

Reflections of Adam "Ted" Bourgoyne

There can be no greater honor than to be recognized by the university that has played such a major role in my life. Both Kathy and I are LSU graduates, as are all of our six children.

I can still remember clearly my first day at LSU working my way through the registration process in the old field house and meeting Benny Craft and Murray Hawkins for the first time at the advising table. Coming from a small high school, I was worrying about being able to make it through the engineering curriculum and was nervous as Mr. Craft looked over my placement exam results. It didn't help when Mr. Craft finally looked up grinning and said, "You must be in the wrong place" as he stamped my registration papers. It was much later when I understood that the petroleum industry had experienced major job losses due to low oil prices in the fifties and was just beginning to recover; thus Mr. Craft had not seen many students that day.

I gradually learned that although LSU was very large, it was a collection of many small units, and within those units you received considerable individual attention. I was in Mr. Craft's

introductory level course when he passed away, so I did not get to know him very well. However, his lessons on professional ethics and how to get along with bosses, co-workers, and subordinates served me well. Murray Hawkins, Oscar Kimbler, and Bill Hise had a major influence on my life and on my professional development. Having lost my father at an early age, I needed strong role models and mentors in my college life more than I realized at the time. I can remember being surprised by the large amount of personal attention that I received and the high "esprit de corps" within the department. This was also true when I entered the graduate program at the University of Texas, where another academic giant Ben Caudle served as my major professor.

The student chapters of the Society of Petroleum Engineers also played an important role in the process, providing interaction among students and faculty outside of class with technical meetings, social events, field trips, and national competitions. You can imagine my surprise later while working in Houston when I received a call from Murray Hawkins asking

if I would consider applying for a faculty position at LSU. While I had always thought about teaching further in my career, it had not occurred to me that I was ready for a university faculty position. When I told Kathy about the phone call, she made clear her opinion on the matter.

A few months later, we were moving back to Baton Rouge. That was probably the best decision that “I” ever made. My life as a young assistant professor was much simpler and less stressful than today’s young faculty. I enjoyed working with Bill Holden, who was a great teacher, as I tried to borrow techniques of his teaching style. Our focus was almost entirely on our students. Classes were small, typically less than 20 students, as we all taught three or four different courses each semester; therefore, we got to know all of the students quite well because we taught each of them in several different courses before they graduated. Also, emphasis was placed on both demonstration and hands-on laboratory experiments for the undergraduate program. The entire faculty had lunch together often and the topic of discussion generally revolved around improving the curriculum and addressing apparent shortfalls in early learning experiences that were evident in the more advanced courses.

After the Arab Oil Embargo, the department enjoyed strong support from industry and the University as the demand for petroleum engineers increased dramatically. During this time, the leadership at LSU and many other universities began to place a much greater emphasis on externally funded research activities. Then, things quickly got more complicated as enrollment began to swell out of control in response to the high industry demand for graduates. When Murray Hawkins retired as head of the department, I became the department chairman.

There I was, faced with the high demand for graduates, making new faculty recruitment my greatest challenge.

Fortunately, I was able to attract Zaki Bassiouni to our program and he quickly demonstrated both academic and administrative skills. From there on, my years as chairman of the department were blessed by continued demand for petroleum graduates and strong support from the industry, as department alumni maintained a strong interest in the well-being of the department – a tribute to the value of the education they received at LSU. This allowed the department to build a nationally recognized research and continuing education program related to drilling and blowout prevention while maintaining the traditionally strong program in reservoir engineering and enhanced oil recovery. My years as chairman were also blessed with a cohesive and supportive faculty. On academic and budgetary matters, I could always report a unanimous position from the faculty. In our planning documents, we liked to talk about the petroleum engineering “family” of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. I later learned that up the line we were known as the petroleum engineering “Mafia.”

Although administrative work was never my strong suit, I am pleased that I was able to serve the college twice during periods when national searches for a new dean of engineering were being organized and carried out. During the five years spent as acting dean of the College, I sought to nurture the high standards and “esprit de corps” among the college faculty and students that I had always enjoyed. I had the pleasure to work with an enthusiastic and hard working faculty that made efficient use of their laboratories and facilities, and produced enthusiastic and successful engineering graduates who later served the needs of our State and nation. I thank LSU for affording me the opportunity to enjoy my life – a happy life.