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# SPE Presidents Look Back on 50 Years of Growth and Accomplishment

*The history of SPE is perhaps best told by the men and women who have guided it through the past 5 decades, from a primarily US offshoot of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (AIME) to the worldwide technical and professional society it is today. JPT asked each of SPE's living past presidents to reflect on their terms—the highlights, the challenges, and the milestones.*

## Wayne E. Glenn, 1960



This year was an important one in the history of SPE. At a time when other professional societies were cutting back on services or increasing prices, SPE was adding services and holding dues the same and giving members more for their money. SPE established many important programs at this time. The Distinguished Lecturer Program was created in 1960 as

was the new quarterly journal, *SPE Journal*, the society's first technical journal. Both were historic milestones for SPE.

SPE Executive Secretary Joe Alford and I began discussing the possibility of expanding SPE worldwide and starting up sections overseas. I had the Conoco plane at the time, and we traveled all over the world—to Europe, to Russia—to try to set up sections. We tried to find good people on the ground who were interested in SPE, and we met with government officials and left behind SPE literature. The funny thing was, often the person we left in charge of setting up the section, after the government saw how efficient and capable he was, would hire him away and put him on the government payroll and we would have to start again from scratch.

## John C. Calhoun Jr., 1964



In February 1964, during the AIME Annual Meeting, I officially became SPE President, succeeding L.P. Wharton. Although SPE had become an autonomous unit of AIME in 1957, a period of transition still existed, which accounts for the February date for assuming the office of SPE President. This transition period, along with several other elements

of change of concern to SPE, drove the society's agenda.

In my 1964 Presidential message, I took note of the fact that President Wharton had asked the question, "What are SPE's aims and obligations?" The very phrasing of this question reflected the relative youth of petroleum engineering and of SPE as a professional association, a situation that few in today's SPE world are aware of. I gave a three-fold response to that question: our need to be a learning profession, to seek out and nurture new members of the profes-

sion, and to enlarge our awareness of a role for SPE with respect to the broader issues of our general society. When, in the fall of 1963, as President-elect, I had outlined these views, the *Oil & Gas Journal* reported it as a three-point education program—the education of SPE members, the education of those who will become petroleum engineers, and the education of the public at large. These were the challenges that SPE faced in becoming a truly separate and higher-quality professional association that represented a fully recognized branch of engineering.

At the time of my presidency, the mood of the US was focused on science, engineering having taken a backseat. All engineering, not just petroleum engineering, was going through a period of self-examination. This mood, brought about by the scientific successes of World War II, the Cold War, nuclear issues, and space concepts, was exacerbated by a growing number of social problems, such as environmental pollution, that were being identified and associated in the public mind with engineering and technological advancement. Engineering enrollments had fallen sharply, especially in petroleum engineering. The Engineers Council for Professional Development was in the process of setting new standards for engineering curricula, and only a decade earlier had declared that petroleum engineering was a "fringe" curriculum, unworthy of full engineering recognition. Less than half of the SPE membership itself consisted of individuals with a degree in petroleum engineering.

As a consequence of these transitory factors, I cannot identify any great SPE projects during my presidential tenure or milestones that clearly identified a new level for the society. Rather, the activities were incremental by nature, steps that successively wove together the infrastructure that we know today. The number of regional meetings was increased, critical topics were identified for monographs, short courses for upgrading society-membership capabilities were initiated, and special attention was directed to involving the petroleum industry in the affairs of petroleum engineering educational programs at universities. The program activity was characterized by the personal interest and activity of individual members of the SPE Board in all of these arenas. It was an exciting time, but much of what we now know as SPE with its international dimensions was still in the future.

### H.A. Nedom, 1967



In 1967, SPE was a constituent member of AIME but was growing in membership, publications, and services for its members. Developing a rapid and efficient means of transferring technology was one of the society's goals then as it is today.

The first of the Monograph series, *Pressure Buildup and Flow Tests in Wells* by C.S. Matthews and D.G. Russell, came out that year. More than 5,000 copies had been sold by year's end, and five other monographs were in preparation. Continuing education was emphasized by the board, and, late in the year, the first videotaped course was circulated to the sections. It was a 30-hour course titled "Fundamentals of Reservoir Engineering" taught by Ben H. Caudle of the University of Texas at Austin. The course was warmly received and resulted in a series of video-instruction courses.

Of particular interest during 1967 were the numerous meetings with other societies in planning the first Offshore Technology Conference (OTC). SPE and its Executive Secretary, Joe Alford, took the lead, and SPE has administered the conference ever since. OTC fulfilled a huge need for offshore engineering information and will always rank as one of SPE's finest accomplishments.

### John M.C. Gaffron, 1969



This was a dynamic year for the society. Membership was at a record high, and we were confident that vigorous growth would continue. SPE had grown from an infant branch of AIME to its largest constituent society. We were reaching new highs in attendance at regional meetings as well as in pages published in journals and conference preprints. Member services were increasing—the Continuing Education Committee had put together two successful videotaped lectures and was working on a third, and our second monograph, a landmark work on hydraulic fracturing, was completed. Close to 2,000 members were now participating in our continuing-education activities and programs. The board also created a standing committee on career guidance to more effectively aid local sections in career guidance activities.

And, of course, it was also the first year of OTC, an event in which SPE took considerable pride. The application of engineering to the ocean environment was an emerging technology that involved not only petroleum engineering but other disciplines, and the event became a hallmark for SPE working with other leading engineering and scientific societies.

### Lawrence B. Curtis, 1971



During my term, we celebrated the centennial of AIME with SPE being one of its constituent societies. The year had a special aura and was a proud one for all of AIME's societies—mining, metallurgical, and petroleum. John Bell was President of AIME and maintained a progressive stance relative to technology development and dissemination to professionals in each society. Since he was from SPE, we knew we could count on his support for any reasonable proposal to the AIME Board.

More American petroleum companies were moving into the international upstream arena. It really started in the early 1950s, but now was accelerating with demand for petroleum increasing by 10% per year and the United States, except for Alaska, becoming a maturing upstream province. Many SPE members already were engaged in international operations (I was one) and were stationed overseas. They were associating and working with engineers and peers abroad, many of whom were also members of SPE. In this industry environment, we knew we had to do something to maintain and grow a strong SPE that could help solve world energy problems.

In 1970, when I was President-elect and Bob McLemore was President of SPE, the Executive Committee of AIME and the SPE Board debated extensively whether SPE should become more internationally oriented and become a truly international professional society, encouraging worldwide membership and serving members through newly established sections in other countries. The answer was yes. But we knew that this would be a large undertaking and an aberration to system politics. The plan, approved by the board, was to move forward with minimal conflict. We wanted to maintain a low profile in bringing this about, but at the same time make significant progress.

