

## REFLECTIONS OF BILL R. HISE

**MY FIRST JOB OUT OF COLLEGE** was with Shell Oil Company. We had moved several times associated with my work at Shell and my wife, Anne, and I wanted a more stable location in which to raise our two children and spend our lives. I was due to end a one year assignment at Shell Development Co. in Houston, Texas in the summer of 1964, and in late spring of 1964, I called LSU and asked for the Head of the Petroleum Engineering Department. The reason I chose LSU was that I had an inquiry about joining the faculty from LSU when I finished my M.S. degree at the University of Oklahoma, but decided not to pursue teaching at that time. Murray Hawkins said that Mr. Craft had passed away earlier that year, and he suggested that I come to Baton Rouge for an interview. I did, and, subsequently, he offered me a position in the Petroleum Engineering Department as an Associate Professor to start in the fall of 1964, and I accepted.

When I arrived at the Petroleum Engineering Department at LSU, we discovered that all four of the faculty members at that time were basically reservoir engineers. I was “elected” to teach the drilling and production courses as well as the petroleum property evaluation course in which I had considerable experience at Shell. Looking back, I suspect the students could follow my lectures better in the drilling and production courses, where I had to read the book as I climbed the stairs to class, than they could in the petroleum property evaluation course, where I knew the subject backwards and forwards.

One of the things I fondly remember about some of my early years at LSU was the faculty walking over to the Plantation Room at the Union every day for lunch. The conversations at lunch covered a wide variety of subjects. One day, when Murray’s son Warren had been pole vaulting in high school,

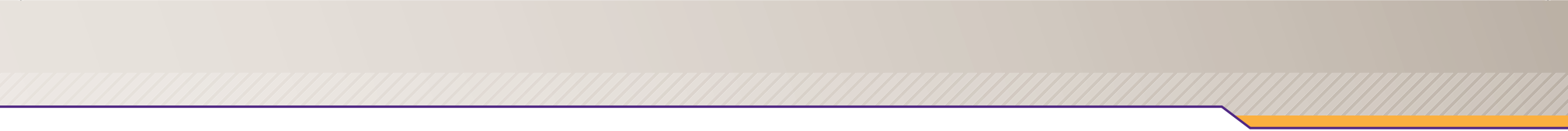
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Murray pointed out that pole vaulting was simply the conversion of kinetic energy to potential energy. So, we worked on the equations and analysis for pole vaulting that day on the paper tablecloth. Notwithstanding our work on pole vaulting, most all of our work on the tablecloths was related to some aspect of our courses in petroleum engineering or the oil industry in general. All of this made me come to realize that Murray Hawkins had a grip on the basic fundamentals of what we were doing that exceeded anyone I have ever known.

One of the many things I really enjoyed about teaching in the Petroleum Engineering Department was the association and working relationship with the other faculty members. Thanks to department heads like Murray Hawkins and later Ted Bourgoyne, we all saw our mission the same. The students and their opportunity to learn came first. I'm reminded of a phrase purportedly uttered by someone who

worked at LSU, but not in an academic department, who said, "this would be a great place to work if it wasn't for the students." We used this to remind ourselves why we were there. Fortunately, all the Petroleum Engineering faculty felt that LSU was a great place to work made possible because of the students.

Another activity that played a significant role in my time at LSU was originating and participating in the well control and blowout prevention training school. I developed the idea as a result of a field trip with the students in my drilling class to see an Exxon operation in the Avondale Field near New Orleans. Roy Sullins, the Exxon recruiter assigned to LSU Petroleum Engineering in the early 1970's, invited me to bring the students in the drilling class to witness a training exercise that involved circulating out an induced gas bubble ("kick") out of a well by Exxon drilling foremen to practice well control. On



the way home I thought, “why can’t we convert one of the old abandoned wells in the University Field on the LSU campus into a similar training well for our students and industry as a whole.” We applied to the AAODC (American Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors) for a grant to build the first facility and they took it under advisement. Then came the huge blowout at Bay Marchand, and we received the grant the next day.

Although I have been gone for a number of years, I still have contacts with the Petroleum Engineering Department. Thanks to Dr. John Smith, I have been able to periodically audit a graduate drilling course as a part of my continuing education requirement for engineering registration. Also, I have a grandson, Forrest Hise, who is a senior in petroleum engineering this year. We see each other nearly every week, which helps me stay current with the course material and the professors. Lastly, my

consulting work for an independent oil company in Baton Rouge involves trips to drilling prospect exhibitions in Houston and Dallas to display or look at the displays of others related to investing in drilling prospects. At almost every one of their exhibitions I have contact with one or more former students. Frankly, these opportunities to visit with former students are one of the most enjoyable parts of the trip for me. Based on these experiences, I have come to realize that every former student I meet has a good feeling about his time in petroleum engineering at LSU and his “old” professors.

Lastly, I want to thank the LSU College of Engineering and those that supported my nomination for selection to the Hall of Distinction. As a part of preparing my “Reflections,” I read the list of those previously selected for this honor. It is an impressive list, which makes me feel extremely fortunate to be included with such a group. Thank you again.