

Reflections of Mark R. Guidry

I was born in New Orleans to a father of Cajun French descent and a mother from a Czech immigrant family. My father was definitely not a city boy, having gone there as a teen to be raised by an uncle after his father died of influenza. My mother's very successful parents lost all of their wealth in the depression. During these hard times, she met my father and they began their family. We moved to my father's hometown of Cut Off when I was 10 years old, and I lived there until going off to LSU for college. Growing up in rural south Louisiana was a great experience. Nurtured by a loving extended family, I learned how to hunt and fish, how to farm and ranch, and how to relate to this free spirited Cajun community. It well prepared me for life. Or so I thought.

At LSU I studied Electrical Engineering, joined a social fraternity and enjoyed life. I had pleasure of working in the kitchen of the athletic dormitory at the time LSU football won a national championship. I have to say that Professor Bill Owens was one of my favorite professors, as he brought to us

an understanding and love of electronics that I carried with me through my life. Professors McLean, Reed, Ramsey and Voorhies all taught with dedication and professionalism. Their interest in their students later influenced me to try teaching as a career.

In my junior year, I met a classmate I had never encountered before. She was also studying Electrical Engineering but unlike the other students I knew, she was beautiful, personable, friendly and very smart. Nothing I had experienced had prepared me for her. It was love then and still is today. We were married the week after graduation and for our honeymoon drove to Seattle to begin our professional careers at Boeing. In Seattle, we started our family and learned to love the wild mountains of the Pacific Northwest. The aerospace industry was not to my liking and, after completing my MSEE from University of Washington, I returned to LSU to try teaching. Teaching seemed right to me, so off we went to Ames, Iowa for a Ph.D. We returned to LSU but unfortunately,

after 5 years of teaching at LSU, it no longer seemed right. I was more interested in joining the fast moving semiconductor industry. This led to series of career moves ending in California's Silicon Valley.

In 1994, I had accomplished all I wanted in technology. With Carolyn, I had founded two significant companies and had invested in several other start-ups that resulted in our financial independence. I retired, bought a sailboat and left the madhouse in the hands of the inmates. For four years I sailed Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and the east coast of the US. Suitably refreshed, I now spend my time between our home on Bainbridge Island (across the sound from Seattle), our ranch in central California, our mountain home near Lake Tahoe and our boat in the Caribbean.

Don't feel sorry for me, though, as I still have a great challenge left. I intend to develop a herd of milking water buffalo for the production of traditional Italian mozzarella cheese. Working with a cheese company, veterinarians at the University of California at Davis and several groups in Italy, we have identified animals suitable for export to the US from Italy. As soon as the US embargo on bovine importations is ended, we will again be in business.

I have had a happy, wonderful, lucky life! All three of our children have technical degrees, are happily married to wonderful people and have given us six lovely, bright grandchildren. I have much to thank LSU for: a good education, an interesting phase in my career, finding my life's partner, and now, this great honor I share with that partner, Carolyn.