In the fall of 1971, I was privileged to give the opening talk at the first meeting of the newly created SPE London Section. Also, David Riley, then Executive Director of SPE, and I attended the World Petroleum Congress in Moscow in 1971, and on our return to the US, we stopped in Paris to visit the Director of l'Institut Français du Pétrole and discuss forming a local SPE section in Paris. But it soon became very clear that we would not be successful. It would remain for a later regime and time for that to happen. It was not easy to create local sections in foreign lands.

Another trend influencing SPE members and upstream technology at this time was the dramatically increasing activity in offshore marine basins around the world. The North Sea, west Africa, the Persian Gulf, and the South China Sea were areas of surging industry presence. In the Gulf of Mexico, and to a certain extent in Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela, the industry was developing and proving new offshore technology and engineering concepts. This surge in offshore development led SPE to focus more on marine technology, an interest that only a few years earlier had spawned OTC, to address technology needs in this rapidly growing

segment. I personally felt privileged to be a leader of SPE of AIME during this dynamic time frame. What is amazing is that it was less than 40 years ago, and we are now discussing the possibility of the world reaching peak oil production in the foreseeable future.

#### Donald G. Russell, 1974



The year was a whirlwind of activity for me—SPE meetings, board meetings, visits to SPE sections, participation in the beginnings of the SPE Foundation, helping in the effort to make the public aware of the facts surrounding the oil and gas business during the turbulent oil-embargo period, and doing the best job I possibly could for Shell Oil Company. These

things all required all the time I could afford to give them and still be Norma's husband and father to Karen and Steve.

In spite of the activity, what I remember most vividly were the people I was so closely associated with. The SPE staff, headed by David Riley and Dan Adamson, was absolutely great. They provided incredibly good support and advice that was invaluable to me, and also did an excellent job of day-to-day management of SPE affairs. I also was fortunate to have a very talented SPE Board to work with. During the years before 1974, I got to know a group of members through my SPE involvement who were pioneers in establishing the successful path SPE has been on through the years. The support SPE received from men like Wayne Glenn, John Bell, Scott Kraemer, Buck Curtis, Ed Runyan, Marvin Katz, Arlen Edgar, Don Stacy, Arlie Skov, and Ken Robbins, just to name a few, who enthusiastically gave their time, wisdom, and money to our society over the years, was a prime factor in its successful growth. I personally found that there was always a bank of these talented people who were never too busy to respond to a call for help or advice.

Early in my term, the industry in the US was being bombarded with an avalanche of negative information and groundless charges about the energy crisis by the news media and some members of Congress. The OPEC embargo of oil exports to the US had shocked the American people, and they wanted some answers. Wayne Glenn of Conoco, who was President of AIME in 1974, was a tireless advocate for the petroleum industry and was a great model for me to follow as I also got involved in speaking out with facts about our energy situation. I like to think that speaking out for our industry ultimately helped to get us where we are today. We are a much less regulated industry than in 1974, and as a nation, we are much more aware of both the domestic and worldwide energy situation. We likewise are aware that energy conservation always must be part of the solution, as well as development of alternative energy sources.

Finally, I was privileged to be in the executive structure of SPE during the formative years of the SPE Foundation. The foundation has matured and taken on excellent programs and projects over the years. I believe the foundation has benefited greatly from the support of past SPE Presidents as well as that of the ongoing SPE Boards and elected leadership.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not mention the evolution of SPE into a truly international organization. In 1974, SPE was primarily an American organization with a group of overseas local sections. The years since then, thanks to excellent dedication and leadership, have helped SPE grow into a truly global organization. Hurrah!

The final act I performed as SPE President was the inauguration of my successor and great friend, Ed Runyan. During the dinner and ceremony, Dave Riley slipped me a note stating that SPE membership growth in 1974 exceeded growth in all prior years. It would not have been appropriate for me to take credit for that, but it sure seemed the perfect ending to a very enjoyable year.

#### Edward E. Runyan, 1975



One of the major issues considered by SPE in 1975 was addressing the need to become an international organization. As archaic as it may seem now, in 1975 there was a great deal of opposition to actively entering the international arena. Eighty-two percent of our members lived in the US, and many of them felt that they should keep the technology and, therefore, their jobs in the US. Fortunately, SPE, as it usually does, arrived at the right answer and continued to expand internationally. It is great source of pride to see SPE where it is today.

Another major subject of debate was SPE governance. In 1975, SPE was a wholly owned subsidiary of AIME. SPE did not even file a tax return because it had no legal standing. Because all SPE actions were subject to approval by the AIME Board, conflicts did exist, particularly regarding international expansion. One of the outgrowths of this structure was the formation of the SPE Foundation, which was and is a free-standing corporation governed by former SPE Presidents and was therefore outside AIME jurisdiction. It took another 9 years before separate incorporation was allowed by AIME and SPE International was formed.

One of the personal highlights of my year was a trip Dave Riley, then SPE Executive Director, and I made around the world visiting SPE sections and laying the groundwork for new ones. The first local section in East Asia, the Japan Section, was chartered on this trip in April 1975. Although commonplace today, I think that perhaps Dave and I made the first trip completely around the world for SPE.

#### Charles L. Bare, 1979



The most significant event during the early part of 1979 was the sudden death on 14 March of David Riley, who had been Executive Director of SPE since 1968. He was only 48 years old, and his loss was felt by all those active in SPE. We were extremely fortunate that Dan Adamson was already on staff and could immediately take on this role, which he held for more than 2 decades.

Energy sufficiency has been a crucial topic for as long as the petroleum industry has existed. In 1979, a particular focus on reserves was initiated with a more serious technical basis. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) began to expect a better presentation of reserves volumes in stockholder reporting. The result was a dedication of engineering talent to the economic basis as well as the physical determination of stated reserves volumes. Industry committees were formed at the request of SEC for more-formal reserves category definitions as well as a more consistent basis for physical determination of the reserves values within each category. SPE was active in advising SEC concerning the talent and resources required to meet these goals.

This year was also a watershed for the increased international focus of the society. During my trip through the East Asia sections, the society received a request from the Chinese Petroleum Society to visit Beijing to further cooperation between our organizations. On 13 April, I flew to Beijing with Doug Ducate to discuss this topic with the Chinese. Their request was for the society to supply technical seminars for Chinese engineers on a broad range of technical topics. I discussed with them the need to hold an exhibition of industry technology and services in conjunction with the technical seminars. After 2 days of stressing this dual approach, we were introduced to the government entity responsible for conducting exhibits. Doug and I toured the Soviet-built exhibition center with a current exhibit of industrial goods. After an additional day of discussions, the government agreed to a format including an exhibition accompanied by technical presentations. I was very pleased to attend this joint meeting, which was held 17–24 March 1982. It was by all measures a success, with 1,000 overseas visitors and an estimated 150,000 Chinese in attendance.

