

Reflections of Richard J. Juneau

Growing up on a small farm in a small community in central Louisiana, I had no real idea of what an engineering education or career was about. Our only businesses were two small "Mom & Pop" grocery stores and the local bar. But we had a great school, with outstanding and dedicated teachers. The entire community centered on family, school and church. With few exceptions, everyone dedicated their meager lives to hard work, helping neighbors, and educating their kids. Above all, we were taught to always respect, appreciate and support this great country, and that we were truly blessed to be born here.

I joined my brother at LSU in 1956. He was studying petroleum engineering (PE) because our older cousin was enrolled in PE, so I joined them. Early in my sophomore year, I concluded that my interest was more in mechanical (ME) than PE and switched in January. I still had no idea how engineers made a living, but luckily it turned out to be a great choice for me, with an enjoyable and rewarding career. My first claim to fame at LSU occurred immediately after registration for classes in the old Gym Armory. Upon leaving, upper-classmen grabbed two of us and gave us the standard "head skin" hair-

cut. The next day, our picture was on the front page of *The Reveille* with the caption "It Only Hurts for a Little While."

After four great educational years at LSU, typical college experiences, many wonderful professors, highlighted by the first football championship team, I graduated on June 4, 1960. Two days later, I reported for my first job as a project engineer for a paper manufacturing plant in St. Francisville, LA, and began learning how to become a good engineer. Having been previously endowed with strong work principles, my LSU engineering education provided me with the outstanding background I needed to be successful in industry and later in my own technically-oriented business. I quickly learned what engineering is all about and how important an education in engineering at LSU is to future success. As proud as I am of the relative success of my small high school, I am overwhelmed at the enormous success of many graduates of LSU's College of Engineering (CoE).

One of the benefits of an engineering education from LSU is that it provides excellent preparations for many avenues in the work place. After a couple of promotions in project engineering, I was offered an opportunity in maintenance. In a few years, I worked through several

promotions, and finally, at age 34, to maintenance manager of a large paper mill in Mobile, AL. This experience prepared me well for my own business in 1975. My LSU engineering education provided me with the technical expertise and the confidence to embark on this ambitious endeavor and develop it into a successful and rewarding business enterprise. In today's market, there are countless opportunities for young engineers. The LSU CoE serves an important role in providing a great education to meet these highly competitive challenges.

Since 1999, I have had the distinct privilege to serve on the LSU CoE Dean's Advisory Council, the ME Department Industrial Advisory Board, and the Forever LSU CoE Campaign Steering Committee. It has been a pleasure to work with these outstanding groups of professionals – engineers, dedicated faculty, staff, and outstanding students. This has been a real life experience for me. I know that most folks can never have such a wonderful opportunity. The interest, cooperation, support and leadership provided by Zaki Bassiouni and Glenn Sinclair to move the LSU CoE and Mechanical Engineering to the highest national standards and recognition is incredible – thank you both for caring so much about LSU, the CoE, ME, and especially, about all our students.

No words can properly describe my surprise of being inducted into the LSU CoE Hall of Distinction. I know that many others are far more deserving. This is without a doubt, the greatest honor of my professional career. I am truly humbled and honored to join this group of outstanding engineers previously inducted. My heartfelt appreciation to the many who carried me through for this honor. I know this has been a great challenge on many occasions. First and foremost to my family for the enormous support you have given me: my wife Katherine, my two daughters Lisa Mohr and Jill Curtis, their husbands Jeff Mohr and Glenn Curtis (all LSU graduates), and my five wonderful grandchildren (Michael and Brittany Mohr, Meagan, Nicholas and Jacob Curtis). Also to my brother Jerry Juneau, my many business associates and friends: Glenn Sinclair, Carroll Macalusa, Henry Landry, Zaki Bassiouni, and others too numerous to name. How can I ever thank you enough? This is a great and wonderful honor and privilege. Forever LSU! Our best wishes to Zaki in his well-deserved retirement from a job very well done at LSU.

Hall of Distinction 2007-2008