

Reflections of Ann Forte Trappey

Every Saturday morning during the school year, from 1st through 10th grade, my Dad would take the oldest of the five girls in my family to Baton Rouge for piano lessons. Our teacher's home was located off Lee Drive. While one of us took lessons, the other would have the opportunity to go riding around LSU with Dad. We would visit the Union, sometimes get to watch the LSU band practice if it was football season, or just ride around campus. We frequently ended the morning with a visit to the McDonald's with the original golden arches through the building. What a special time for us with our Dad. Dad was very proud of the mark he had left in the sidewalk on Highland Road in front of the Law school. He had placed his initials there in a patch of concrete. (Unfortunately, the sidewalk was replaced in the late 70s.)

He and my Mom were both LSU graduates. So, growing up, LSU was always going to be the place we would attend college. There was never a thought of attending any other school. We have attended LSU football and basketball games

ever since I can remember. The "new" bridge wasn't built yet. We would cross the Plaquemine ferry to come to an LSU football game. Saturday nights in Tiger stadium were magical as a child. I still get goose bumps when the brass section blows the first notes of the fight song. Dad loved sports. I actually got to witness Pete Maravich score his 2000th point in the Cow Palace. We grew up loving everything LSU.

After completing high school at St. John in Plaquemine, I though I wanted to be an architect. Once I realized the technical courses were my favorite, I switched to civil engineering. I have never regretted that decision.

I'll never forget the first day of hydraulics class with Dr. Frank Germano. He asked how many of us knew if he had taught our parents. Over half of the class raised our hands. He and all my professors were inspirational. Dr. Mehmet Tumay would get so excited teaching soils. Who would have ever thought that dirt could be so interesting? Mr. Kazmann, a legend in discussions about the mighty Mississippi, taught me

how to write a good technical paper. There were not many other women in my classes, but that never mattered to me. Being active in ASCE inspired me to continue to be active in my professional societies. All of my teachers, some now I consider friends, have taught me much more than they will ever know.

I was actually still in school when I met Fred, my husband now for 21 years. We lived in the same apartment complex along the old front nine of the LSU golf course across from CEBA. I graduated in May 1982, and we got married in October of that year.

I worked for the Louisiana Department of Transportation for about eight years. I worked in three different sections while I was there so that I could learn about the department and about design. My company continues to serve DOTD as a valued client.

I left DOTD in 1990 after passing my professional exam. By that point, I had two babies to take care of also, Francois, now 19, and Elise, now 17. I went to work with Forte and Tablada (F&T) in the civil design group. I never dreamed starting out in May 1990 that life would take such a turn. Within eight months at F&T, Dad's bout with congestive heart failure became life threatening. By May of 1991, he was gone. The next three years were turbulent for F&T. The large Sydney Murray Hydroelectric Power plant project was completed in 1990. The project had engulfed the company for the previous four to five years. We had forgotten our "bread and butter." Many of the engineers who had been considered "management" retired and one of the engineers took over the management of the Hydro facility. I had a few employees who had been with F&T for several years and were willing to stick

it out with me to rebuild. Fortunately, we worked hard, developed several new clients, were able to bring back a few long-time clients, and were back on track. Valuable lessons were learned from that experience.

All this time, I remained very active in LES and ACEC. I have served as a board member at large on the LES State Board and Baton Rouge chapter president of LES. I have also served on the ACEC Board for several years having recently served as president and national director. I have met many engineering friends through my association with these groups. I also currently hold the presidency of the Louisiana Engineering Foundation, an organization that was actually a dream of my father's, that serves all engineering disciplines throughout the state.

Through all this, my love for LSU has never dwindled. When my Dad was alive, he served on the Dean's Advisory Board to Dean McLaughlin. When he passed away, the Dean asked my mother to take his place. After a few years, it was her time to step down. The Dean asked her for recommendations and she recommended me. I now have the honor to serve on Dean Egbelu's Advisory Council with other engineers and managers who are dedicated to seeing the LSU College of Engineering prosper.

Recently, we were able to place the small-scale physical model [of the lower 76 miles of the Mississippi River] on LSU's campus by building a facility specifically designed to house the model. The studies being run off the model will be a substantial part of the Department of Natural Resources' basis for funding requests to the federal government for coastal issues. It is exciting that LSU can play a large role in the

development of the engineering solutions for Coastal Louisiana.

LSU is a special place. I'm so proud and honored to be able now to serve the school that has given me my education and has given me so many memories even from my childhood.