While it was not an experience associated with my presidential term, I must speak to another topic related to our international focus. While I was working in Conoco's London office, I became aware of the very successful and beneficial Offshore Europe exhibition and conference held biennially in Aberdeen. This event was founded and sponsored by Spearhead Exhibitions. I was able to lead negotiations on behalf of the society to purchase a half interest in this event. This purchase was concluded in 1990. Offshore Europe continues to be a very important means of providing technology and industry updates to a large segment of our membership and the industry. The opportunities that were afforded to me by SPE to interact with fellow professionals within the petroleum industry more than compensated for the energy and time I invested.

## Marvin L. Katz, 1980



Both the industry and SPE were in a period of rapid transition during the 3 years I served in the presidential rotation and traveled. Our Executive Director, Dave Riley, died suddenly the day before he was due to leave with my wife, Suzanne, and me on our first international trip. The society was working actively on organizing itself as a truly international organization—this was still controversial, as many in SPE and on the Board of AIME favored keeping SPE primarily a US organization. There were many people, especially in my own local section in Dallas, who wanted SPE to play a more active role in promoting a strong US national energy policy. Those of us who favored a truly international outlook felt that participation in US politics would be a serious mistake and that we should concentrate on technical-information dissemination and professional affairs and leave politics and national policies to trade groups.

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Those of us who favored a truly international outlook felt that participation in US politics would be a serious mistake and that we should concentrate on technical-information dissemination and professional affairs and leave politics and national policies to trade groups. I remember being amused and a bit dismayed to find that, after fighting to recognize SPE as a separate organization from AIME, at one of my first stops, in Dhahran, the meeting at which I was scheduled to speak was advertised as an “AIME Meeting” rather than as an “SPE Meeting.” And it was! There was very little participation by Saudi engineers. We have come a long way since then.

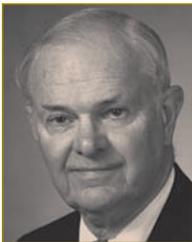
Since much of my career had been in the “ivory tower” of research, I found the opportunity to visit sections around the world extremely rewarding as I learned more about large operations and the many differences between domestic and international technological concerns. I fear I bored many people to death with my early talks—the intricacies of enhanced-oil-recovery technology were of little interest in most international sections. But people were kind, and we had many wonderful experiences and opportunities to meet new friends.

In the industry, the turmoil in the Middle East was beginning to rapidly escalate. I remember standing on a platform in the Arabian Gulf in 1979 and having one of the engineers point to a flare that could be seen on the Iranian side of the Gulf. The Iranian revolution and its implications were on everyone's mind. Other areas of the world were just beginning to open up. In 1980, Dan and Diane Adamson and Suzanne and I were invited to China to discuss relationships between SPE and China and an international SPE meeting to be held in Beijing. We arrived at a large new airport that was

almost empty, and were relieved to find people out in front who had been sent to meet us. We stayed in the "Friendship House," a government facility, as there were no commercial hotels. Most people wore Mao jackets, and the streets were full of bicycles and tractors, but there were very few cars. Diane made a special impact as she wore her open-toed shoes on the streets of Beijing. People would stop and stare at her feet, as they had never seen such shoes! I remember being impressed with how much things had changed in the relatively short period before attending the March 1982 SPE conference in Beijing. From what I see and read, the rate of change has not slowed much since.

It is truly gratifying to see how international in scope SPE has become. I hope the role we played back then contributed in some way to guiding the society in this direction.

### Arlen L. Edgar, 1981



After taking office as SPE President at the 1980 SPE ATCE in Dallas, one of my first duties (and an unexpected one) involved a trip to Washington, DC. Michel Halbouty, who headed the transition team of US President-elect Ronald Reagan, called a meeting of the Presidents of SPE and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) to discuss US petro-

leum availability in case of an emergency. Topics discussed included the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and US producing capacity. The discussions led to mobilization of members and staff of SPE and AAPG to conduct a survey of US oil-producing capacity (there actually was some excess at the time). The study was completed and presented by Halbouty to Congress.

The year was a significant one for the society in many respects. It marked the halfway point in the 10-year SPE Long Range Plan adopted in 1976; a review showed that substantial implementation had been accomplished, primarily in the area of internationalization. And in February, the SPE Board endorsed plans for a new headquarters building to be built in Richardson, Texas, by the SPE Foundation. Additional office space was critically needed to accommodate expanded activities and staff.

On a visit to sections in the Asia Pacific region, I had the honor of presenting a charter to the new Malaysia Section, the 76th in the society. On this same trip, meetings were held in Beijing with representatives of the China Society of Petroleum Engineers. Plans were made for the first International Petroleum Technical Symposium and Exhibition to be held in Beijing the following year. A highlight of the 1981 Hydrocarbon Energy and Economics Symposium in Dallas was the keynote address by former US President Gerald Ford. The presence of Secret Service agents added a unique flair to the event.

My presidential term ended at the 1981 ATCE in San Antonio, Texas. Attendance set a new record at 11,400, compared with 9,390 in 1980. The 340 exhibitors also represented a new record. My tenure also saw crude-oil prices reach record levels. While I would like to claim credit for this achievement, honesty (and ethics) prevent my doing so.

### W. Clyde Barton Jr., 1982



When I became President of SPE for 1982, the industry was enjoying significant growth. SPE was enjoying growth as well, with membership rising in the US as well as internationally. The SPE leadership had recognized the rapidly growing importance of internationalization and took the initiative to push SPE to the forefront as the premier technical society for the worldwide petroleum industry.

Total membership essentially had doubled in the past decade to more than 42,000, while technical meetings increased both in number and participation. Local sections had increased to 78, including 20 sections outside the US.

One of the highlights of my term was the first SPE oil and gas conference in Beijing in March 1982. Thanks to the efforts of my predecessors, the SPE staff, and the Chinese Petroleum Society, the planning and arrangements for this meeting were excellent. The meeting was highly successful and played a major role in opening China to the technical community and to equipment suppliers outside China. I had visited China on business for my employer in 1978, and the positive changes I saw in a little more than 3 years were but a modest indicator of China's future growth.

SPE exists to provide a technical platform for engineers to exchange ideas and grow professionally. This mission requires open and free communications within the technical community. As the society grew, we found that communication between the leadership and local sections was becoming a serious problem. Keep in mind that we did not have an Internet with its nearly instant worldwide connections. We made a serious effort to improve the dialog at all levels of the society through more publications, meetings, and leadership visits with local sections. Travel by volunteer members can be burdensome, and this effort was difficult, but rewarding. SPE has benefited over the years by the continuing corporate support of industry management, which recognized the bottom-line value of SPE.

As president, I was asked my view of petroleum engineers of the future. I responded that they would not be much different in the future than in 1982—they would have the same curious mind, the same dedication, and the same creative enthusiasm. They might be much better equipped to tackle their jobs, thanks to a tool box full of advanced technology supplied in a large part by the successes and failures of their predecessors, but they would need better tools because the job is getting tougher. I think that view was correct and still holds true today.

I have long been an advocate of freedom and the free market. The underlying strength of SPE is its dedication to the voluntary exchange of technical ideas and information. Such exchange can best be done in an atmosphere of freedom in which goods and services are also free to cross borders. It was said long ago that if trade does not cross borders, guns likely will. My wish is that freedom can become a reality for all people.

