the Lower Hudson Valley Engineering Expo. Now in its sixth year, the expo introduces prospective engineering students to representatives from some of the leading engineering colleges in the Northeast and top engineering firms in the Hudson Valley.

McLaren serves on the board of directors of the American Society of Civil Engineers and National Society of Professional Engineers, and serves in board capacities at his two collegiate alma maters - on the advisory board at the Cornell School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and on the board of Rutgers' Civil Engineering program. He also serves on the advisory board of the Salvation Army.

McLaren resides in Blauvelt, N.Y., with his wife of 28 years, Diane, and their daughter Noa, a senior at Lehigh University and an intern at WCBS-TV. In his limited leisure time he enjoys spending time in Saratoga Springs and the Jersey shore, as well as skiing, boating and jet skiing.

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