

REFLECTIONS OF BOBBY SAVOIE

AS I WRITE THIS, it is hard for me to believe that it was 38 years ago that I moved into Hatcher Dormitory with one of my best friends from high school. That dormitory held more people than the entire population of the town that I grew up in on Bayou Lafourche. There was never any doubt that I was going to LSU, nor was there any doubt that I would become an engineer. I loved solving problems and building or repairing things, particularly if it was something that people said couldn't be done. Both of my parents were brilliant in their own way and had instilled in me and my six siblings both a tremendous work ethic and a love of learning that would stay with me my whole life. Therefore, leaving Belle Rose and moving to Baton Rouge seemed like a natural transition in my life. I quickly found out that I had a lot to learn, and not just in the classroom. Although only an hour away, life at LSU was a totally

different world from the one I knew in Belle Rose. During my four years at LSU, I learned as much outside the classroom as I did inside. I entered LSU as an 18 year old who thought he was "grown up" and left as a 22 year old man with an Engineering degree and a new-found humility who knew he still had a lot to learn, and a lifetime within which to learn it. LSU changed my life in more ways than I would have ever imagined. I definitely took time to enjoy the party-school reputation of LSU back in those days, but I also learned just how much work it took to finish an Engineering degree in four years. The College of Engineering at LSU had an excellent reputation that was well deserved. I remember walking out of one of my final exams in the spring semester of my senior year, after being awake for 36 hours straight, and seeing that I had an "A" in my last class, meaning I could skip the final. That feeling of accomplishment

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is one I will never forget.

LSU was so much more than just an excellent academic institution with a great football tradition (which I enjoy to this day). I not only made lifelong friendships and met a beautiful young lady that has now been my wife for 32 years, but my eyes were opened to possibilities that I had never imagined. LSU not only prepared me to start my professional career, it gave me the confidence to undertake any challenge, and a great deal of respect for those who had gone before me and succeeded. After starting my first job as an engineer, I quickly discovered that adding an MBA to my Engineering degree could put me one step ahead of the pack. Once I earned my MBA new opportunities began to open, and each step held new challenges and new accomplishments if I was willing to work for them. That work ethic

instilled in me by my parents and honed at LSU has paid off many times over in my life. My wife and I have taught our children to never let themselves be defined by how life may occasionally knock them down; but rather to define themselves by how they get back up, keep going, and never, ever give up. That concept is one I have tried to exemplify in my life; to always do the best that I can, to always try to make the world around me a little better than it was when I got here, and to try to give back to others some portion of the many gifts that have been given to me. I don't always succeed, but I will never stop trying. That love of learning that I mentioned is still alive and burning in me just like it was when I was 18, as evidenced by earning my PhD in Engineering at the age of 51 after selling the second company I had the honor of leading. LSU was for me the start of an



extraordinary adventure and 34 years after receiving my undergraduate Engineering degree, I still look forward to each new day and the opportunities and challenges it will bring.