### T. Don Stacy, 1983



Few significant events are conceived and accomplished during the single term of any SPE President. Most overlap two, sometimes three, terms and are the results of efforts from several people. During 1983, a significant event was the groundbreaking for the new SPE headquarters building in Richardson, Texas. As significant as this event was, it was overshadowed by an even

more significant one—the completion of the evolution of SPE from a constituent society of AIME to a worldwide body of professional engineers, independent of any other engineering organization. This maturation of the society led to the decision to move the headquarters to Richardson, and the groundbreaking ceremony was held on Valentine's Day in 1983.

Companion actions to the above were the formation of the SPE Foundation and the first SPE endowment fund to own and finance the headquarters building. Living presidents can claim their own due in these matters but I want to recognize the efforts of M. Scott Kraemer, who was SPE President in 1972 and who was a significant force in accomplishing all of these matters.

Also in 1983, SPE proposed a change in its bylaws to create a new standing committee on microcomputers to “find ways to apply ‘personal’ computers to solve petroleum engineering problems.” That ripple now has become a tsunami, and we did not even dream of the Blackberry.

### James R. Jorden, 1984



I was inducted as SPE President in October 1983 at the ATCE held in San Francisco. In an interview published in *JPT* at that time, I said, in response to a question about the oil industry's economic recovery, “Most forecasters are predicting a slow growth for the next few years.” Little did we know of the impending oil-price crash that would occur in less than 3 years.

Rather than focus on just the events of 1984, I choose to highlight the significant activities of 1983, 1984, and 1985—my 3 years in the presidential rotation. Each administration builds on the work of its predecessors and passes on to its successors some achievements. It is a continuum of progress. In my view, the most significant events during these 3 years of SPE history were

- The opening of the new SPE headquarters in Richardson. This move enabled SPE to use money, which would otherwise be spent with third parties for rent, for member services.
- The separate incorporation, in November 1984, of SPE as a totally autonomous, independent organization.
- The beginning of the national councils within the SPE governance scheme. This idea was first sketched on a cocktail napkin by Dan Adamson and me in 1984 while some 30,000 ft in the air between Melbourne and Perth, Australia. National councils have now morphed into regional councils, which enhance communication among sections in their geographic area. However, at the time, national councils served a valuable purpose to assure non-US members and sections that SPE was sincere about the internationalization of the society.

- The presentations, in 1984, of five new awards—the Drilling Engineering Award, Production Engineering Award, Reservoir Engineering Award, Public Service Award, and Young Member Outstanding Service Award.

I completed my presidential year in October 1984 at the ATCE in Houston, where the headquarters hotel was the Shamrock Hilton, now torn down. My most enduring memory of these 3 years—indeed of my entire involvement with SPE—has been the respect and friendship I have gained working with the competent and committed people, both members and staff, who work to enhance the petroleum engineering profession.

### Dennis E. Gregg, 1986



I became President in September 1985 in Las Vegas, Nevada. I do not know if that choice of a site for the ATCE was symptomatic of the heady years the industry had been enjoying with oil prices climbing to USD 40/bbl and rig counts over 4,000 or was prophetic of the many tough years ahead after the price plummeted to USD 10/bbl. At any rate, the board had to

deal with falling revenue and, thanks to the reserve fund, did not have to hit the panic switch and cut programs drastically.

Recommendations from the first report by the Task Force on Reserves Definitions, appointed the year before, were tabled for further review, but the work by that task force has been the foundation for reserves-definition efforts by SPE and other organizations that are still continuing.

A highlight of every SPE President's term is visits to the sections. I was most impressed by the diversity of engineering challenges on the one hand, and by the consistent dedication to solving them on the other. One tour took me to sections in West Virginia and Kentucky; another to the Middle East. My talk was about project management, and the example was a near-billion-dollar project in the North Sea. I could not wait to see the jaws drop in the Appalachian sections when I showed the movie of the big jacket sliding off the barge and the derrick barge lifting the huge modules onto the deck. And I fully expected to have people lined up for job applications. Well, they seemed to appreciate the talk, but they had problems and opportunities of their own—such as new water-disposal regulations that could cause one operator to shut in hundreds of wells and lose significant production. In Saudi Arabia at that time, there were no wells on artificial lift, and wells from their biggest (the world's biggest!) offshore field were shut in if they produced any appreciable amount of water.

### Noel D. Rietman, 1987



The biggest event in my term really started in 1986 and continued through 1988. SPE had successfully weathered the jump in oil prices of the 1970s followed by the significant downturn of 1982, but the free fall in prices in 1986 was new and stunning to all of us. We did not know what it would do to our membership, our income, our reserve

fund, and our member programs. In typical SPE fashion, we formed an ad hoc committee to look at the problem and tried to project likely outcomes. Despite the many jokes about committees, this one performed like most SPE committees do. It provided us with excellent guidelines to cut costs while minimizing the reduction of member services and the impact on the reserve fund. Even today I marvel at the effectiveness of SPE committees, both ad hoc and standing.

Since 1987, we have seen several other significant price changes, both up and down. It seems ironic that during and before the 1960s, we were not that good at projecting future performance of reservoirs but we certainly thought we knew what future prices were going to be. Although we have continuously developed better skills and tools for predicting performance, today's price uncertainties have made future income still difficult to predict.

### R. Lyn Arscott, 1988



I became SPE President after 3 years serving as Treasurer. The price of oil had crashed in 1986, and SPE spent many years adjusting to the new economic reality. We were fortunate to have established a reserve fund in the early 1980s, but because of a significant reduction in advertising revenue and a drop in meeting attendance, we had to reduce SPE staff by 10%, reduce operating expenses by USD 1.5 million per year, and raise membership dues from USD 30 to 40 to balance our accounts. OTC attendance went from 56,000 in 1985 to 25,000 in 1987. Enrollment in petroleum engineering schools dropped from 10,000 in 1982 to 1,600 in 1988.

An amazing coincidence occurred in 1988–89 when the presidents of SPE, AAPG, the Society of Exploration Geophysicists, and the Society of Petrophysicists and Well Log Analysts all were Chevron employees, so it was a great opportunity to build our relationships and look for synergies in programs. We started meeting regularly, and I am pleased that this communication effort has continued up to the present. That year was also the start of the monthly president's column in *JPT*.

The 1980s were a period of massive change in how oil and gas companies managed their businesses because of an avalanche of environmental regulations. SPE played its part in collecting and disseminating information by organizing a health, safety, and environment (HSE) committee in 1989, and we began planning international conferences in HSE. In 2008, we will hold the eighth SPE International Conference on HSE in France.

My most pleasant memories were the family vacations we tacked on to the end of the summer board meeting, which were often held in the Colorado Rockies, and the impressive hospitality I received when visiting sections in Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia.

