

Reflections

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If there were a theme to this reflection on my time at Louisiana State University and the years since, it would most certainly be "I couldn't have imagined." I couldn't have imagined the impact that my Chemical Engineering degree from LSU would have on my life, or the doors it would open or the opportunities it would provide.

I didn't graduate high school with the intent to pursue an engineering degree. The product of a hard working middle class family in Baton Rouge, a college degree was not the norm. I certainly was not familiar with chemical engineering and had never met a chemical engineer until I enrolled at LSU. A series of unrelated and ordinary circumstances led me to LSU in the summer of 1978 and I couldn't have imagined the impact that my Chemical Engineering degree from LSU would have on my life, or the doors it would open or the opportunities it would provide. I have wonderful memories of people who influenced and helped me on campus. I developed a long lasting friendship with a fellow chemical engineering student, Gretchen LeBlanc. She was a stabilizing and powerful role model for me- even back then. I am truly blessed to still be her friend and working with her at Dow Chemical today. We students viewed our professors as larger than life (I still view them this way), and they taught me much more than engineering. From them I learned discipline, which that I needed to really work hard for what I wanted, that there isn't always a simple answer, and to respect the chemical engineering profession.

A few professors were particularly prominent in my memories. First is Dr. David Wetzel. He was the "cool" professor to us undergrads. Dr. Wetzel has a true gift for teaching and he made very difficult concepts clear and meaningful. He maintained a sense of humor and creativity in the classroom that was refreshing. For example, I still remember a test question from his class exam. It involved calculating the heat transfer coefficient of a crawfish shell! I haven't been able to eat a crawfish since without thinking about that. The students at LSU are so lucky to still have Dr. Wetzel in the classroom today.

Second, I must comment on Dr. Art Sterling. Dr. Sterling was my advisor and he gave me such good direction and coaching. He helped me to

learn to think ahead of the immediate short term- a skill that doesn't come naturally to a 19 year old!

Finally, I must acknowledge Dr. Ed McLaughlin. Dr. McLaughlin was teaching, but also became the chair of the Department during my time at LSU. He was tough, but I recognize in hindsight that he set the standards for the Department and the students. Without his leadership, would my degree have been as powerful as it turned out to be? Could I have been as successful? I thank him for his setting the bar very high.

I have had occasion to visit with all three of these outstanding former