

Reflections of Donald W. Keller

For the first 15 years of my life, I lived in the shadow of the oil and gas fields of South Louisiana and became accustomed to the oil industry and the people involved in this business. I was impressed and fascinated by all aspects of the business and always felt that some day I would be a part of this world. My father worked for Humble Oil (which was acquired later by Exxon) and we moved from place to place in South Louisiana, living in four different cities during this 15 year period. During my high school years, I worked part-time for Humble Oil engineers and geologists and learned about their exciting jobs and how they worked together to drill and explore for oil and gas. It was no wonder then that I had my heart set on being a petroleum engineer and working for Humble Oil after graduation.

My parents did not attend college but were insistent that I and my four siblings get a college degree. With their wishes in mind, I left home in 1953 and drove to Baton Rouge to enroll at LSU. I was assigned to a dormitory room in Tiger Stadium and spent many exciting Saturday nights there when the Tigers played at home. After two years in general studies, I entered the Petroleum Engineering Department and met Murray Hawkins, without a doubt the best

teacher I ever had. He dedicated himself to the dissemination of engineering knowledge to his students, and taught us how discipline and focus can be used to solve almost any problem. Murray was inducted into the Hall of Distinction in 1985 and I am very honored to follow in his footsteps. Thanks to Murray Hawkins, to this day I am as proud of my ability to handle everyday problems around the house as I am of my career accomplishments.

After working my way through college with the help of a scholarship, I received a job offer from Humble Oil to work as a petroleum engineer in South Louisiana. My dad was also working for Humble at the time, and my original objective to work for the same company after graduation was realized. I worked for three years as a project engineer coordinating the development of some of the largest gas fields in South Louisiana. In 1959, a major gas discovery was made in the Garden City field jointly owned by Humble and Quintana Petroleum, one of the largest independents in the country at that time. Shortly thereafter, I left Humble Oil to join Quintana Petroleum after being offered a tremendous opportunity to advance my career. It was here that I was able to use my educational skills learned at LSU

in going beyond my engineering aspirations into marketing, finance, and then management. After coordinating the unitization and development of the huge Garden City field, I moved to Houston in 1967 and became more involved in the management and growth of the company which was opening new offices in Canada and Europe. In 1980 I was promoted to President of Quintana Energy, Quintana Refinery, and other domestic and foreign subsidiaries. At this time I was responsible for the management and operations of a 35,000 bbl/day refinery and petrochemical facility in Corpus Christi, Texas as well as the marketing and finance functions of Quintana Petroleum Corporation.

After spending 26 years with Quintana, I felt that the time had come to start my own company. So in 1986, I resigned from Quintana Petroleum and founded Enerfin Resources. Using the invaluable knowledge and skills learned at LSU and with the experience gained from Humble Oil (which by then was known as Exxon) and Quintana, I was successful in building the oil and gas assets in Enerfin Resources over a 20 year period to over \$250 million.

After leaving LSU and spending time in the energy industry, it became apparent that the technical skills and management perspectives learned at LSU prepared me well for success in the business world. I have always attributed my success to the guidance from my parents and to the quality education I received at LSU by the dedicated faculty in the Petroleum Engineering Department.

Giving back to our alma mater has always been an important consideration to me and my wife, Gayle. Early on, we contributed money in honor of my parents by having bricks engraved with their names in

front of the Lod Cook Alumni Center. Later we sponsored a Distinguished Professorship for the Petroleum Engineering Department, the Keller Family Scholarship for Texas residents, and the upcoming Well Facility Building Fund. The Building Fund will be used to fund construction of a new classroom at the Petroleum Engineering Research & Technology Laboratory as well as to support the ongoing facility needs after construction—meeting a very important need of the Department. I feel that it is my responsibility to do what I can to provide educational opportunities to new engineering students at LSU and to assist the Petroleum Engineering Department to recruit the very best students and faculty. We must all take the time to be involved in some way in making LSU an exceptional institution so as to improve the quality of education and life for future generations.

When I think back about where I came from and how I got here, I feel truly honored to be inducted into the LSU College of Engineering Hall of Distinction. To receive such an honor along with the other inductees from past years is by far the highlight of my professional career. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Craft & Hawkins Department of Petroleum Engineering, and especially to Murray Hawkins, for the education and guidance necessary to initiate my chosen field. This has been a long journey with many challenges through the years. I would like to thank everyone – my business associates, my friends, and my family for the support and loyalty I needed through the years to achieve this recognition. This is a wonderful honor for me and my family and I will strive to be worthy of the trust placed in me by the College of Engineering. GEAUX TIGERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!