### Orville D. Gaither, 1990



SPE had been talking the talk of an international body, but there was little walking the walk. As an executive involved in the international oil business, it made perfect sense to carry the walk to as many sections as possible. My tenure as president was characterized by travel, travel, and more travel—more than 250,000 miles in commercial and private aircraft.

I addressed a huge number of international sections and opened the first SPE Asia Pacific Conference in Australia. Not wishing to slight our domestic base, I attended the Appalachian Regional Conference and spoke at section meetings from Mississippi to Montana. Amoco was simply wonderful and assigned one of its smaller jets to get me to sections that were off the beaten path for domestic airlines. My monthly column was titled “Enroute” simply because I wrote these columns on planes going to or coming from SPE functions. I suspect that I will always hold one record—that of addressing the Cairo Egypt Section three times during my tenure as President.

On the international front, we were opening sections almost weekly. I recognized that SPE needed to elect an international engineer as president and also that women were becoming more of a factor in engineering and other Earth science professions. I am pleased to say that this groundwork was laid to accomplish both objectives. The individuals selected were truly outstanding.

During 1990, not everything went well. I vividly remember seeing my eldest son in the audience at my first speech, which was in New Orleans. He was wrapped in bandages from burns suffered in a compressor fire. I could not help remembering my admonishment to him that the field of petroleum engineering would extend well beyond my life and probably his too. Two of my sons followed that advice, but unfortunately both suffered burns in compressor fires in the field within a year of each other.

The first thing that I recall from that year is the very tiny baby steps that we took toward abstracting SPE papers of the past to allow SPE to better serve its entire spectrum, domestic and international members alike. It was a small but vital beginning. To sum the year up in a single word, I would have to say, “Enroute.”

### Arlie M. Skov, 1991



The year 1991 was an extraordinarily exciting time to be SPE President. The society was in the midst of a greatly accelerated international presence. The London office was opened in 1991 and the Kuala Lumpur office 4 years later, both landmark events. During the 8-year period from 1989 to 1996, SPE added 42 sections outside the US.

The first SPE section in China was formed in 1991 and the first in Russia a year later. I had the good fortune to visit both Beijing and Moscow as these two sections were formed, and

to personally see the interest and eagerness of the new members. Today, those two important nations have a combined total of 12 SPE sections with more than 2,000 members!

Correlating with this greatly accelerated international growth of SPE, most of my memories as 1991 President are of international travel—to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, China, Australia, and South America. I visited a total of 33 sections outside the US as well as 22 within it, and I was perhaps the first SPE President to visit that high a proportion of non-US sections. It was a wonderful experience for me, and I am delighted that SPE continues its international growth.

#### Roger L. Abel, 1992



“Change”—not the kind that jingles in the pockets after a night out with friends, but the kind generated from creative tension of the times. That single word would describe the exciting time I served as SPE President. I wrote about it monthly in a *JPT* column titled “Lagniappe” and could not keep up with it. The society was changing during that time and,

for the most part, the changes were good. Here are just a few things that were done during my tenure.

We held the First International Conference on HSE in The Hague, organized jointly with the Dutch Royal Institute of Engineers. This was not without controversy, as one might imagine. A technical society made up to a great extent of engineers of major companies providing a forum for environmental activists was regarded by some with skepticism. But a number of majors saw the benefits of finally engaging the environmental community on a technical basis rather than an emotional one, and provided the support to make it a success. And that event was followed up by a number of companies publicly taking a more active role in environmental care. Offshore Europe also continued to grow, and SPE successfully concluded negotiations for the acquisition of SPE Europe’s holdings in this profitable venture.

The world was changing rapidly, and SPE saw the need to change its way of doing business also or become less relevant. We recognized the need to step in and become the training vehicle for the independents as the demographics of the industry shifted. We recognized the need to modify the membership of the board to provide more representation of technical interests. We recognized the need for more international offices for member support. And we recognized the need to join the electronic information age, establishing a group to investigate the cost of changing SPE from a paper organization to an electronic-data organization.

SPE was becoming more and more international in membership and conferences. Consistent with this, we voted to add the word “International” to the SPE name and to modify the logo. It now sounds like a small thing, but it was not then. And with the opening of the former Soviet Union, I was privileged to be the president who presented the charters to the organizational meetings of the first two SPE sections in Russia, Tver and Moscow. My head still

hurts from the toasts with my many Russian friends after the lunches.

It was a memorable year, and I was able to travel and meet some great members and make some lifelong friends. But nothing is more memorable or makes me prouder than to be the president who, in leaving, handed the gavel to the first non-US president, Jacques Bosio.

#### Jacques Bosio, 1993



Just a few anecdotal words on what has now become history: Back in 1985, when we founded the French Section, the SPE world was divided into 14 regions. Eleven of those regions were in the US, one in South America, one for Europe and Africa, and one for the Middle East, Asia, and Australia. The USSR was totally ignored!

SPE was perceived as a US professional society. Not very many members of the successive SPE Boards had realized that geology has no borders and that the center of gravity of the oil business was not in Texas anymore but traveling east, drawn by the North Sea and especially the Middle East. But some were visionaries. Under the impulse of Orville Gaither and a few others (not very many, let us face it!), the decision was made, for the future good of the society, to really go international and to make it known.

Why not elect a non-US President, a foreigner? And a real one, not a Brit who speaks about the same language and could be perceived as not really being a foreigner. Let us take the worst kind, said someone on the Nominating Committee!

And this is how I entered my second family, with my dad in SPE, Dan Adamson, and a dedicated and efficient staff, and an amazing group of colleagues at the board of directors.

Let us talk about the Board a little. You find there some of the best professionals in the world, sometimes not easy to manage, but look at the results: In 2 decades, SPE has managed to become the number one professional society in our industry, with 70,000 members.

#### E.A. Breitenbach, 1994



The title of the 1994 ATCE, “The Energy of Change,” was as appropriate as the title of my monthly column, “Winds of Change.” Political changes in the world made immature basins such as those found in the former Soviet Union, China, several countries along the Pacific Rim, and many countries in South America become available for exploration for the first time in decades. This exploration was primarily funded by the sale of assets in mature basins, such as those in most of North America. The result was a permanent dislocation of many facets of our industry, and the “downsizing” and “rightsizing” to reflect these changes. Exciting growth was occurring in the immature basins, while careers were impacted and jobs lost in

mature areas. And the SPE membership and member needs were changing equally fast.

I had four primary goals. First, to review the SPE financial system so that we could more accurately investigate costs and income and return to profitability. This was accomplished. Second, to define the new SPE worldwide organization that would reflect the changes that were occurring and get it in place. The short-term organization was approved and put in place, and the long-term organization was being defined at the close of the year. Third, to adopt a policy and proceed with intersociety relations. A policy was defined and adopted that allowed SPE, for the first time, to make clear its role within our industry and to proceed with discussions with several professional societies in various parts of the world. The last goal was to begin to solve the question of how to provide our technology to the new generation of “competent generalists.” This effort was begun with changes to *JPT* and formation of a new task force to field test ideas.

