

Reflections of Charles V. Cusimano

How ironic it is that the day I sit down to write these reflections on my life, my career, and my days at LSU is the day that marked the passing of one of my boyhood heroes – Joe DiMaggio. He was indeed a legend in my eyes, and I admired him as an athlete for the skill and grace with which he played and for his dignity and humility of the baseball field. Despite his fame and fortune, he always stood at a distance from his celebrity status.

As a young man growing up in New Orleans, all I cared about was sports, and baseball in particular. While my brothers were out working to earn a little spending money, I was out on the playing field. I didn't care that I didn't enjoy the little extras they did because they had some pocket change. My only love was playing ball, and I was perfectly contented to be out on the baseball diamond. Even at such a young age, I knew I wanted to pay sports just as I knew I wanted to go into the oil business. Little did I know then, that my two aspirations would become so intertwined.

At Holy Cross High School, I played all junior varsity sports, but I apparently stood out in football. This provided me the opportunity to explore offers of athletic scholarships from many universities. I vividly remember the day I visited LSU. It was early spring and all the azaleas were in bloom. I was excited to learn that LSU offered the petroleum engineering curriculum I wanted and that it was one of the best programs in the country. It was very easy for me to say "yes" to their scholarship.

LSU, both academically and through its athletics program, provided me with everything I ever wanted from a university. It taught me discipline and gave me direction. I learned integrity and the value of hard work. LSU gave me the opportunity to fulfill all the dreams I ever had.

Even today, many of my family and friends consider me a sports fanatic. If there is a sporting event, no matter when or where, I'll try to be there, be it football, baseball, basketball, track, horse racing, you name it. My love of sports was

apparently passed on to my children and grandchildren, who are a great source of pride to me. I find no greater joy today than watching them at their track, wrestling, and swimming meets, and reveling in their accomplishments.

In any successful life, there are numerous people to thank and circumstances to be grateful for. For the success of my business endeavors and the love and devotion of my family, I continue to be truly thankful.