

Reflections of Bruce E. Bernard

Life is circular in the sense that we often relive earlier life experiences. Today is a special opportunity for me to reflect on a time which was one of celebration, learning, building and planning. Great times they were!

Looking back through my window into the “old war school,” I hear the music and feel the emotions and controversy of the war in Asia and the heat and rigor of freshman orientation and R.O.T.C. I feel the unforgettable camaraderie of lives shared in Johnston Hall and South Stadium, the rumble of Tiger Stadium on Saturday nights, and the peace of walking across the parade ground to the chapel each Sunday morning. I still feel the many great hours of listening, discussing, concentrating and small talk in those friendly halls of the Petroleum Engineering Department... my entry point into a life’s work still underway! These memories are vivid, full and precious.

Life on campus in the late sixties was full, fun and challenging. Early on, I struggled to find my way in a new,

large and active social setting and balance my time... the first year was especially tough in that regard! But as I began to focus on the future, I learned how, when and where to study, and how to work and earn my way.

Reflecting back, I now feel the leadership experience in creating a fraternity chapter and participating in Pi Epsilon Tau and the Society of Petroleum Engineers were to pay great dividends later... more than I could have seen at the time. The close relationship with fellow P.E.’s was another big factor in shaping the “whole” engineering professional at LSU. The close knit, accessible faculty in our department was somewhat unique...people like Bill Holden, Oscar Kimbler, Bill Hise and Murray Hawkins. Anyone who graded papers for Professor Holden couldn’t help feel what a “conscientious” educator really is! His tests were tough, but fair, and designed with great care, time and originality. I still consider Craft and Hawkins’ Applied Petroleum Reservoir Engineering the “bible” of petroleum engineering today because of its blend of simple

practicality and “just enough” theory to communicate the fundamentals.

The people of those times certainly had a hand in shaping my future... my best friend and wife, Susan, whom I met in New Orleans and married at LSU; now two beautiful daughters are on the threshold of entering their own worlds of medicine and sociology; our parents with their love and encouragement; Professor Murray Hawkins and his staff; my classmates, roommates, and fraternity friends who solved the world's problems at the Pastime and danced to Roy Orbison's “Pretty Woman” at the Bengal.

Now I understand how it all fits together! LSU and her engineering school is more than just the greatest place to find knowledge; it provided me a foundation of principles, role models, relationships, accountability, maturity and a life plan. For that, I am forever grateful, and I once again today celebrate, learn, build and plan, for these, too, are great times!