Though I get to write this summary of substantial progress, it was the major efforts by the Board members and staff that made it happen. We had many heated arguments, as one would expect in such times of major change. However, these arguments were always about how to provide our members with better services within our budget. My role during this challenging period was to be the designated SPE cheerleader leading the pursuit of our vision. It was an honor to serve.

#### Roy H. Koerner, 1995



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” in the words of Charles Dickens. And that aptly described the restless years of the mid-1990s for us. Recall that in the decade just before, the industry had suffered a roller coaster ride. It began with a period of spiking crude prices subsequent to the Iranian revolution, and there was talk of eventual USD 100/bbl crude. That was followed by a severe downturn in the 1980s, and corporations began a series of reorganizations and the elimination of layers of many middle and upper managers. Thus, companies purged the ranks of experienced leaders, primarily in North America. As a result, many of those whom SPE had drawn on for board and officer positions were replaced by young, bright, and “upwardly mobile” professionals. Interestingly, companies from outside North America continued to furnish a cadre of experienced management for SPE positions. Change was in the air and was needed for SPE, as well.

Just before my watch but while I was on the Executive Committee, there were some power struggles and resignations, but in the midst of this disquieting activity, some exciting concepts emerged. One of these concepts surfaced as a passionate desire to serve the membership and to find out what they really needed and wanted from SPE. Another was the realization that SPE was truly becoming an international society, and what, in a practical sense, did that demand in terms of change? Also, it was recognized that the SPE staff

needed restructuring, that the society needed to be broader geographically, and SPE needed to improve the use of information technology to meet the ever-increasing global membership requirements.

This “reinvention” of SPE, while retaining the bedrock foundation of our basic mission, led not only to restructuring the staff but the board as well. Studies were conducted, consultants were hired, action steps were hotly debated, and decisions made. Today, the SPE Board and staff stand on the foundation of those decisions, some made more than a decade ago. The organization has been greatly improved since then, such that all who were involved, then and now, can take great pride in the results. While many professional engineering societies still struggle, SPE is growing and prospering and, I dare say, is the finest of its kind.

#### Peter D. Gaffney, 1996



Petroleum engineers are often in the business of assessing past production and forecasting future performance and we are always looking to history-match the past to help define the future. So permit me to tweak a few recollections in my history match.

In late 1995–96, there were concerns about oil oversupply and price. The latter reached the mid-USD 20/bbl, at least for a while, which were heady numbers indeed to those of us who had experienced the previous 10 years. The opening up of substantial exciting onshore acreage and other opportunities also was part of the mid-1990s tapestry. The former Soviet Union, significant parts of Latin America, and much of the rest of the world opened up to investment opportunities previously closed. The international recognition of gas was then getting into full swing, beginning what has been a major 10-year growth story that continues.

The market then, as now, was to a large extent driven by investments analysts, and this led to an extreme focus on costs and head counts. Large companies cut substantial professional staff numbers, particularly in exploration. Professionals who would indeed have been the leaders and, even more importantly, the mentors of today were lost during this era. Short-term-ism and perception—rather than the reality of price, costs, and production—were driving the industry then, much as it does today. Overspecialization in our business made it difficult for some of our members to retain jobs, as the market was interested in the “competent generalist,” a demand even more evident today.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes of the era as a result of the push on costs was the reduction in upstream R&D by the major companies, which has led to nearly all new technology being made available from the service and manufacturing sector. This has made it much easier for national oil companies and small- and medium-sized companies to compete with the larger concerns. Interestingly, SPE already was well geared to take advantage of the changing international dynamics, and its network of services and professionals has benefited the new environment significantly.

### T. Scott Hickman, 1997



Throughout the 1990s, the challenge to SPE was to realign its programs and priorities to the reality of an industry still consolidating in the aftermath of the mid-1980s' price collapse. More than 400,000 jobs had been eliminated, including those of thousands of engineers and geoscientists. The workplace atmosphere was characterized by job insecurity, lack of company loyalty, and fewer employees expected to do more, leaving less time for professional activities. The situation was compounded by the reduction in company-sponsored training and mentoring opportunities, placing the individual professional in charge of his own career development. This had tremendous implications for SPE, where providing career-enhancement programs always had been the stepsister to technology dissemination in its mission.

Ironically, while oil companies were exiting mature basins, they were rapidly expanding into frontier areas and to exotic reservoirs that required ever-more advanced technology. The pressure to collect and disseminate an expanding volume of technology worldwide strained SPE resources and procedures. Fortunately, foresighted individuals among my predecessors had engaged in a series of strategic planning sessions so the board was well along in identifying, prioritizing, and investigating the main issues that arose from a changing industry. In broad terms, the issues for SPE were how to (1) increase diversity in geography, language, culture, and economic means; (2) ensure more effective and representative governance; (3) increase career-enhancing opportunities; (4) provide full services to members around the world; (5) use advances in information technology to improve communications, meetings, and technology collection and dissemination; and (6) make SPE's case to a new generation of management.

The governance of the society is an ongoing process, and any accomplishment is the result of a collaborative effort by successive Boards of Directors, committees, and task forces over a 3- to 10-year period. Recent programs involving young professionals and global certification had roots in the mid-1990s. During 1997, the SPE/World Petroleum Council Reserves Definitions were approved by the Board, Technical Interest Groups were initiated, and a meeting policy was approved. Task forces were appointed to study short- and long-term governance issues, minimal professional competency, and the society's revenue and expense trends. The real accomplishment of the directors and officers was their willingness to break with tradition and face up to the reality of what it means to be a truly global organization. This was demonstrated by the enthusiastic manner in which the first person from outside the North America/Western Europe sphere was nominated and approved as the official presidential candidate at the October 1997 board meeting after the original candidate suddenly resigned for health reasons. In the last decade, the officers, directors, committee chairs, and technical editors have become increasingly more repre-

sentative of the membership. I am proud to be a 50-year SPE member and honored to have served as president.

### DeAnn Craig, 1998



During my presidential rotation, I would describe the society as being "in transition." Most of our membership was from the US but it was obvious that the most growth, both in members and oil and gas production, would be outside of the US, a significant change from the past. Making the change was neither easy nor quick. There were quite a few members

who were resistant to the change. I was fortunate to have had so many wonderful presidents before and after me and to have had the support of such a great executive director and staff that could see SPE's future was international.

SPE would not be what it is today without the Internet and the computer and associated systems. The Internet enabled the society to communicate globally. One of our big challenges was to get *JPT* into the hands of our non-US membership in a timely and cost-effective manner. SPE finances during my tenure were not as healthy as they are today. Oil prices were low, and layoffs and reorganizations were common. SPE had a series of excellent treasurers who worked very hard to get control of the finances and to put in place systems that provided a detailed understanding of the revenues and costs.

