

Reflections of Zaki Bassiouni



It is a great honor to be inducted into the College of Engineering Hall of Distinction. These reflections are a chance at reminiscing on my association with the College of Engineering at LSU that lasted more than 31 years. After 25 years in the Department of Petroleum Engineering, my career at LSU culminated in my appointment as Dean of the college in July 2004, which lasted until my retirement in 2008.

In the summer of 1977, I accepted an Assistant Professor position in the Department of Petroleum Engineering. I was elated to join a renowned department in a state known for its close association with the oil and gas industry. It was also the chance

to be a colleague of pioneering petroleum engineering faculty such as William Holden, Adam Bourgoyne, and the late Oscar Kimbler, to name a few.

A major part of the department's history is the story of two remarkable men: Benjamin C. Craft and Murray F. Hawkins. These two faculty set the course of petroleum engineering education not only at LSU, but in many ways in the industry. So, the accomplishment that we are the most proud of is naming the department after them. The Craft and Hawkins designation was made possible by the strong support of our loyal alumni base.

In 1983, my colleagues entrusted me with the

chairmanship of the department. It was a challenge as we were facing sharply fluctuating enrollment, scarcity of faculty and resources. But the faculty managed with the help of outstanding staff. To align itself with the Institution's desire for broader research and scholarly activities, the department inaugurated a PhD program in Petroleum Engineering in the early 1980s.

The college has come a long way since the summer of 1977. First, I witnessed a move to the Center for Engineering and Business Administration (CEBA) building, then a brand new building shared with the E. J. Ourso College of Business. CEBA was recently renamed Patrick F. Taylor Hall in

recognition of one of our illustrious petroleum engineering alumni. Soon the E. J. Ourso College of Business will move to a new building and Patrick F. Taylor Hall will provide a much needed physical expansion of the college.

The college maintains the long standing tradition of recruiting, retaining, and producing well sought after engineers. The college is on the list of "Preferred Partners" of many major corporations who vie to hire our graduates. LSU engineering graduates are known for hitting the ground running. They are well prepared technically and socially. The college also enjoys active diversity, research, and

graduate programs.

Development activities, which were modest in the 1970's, have grown by leaps and bounds. The current development office, and the endowment portfolio that goes with it, is one of the largest among LSU colleges. The college has cemented its relations with alumni, and built strong bridges to industry. The Department of Petroleum Engineering has led the way and count one of the largest endowments of any single department on campus.

Although I am technically retired, I continue to practice petroleum engineering. I am involved with continuing education and consulting activities. My first significant contribution to

our industry after retirement was taking part in the 2008-09 Society of Petroleum Engineers Distinguished Lectures program. I spoke at 37 SPE Sections located in 20 countries. I presented the concepts and results of improved oil and gas recovery research conducted by the department.

The support and friendship of my colleagues, alumni, and LSU friends has made for an enjoyable and unforgettable journey which I will always cherish and recall with fondness and gratitude.