

1999 Engineer of Distinction



J. Phil Wilbourn

B.S. Civil Engineering, TTU, 1966

General Manger
International Offshore Engineering Dept.
Texaco, Inc.
Houston, Texas

Citation

J. Phil Wilbourn is a native of Memphis, Tennessee. He attended Tennessee Technological University on a baseball scholarship, lettered four years, and received his B.S. in civil engineering. He later pursued a graduate degree in civil engineering at the University of Houston and the University of New Orleans.

Mr. Wilbourn began his career as a design engineer on the CSA military airplane at Lockheed Aircraft Company in Marietta, Georgia, in 1966. In 1968 he joined Texaco Inc. in New Orleans, Louisiana, as an offshore platform design engineer for the Gulf of Mexico. In 1969 he was transferred to Houston and worked with a team of computer programmers and MIT professors to develop a suite of computer programs used to design fixed offshore platforms with three dimensional space frames, wind, wave and current load generators and soil-structure interactions. This suite of programs was used up until a few years ago.

In 1971 Texaco formed a worldwide offshore engineering department and Mr. Wilbourn was transferred into the group as a project manager. In 1975 he was selected by a thirteen company consortia to be the Project Manager for the design and model testing of the first United States deepwater superport. He carried out most of this work in The Netherlands. The project was selected by the American Society of Civil Engineers as their outstanding project for 1978. In 1978 he was named Assistant Manager of the International Offshore Engineering Department and Manager in 1987. In 1996 the responsibilities of the department were broadened into a global Technology Division, and he was named General Manager.

During this time he was responsible for the design, construction and project management of offshore facilities in the Gulf of Mexico, North Sea, Offshore West Africa, Australia, South China Sea, Arctic Ocean, Arabia Gulf, Trinidad, Colombia and Russia. During the summer of 1998 the Texaco Petronius project was installed in the Gulf of Mexico in 1800 feet of water, a world record for fixed platform. He was the executive sponsor for DeepStar, a consortia set up by Texaco in 1991 to combine the human and financial resources of twenty major oil companies and over sixty service companies to evolve the technology needed to drill

and produce oil and gas in up to 5000 feet of water. In 1999 this project received the Industries Distinguished Achievement award, only the third time such an award has been made.

Phil is a registered professional engineer in the states of Texas and Louisiana, a member of the Oil Industry International Exploration and Production Forum, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum, American Bureau of Shipping Committee, Society of Petroleum Engineers, Marine Technology Society and Past Chairman of the Deep Offshore Technology Conference Industry Advisory Board.

In 1998 he left Texaco on loan to Texas A&M University as a Visiting Scholar to the Offshore Technology Research Center, a National Science Foundation Engineering Center. There he helped define the mission of the new center for the next ten years, planned a summer institute, worked on special projects and delivered lectures to various classes and societies on team building and project management. Serving on the Tennessee Tech Board of Engineering Advisors for several years and serving as Chairman of the BOEA in 1998-99 have enhanced his academic interests. He retired from Texaco in 1999 and plans to return to Cookeville and work with Tennessee Tech in some capacity to "add value" to his alma mater.

His wife, Jo Ann, is a realtor and is from Nashville. She received her BS in Education from Tennessee Tech. Phil has two children, Kathy and Phillip, who is also a graduate from Tennessee Tech in civil engineering.



Dr. James R. Smith (l) presents J. Phil Wilbourn with his Engineer of Distinction plaque