



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Clifford L. Thomson

Mechanical Engineering Hall of Fame, 2015

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1965

Vice President of Operations/Engineering (Retired)
Chief Oil & Gas, L.L.C.

Clifford L. Thomson was born in a small town in Missouri and spent his early years there. While he was in the tenth grade, his family moved to Austin, where he graduated from McCallum High School in 1960. Clifford liked math and was encouraged to enter engineering at The University of Texas, where he received a BS in mechanical engineering in June of 1965.

In that same month he married his high school sweetheart, Bonnie Messer. The two moved to Odessa, Texas, where Clifford started his career as a production engineer with Sun Oil Company, which later became Oryx Energy Company. One year later he took a leave of absence from Sun in order to fulfill his ROTC obligation of two years' service. During this time, he lived at Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The year of 1967 was spent in service in Vietnam, for which Clifford received the Bronze Star Medal.

In May of 1968 he rejoined Sun Oil Company in Longview, Texas. It was there that his son, Jay,

was born. Various engineering and management positions took Clifford and family to Midland, Texas; Colorado City, Texas, where he served on the city council; Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he completed the Program for Management at Harvard; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Dallas, Texas; and Quito, Ecuador. He also served on the UT ME External Advisory Committee.

Upon returning to the U.S., Clifford retired from Oryx Energy. After living and working for Randall and Dewey, Inc. in Houston for three years, Clifford and family returned to Dallas where he ultimately went to work for Chief Oil and Gas Company in 1998. He worked there until he retired in 2012.

With retirement has come an effort to improve his golf game, to grow pecans and to develop "real" Texas longhorns, but the highlight of his retirement is watching his three grandsons grow up.