For me, being President of SPE was one of my great, life-changing experiences. The opportunity to visit so many of our members and our sections across the globe made me realize that my education was lacking. My engineering training had focused on the technical; my MBA education had focused on the financial. But in the future, it was going to be the political that was important. So many people in so many countries see oil and gas production as the means to economic growth and a better way of life. For this reason, I temporarily left the industry and returned to the university to earn an interdisciplinary PhD degree focusing on the political aspects of oil and gas production.

### Gustavo J. Inciarte, 1999



When I became president, I was locked up in the New Orleans Hilton because of the potential hurricane that eventually missed the city, so I did not have the usual handover ceremony. I always looked at the SPE Presidency as a continuum, from serving on the board through being past-president in my final year with the SPE Board. So it is not very

easy, nor even ethical, to claim any particular responsibility for anything that happened or materialized during my term on the Executive Committee.

During those days, I think SPE finally began looking at its cultural diversity more as an asset rather than as a challenge. Being only the second non-Anglo Saxon president elected, I dare say, contributed to breaking the strong cellophane

wrapped around this US-based society, thus letting it begin to bear the fruits we are now experiencing. The efforts undertaken to improve the age distribution and to create new international sections have very notably been improved, and the society continues growing to levels previously unimagined.

We dealt with many issues during this time, including reserves definitions, meeting policy, membership fees, adopting computerized systems before spe.org really took off, and SPE governance at both the regional and board level. Another significant item was SPE's contact with the other professional societies, such as AAPG, SEG, and some European societies. Some of those contacts initially were difficult, at least for me, but have begun to benefit all concerned. We are now integrating some of our professional activities in line with the industry's multidisciplinary approach, even as each society maintains its own personality. Another area where we planted some seeds was in R&D. Although SPE had been a technical professional society that contributed to technology development and its storage/dissemination, it never really dedicated to R&D the effort that it deserved and required, but that has changed. This has materialized in a full-fledged R&D Advisory Committee and the first SPE R&D Conference last April. All of these efforts will continue to improve our society's future in line with our most challenging expectations.

#### John A. Colligan, 2000



The oil price had been USD 24/bbl, but when I was asked to be SPE President, it was USD 15/bbl and heading south, and early in my time as President-elect, it went below USD 10/bbl. Not the most auspicious time to start on the job. I had been asked by 1998 President DeAnn Craig to coordinate the preparation of the 2000 SPE Long-Range Plan, and I

put together a team, each member of which spearheaded one aspect of SPE's future. As we progressed on this, it became obvious that one of the most significant challenges for the future was how to position SPE in an electronic world. Kate Baker coordinated this aspect, and the result was the initiative, described as "a major and costly program," that eventually led to today's spe.org. At the same time, we had a Long Term Governance Task Force whose conclusions led to creation of the position of Technical Director, adding another dimension to SPE's governance. It was also envisaged that there could be greater intersociety collaboration and that ATCE could be planned outside the US, both of which have been realized. Another initiative resulted in a tiered dues structure, now well developed. A Member Needs Survey was carried out to ensure that SPE was developing in ways that reflected both existing and potential members' wishes.

The most lasting memory of my presidency was the visits to sections, and their enormous diversity. Initially, with declining oil prices, questions often were asked about whether the future was at all bright, and I remember trying to give a longer view in Victoria, Texas—now, alas, no longer

a separate section—and at other US sections, where members were really struggling. Layoffs and cost cutting were major concerns, as was the lack of young people joining our industry and SPE. But as the economic climate improved, the mood changed, with, notably, many highly motivated young members appearing, often in countries with little traditional SPE membership. In Egypt, the former oil minister attended the meeting at which I spoke, and the section was getting its own permanent office to support members. In North India there was a unique ceremonial reception, with an attendance of more than 500 at the meeting. The Croatian Section championed Dubrovnik as a location for Applied Technology Workshops, and attending the vibrant annual SPE conference organized by the Nigerian sections was quite an experience. Many other section visits, all fascinating, underlined both the diversity of SPE activities over a truly international scope and the potential for the future. It is gratifying to see how SPE has responded to the opportunities with many new initiatives leading to its current strength.

#### Bruce E. Bernard, 2001



The title of my *JPT* articles was "Journey," which reflected my own career experiences as well as my day-to-day travels as SPE President.

Cherished memories from my SPE journey include the remarkable young professionals and students I encountered, like the group in Ecuador who traveled by bus overnight to attend an SPE section meeting in Quito, or a similar group in Trondheim, Norway, or Trinidad, where we often talked for hours late into the evening. I also recall fondly the many amazingly talented professionals to whom I had the honor to present SPE awards around the world, and I distinctly remember each person and how they were deeply moved just by the "simple" act of genuine peer recognition.

The big issues of the day included the electronic SPE, the integration of our previously siloed specialties, SPE's reaction to that by adding Specialty Directors (now called Technical Directors), and the overall struggle to find the hearts and minds of everyone jolted by restructuring across our industry. I had the good fortune to work with very proactive and open-minded colleagues on the Board.

What an amazing organization of people our SPE is! Members are the engines of SPE, volunteering valuable time and talent, sharing knowledge and experience, and being on both the giving and receiving ends at different times on our journey. It was clear to me as SPE President that SPE staff differentiate SPE from any other such organization; they were always there and ready to go the extra mile. I am confident that all who follow in the years ahead will find the same enjoyment and untold benefits from their personal journeys with SPE. I remain forever grateful for the opportunity and honor to have served as SPE President. Congratulations SPE!

*The Past is History,  
The Future is a mystery,  
The Present is a Gift.*

### Stephen A. Holditch, 2002



My term as SPE President began on 4 October 2001, a beginning unlike most other SPE Presidents for two reasons. First, ATCE was in New Orleans, 3 weeks after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Attendance at ATCE was reduced by about 1,000 because our members found air travel difficult for a variety of reasons. Second, I was the first SPE President in a couple of decades who had to get the job done without the aid of Dan Adamson. He was missed, but the new Executive Director, Mark Rubin, was an able replacement and has done a terrific job for SPE.

For years, some of our board members had lobbied to open more SPE offices in areas such as the Middle East, but the board could never make the decision to open such an office. It could only debate the issue. To help make an informed decision on the subject, I appointed a board task force “to develop a strategy concerning opening new offices outside of the United States.” As a result of the task force recommendations and additional investigation, SPE eventually opened the office in Dubai, reorganized itself to be a true international organization, and likely will open new offices in the future.

I also appointed two other board task forces during 2002 that led to positive results. One task force took a look at “learning initiatives” and how to better transmit technology to our members. Another task force revised the SPE meetings policy so we could better manage meetings and allocate costs properly. The results from these two task forces were positive and led to the continued development of more and better meetings. If one really evaluates SPE, its primary business is to plan and conduct meetings, a business that it does very well.

### Andrew A. Young, 2003



SPE is about professional support and development, being inclusive not selective, involving participation and volunteerism. The new millennium brought in a major sea change in the operation of the society. From the formative years of SPE as primarily a North American society growing out of AIME, 50 years on, we can proudly say that we have a truly international and unique society, embracing all disciplines that contribute to the success and sustainability of our industry.

