

Reflections of Frank H. Walk

From my early childhood I wanted to be an engineer. My father, a practical, self-educated engineer, inspired me in these dreams.

Louisiana State University not only afforded me the opportunity to fulfill my dreams, it gave me the solid engineering foundation necessary to meet the challenge of the past 43 years of engineering practice. At LSU I was inspired and trained by such men as Leo LaSalle, Harry Waterfall, Francis Mathis, William Whipple, John Bateman, Frank Germano, and other outstanding educators.

The engineers who broaden themselves with study in the humanities, economics, report writing, public speaking, business administration, and the art of communications—including how to understand as well as how to give directions—will not only be more successful in engineering, but will also be able to most effectively serve their communities and their country in other ways. Because of their

basic training, engineers can bring to community service something that many others do not have: the ability to apply logical, organized thinking and clear decision making.

Engineers not only have the opportunity to serve the community, they have clear-cut obligations to society. The code of ethics for practicing engineers gives guidance and direction with regard to professional engineering matters, but I submit that engineers have a much greater and broader responsibility to serve the community and the country in other ways—in civic, religious, and political organizations.

In the world of today the engineer's sphere of influence as a professional is becoming ever broader. While still including all of the basic structures, products, and processes necessary to human life sustenance and comfort, the sphere also now involves the ecological influences on our environment, the efficient use of energy and other diminishing resources, and many other considerations with important economic

implications for our community, our nation, and the world. Clearly the engineer is in the forefront as never before, as a most important, most involved professional—and one with the greatest responsibility.

I have encountered many LSU engineering graduates in my work and travels, and always I have found them to be competent engineers. In my days as a student, the LSU College of Engineering was already significant in both size and quality. It has come a long way since then, and judging from some recent graduates with whom I have had the pleasure of associating, it is amply meeting the demands of modern-day technology by continuing to offer the opportunity for a solid engineering foundation to those students who apply themselves.

Besides a good foundation in engineering technology, I am a firm believer in the importance of having the practicing engineer understand the practical aspects of engineering design and its application in construction and manufacturing. I have also grown to appreciate the importance of the engineer's learning how to learn, how to organize his or her efforts, and how to utilize an engineer's most valuable commodity: time.

I have been the beneficiary of a fine Louisiana State University engineering education, from a dedicated and capable faculty, many of whom had experience in industry as well as education, and for this I shall be forever grateful.