



Mechanical Engineering  
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

## **Kjell T. Knutsen**

*Outstanding Young Mechanical Engineer, 2005*

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 2002

Masters in Finance, London Business School, 2007

*Commercial Advisor*  
ExxonMobil

Kjell Knutsen conducts international negotiations in the pursuit and progress of large, multi-faceted capital projects for Exxon Mobil. The role provides a diverse set of challenges and the opportunity to work with people from every section of the world.

Kjell was born in Washington, D.C. to Richard and Kathryn Hougen Knutsen. During his tenure at DeMatha Catholic High School, Kjell was intensely interested in math, science and music, and was selected for the Maryland All-State band his junior year. Following his junior year, Kjell moved to Austin, Texas, graduating from Westlake High School in 1997.

Kjell pursued his interests in math and science in the Mechanical Engineering Department at The University of Texas at Austin. The ME department transformed Kjell's life by providing an engaging, challenging and productive environment, enabling him to foster his interests and forge life-long friendships. During his time at UT, Kjell contributed to several student organizations, including serving as president of Kappa Theta Epsilon and as a founding member of the Roden Leadership Program. While completing his studies, Kjell began his professional career at Dow Chemical Company. He held various positions, including reliability and maintenance of turbomachinery, process control, and mechanical design. Kjell also had an international internship with Schlumberger in Paris, France, focusing on mechanical design and automation.

Leveraging his technical experience with Dow Chemical and Schlumberger, Kjell elected to pursue a career on the commercial side of the petrochemical business. He accepted a position with ExxonMobil Gas & Power

Marketing in the summer of 2002. Over the course of his career, Kjell has held a number of positions, including analysis, negotiation and management. In fulfillment of his goal to work internationally, he was selected for an expatriate position in London, where he served several roles, including sales of liquefied natural gas imports from Qatar and as a supply manager for the German production affiliate. His evenings were spent at study, and he earned a Masters in Finance at London Business School in 2007.

Upon his return to the U.S., Kjell accepted a management position overseeing the global business analysis team for the power, gas and Asia Pacific business segments, followed by several engaging positions of increasing responsibility. He continues to utilize his professional interests and talents on the pursuit of collective problem solving and commercial agreements.

Kjell's priority is and will always be his family. Nicole Allen Knutsen and Kjell met at UT Austin. Their three beautiful and talented children, Aksel, Ingrid and Nadia, are aspiring Longhorns! For leisure, Kjell is an avid basketball player with a special interest in marine ecology.

The Knutsen and Hougen families are grateful for a special and long-lasting relationship with UT. Ten immediate family members have graduated or worked at UT. Kjell's grandfather, Joel O. Hougen, Ph.D. (Emeritus Professor, Chemical Engineering 1966-1980) provided the inspiration, support, and motivation for him to pursue his interest in engineering.