Personally, I am delighted with the enormous achievements of the Board of Directors from 2002 through 2004, including the major internationalization movement, the opening of an office in the Middle East (following the success of the office in Asia Pacific), the incorporation of the parent organization in The Netherlands, the opening of sections in major oil provinces previously not served by SPE, and the expansion of intersocietal, cooperative inter-

national conferences and exhibitions outside of the US. This is truly a Society of Professional Excellence.

### Kate H. Baker, 2004



Each SPE President stands on the foundation laid by past presidents, boards, and section officers and the prior actions of individual members and SPE staff. Each comes with his or her particular enthusiasms and priorities to progress within the framework of the Long-Range Plan. All things are possible to those who can delegate, but organizations have only so much capacity. Thus, the plan provides important guidance and continuity, ensuring focus on the things that matter.

I served between two energetic presidents who had many ideas for building a truly international society and tapping the tremendous potential of young members. I defined my presidency as a bridge: supporting past initiatives while positioning SPE for the future by starting work on the fifth SPE Long-Range Plan. Regarding existing initiatives, I believe the four most important milestones achieved during the 2004 presidency through the efforts of many were

- Opening the SPE office in Dubai, and seeing extraordinary growth in Middle East and North African programs as a result
- Restructuring SPE to align its board and business structure with its worldwide operations
- Arriving at a place in which the geographical distribution of SPE's Editorial Review Committee and the numbers of papers submitted from members in each region mirrored the society's membership
- Building the value and capability of SPE to deliver services electronically thanks to the multimillion dollar generosity of corporate, individual, and section contributors to the “Tomorrow's SPE: Investing in spe.org” campaign.

When I started my term, we had completed, or were near to completing, all of the major milestones in the fourth Long-Range Plan. It was time to set ourselves new targets to ensure continued focus on the things that matter. Nearest and dearest to me are reserves and resource definitions and guidelines, and intersociety collaboration.

Collectively, we are now pursuing the grand themes and milestones laid out in the fifth plan. I delight in our progress on these big, difficult, and audacious goals. Yet I believe what binds us together is not just the collective ends we pursue, but also the attention of each member, in his or her own way, to the quadruple bottom line: technical excellence; economic rigor; social responsibility; and care for the safety of oil and gas operations, the health of our workforce, fence-line communities, and the natural environment. An SPE President has the great fortune to meet many, many members and to see firsthand how you go about this. It is amazing, uplifting. I thank you for your involvement, your interest, and your contributions to SPE and to your industry, past, present, and future.

## Giovanni Paccaloni, 2005



At the beginning of my term, I stated clearly that my first goal was to ensure continuity with my predecessors by fully supporting their long-term objectives. In fact, SPE leaders' continuity in pursuing the society's mission is one of our strengths, once more demonstrated by this *JPT* initiative celebrating SPE's golden anniversary. In light of demographics showing an aging industry, the public image of our sector, and rapid global changes, I did add three "personal" objectives for my presidency:

- To launch a new set of activities designed for young professionals under the age of 35, including a new magazine totally devoted to them
- To motivate our student members to view SPE as a terrific opportunity to speed up their personal and professional growth, and to focus the attention of educators and industry leaders on the need to provide better, updated training to young members
- To expand SPE's presence in new, promising geographical areas characterized by accelerated business potential, including Russia, the Caspian Sea region, China, India, and other emerging areas

To maximize the chance of reaching these objectives, I started working on them when I was President-elect, and I received strong support from my predecessors, the global staff organization, and my company, Eni.

Visiting sections is one of the most important duties of the SPE President, so he or she can hear directly from members worldwide about their needs, suggestions, and degree of satisfaction. I visited as many sections and universities as possible, and the reward I received was huge. I remember that more than 20 universities that had never before been approached asked enthusiastically to form SPE student chapters. I want to acknowledge and again offer my thanks to the sponsors that significantly supported our students: Halliburton, Schlumberger, and BJ Services.

The young professionals (YP) program did take off, with an exponential growth of activities, including workshops, section groups, the YP Coordinating Committee, the Ambassador Lecturer Program, and the new magazine *The Way Ahead*. I am delighted to see that three young professionals who championed the program in its initial phase were recently nominated to serve as SPE Board members: Helen Chang, John Donachie, and Josh Etkind.

The penetration of SPE into Russia, China, Kazakhstan, and India has increased remarkably, with corresponding increases in membership, local interest in SPE activities, and new events, such as the first SPE Russian Oil and Gas Conference in Moscow.

Lastly, I have to mention the drastic modification to our dues structure that was carefully reviewed and approved by the board in 2005 as a consequence of comments from many members in various parts of the globe that our dues were unaffordable. The rapid decision of the board to implement a more equitable way to serve our members worldwide

remains a milestone, proving that our society is truly and continuously committed to its mission, vision, and values.

My thanks to every member of the board; to Mark Rubin for his loyal, endless support; and to the numerous SPE staff members who, in close cooperation with our active members, ensure the success of this unique, excellent, and truly international organization. On the occasion of this 50th anniversary, my wish is that all of our many leaders (section and group chairpersons, university tutors and educators, committee heads, conference managers, board members, and presidents) add two more important ingredients to their invaluable dedication of time and talent: enthusiasm and a true passion for their jobs.

## Eve Sprunt, 2006



This was the year in which the catchphrase "people are our most important asset" became very real for the petroleum industry. Sustained high petroleum prices spurred a surge in industry activity and, in turn, soaring demand for technical talent. The demographics of upstream technical professionals switched from being a subject of conver-

sation to a critical priority for everyone from top management down.

Technical talent of all ages is benefiting. Companies desperately need the mature workforce that just a few years before was being encouraged to retire early. Experienced professionals are essential for implementation of development plans and to train the next generation. Technical professionals are now enjoying promotions, bonuses, and benefits that rival those given to management.

The new generation will not look like the old guard. Universities in the countries that previously fed industry ranks cannot satisfy the demand. Companies are scouring the world looking for technical talent and are getting very creative in overcoming barriers to accessing the people with critical skills. Companies are opening technical centers in India, which was not previously an oil-industry focus, and other countries. Several countries in the Arabian Gulf, including Bahrain and Kuwait, now have more women than men graduating with engineering degrees. Saudi Aramco is providing scholarships to women to study around the world. The gender and ethnic mix of the industry is changing rapidly. The oil patch will never be the same.

As SPE President, I focused on securing broader approval and implementation of SPE reserves and resources classifications so that we can better understand future energy supplies, and on talent and technology issues so that we have the personnel to bring those supplies to market. I initiated planning for workshops addressing career challenges facing the new generation, including one on better management and retention of dual-career couples, one on making the technical career ladder more attractive relative to the management ladder, and one in Bahrain for women in engineering, science, and technology. SPE will play a big role in shaping these new technical experts.