

Reflections of N. Y. Chen

I am very honored to be selected as a member of the LSU Engineering Hall of Distinction.

I am particularly pleased that LSU has chosen for this honor a practicing industrial researcher who has stayed on the frontlines of research. Special tribute should be given to members of the Election Board for making this recognition during a period of national concern about losing our world leadership technology. Perhaps the most important consideration for maintaining the nation's technical excellence is to be able to attract top notch scientists and engineers to technical research areas and to motivate them to remain in research throughout their careers.

A good research organization must be blessed with a communicative research staff. In this open environment, young scientists undoubtedly can succeed, if they are willing to work hard and long and say what they think. Sharing ideas is stimulating and very important. It helps me see my work from

different angles, and it helps stimulate a friendly competitiveness among researchers.

Research work can be frustrating at times. After doing exploratory and pioneering research for 23 years, I should know.

It is through patience and perseverance, coupled with a great desire to solve problems and discover new things that innovations and breakthroughs are often made.

If I were to give advice to our next generation of researchers, it would be: Don't hesitate to get your feet wet. Think positive, use your imagination, and don't be afraid to say what you think – even if it sometimes proves to be wrong.

When I was selected to become a senior scientist by the top management of Mobile, I was interviewed by the editor of our company newspaper to reflect upon the years I had been there. I said at the time, and it is still true today, that I have been in a

rather unique research organization. It manages to recognize unusual talents and provides an environment in which novel concepts can take root. It is also blessed with a communicative research staff. All these qualities are necessary for good research.

Whatever success I may have with my professional career, I attribute my good fortune to having had my baptism in American education at LSU, continued education at MIT, and the opportunity to perform at Mobil.