



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

W. Matt Ralls

Distinguished Mechanical Engineer, 2020

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1971

MBA, The University of Texas at Austin, 1973

Executive Chairman (Retired)

Rowan Companies

Mr. Ralls attended The University of Texas at Austin from 1969 until 1973, graduating with a BS in Mechanical Engineering in 1971 and with an MBA in 1973. He began his career in commercial banking primarily focused on energy lending, where his engineering education was especially useful. In all, Mr. Ralls spent 17 years in banking with three large Texas banks, mostly in loan management positions, ending with his role as senior lender over all non-retail lending for a 27 bank holding company.

In 1990, Mr. Ralls was recruited to be Chief Financial Officer for a publicly traded independent E&P company in Houston. After that company was sold in 1996, he joined another publicly traded E&P in a similar position before being recruited to join Global Marine, a publicly traded international offshore drilling company in 1997 as Vice President and Treasurer. A year later, he was promoted to Senior Vice President and CFO. He held that position following a merger between Global Marine and Santa Fe International in 2001 that created GlobalSantaFe, then the world's second largest offshore driller. In 2005, he was promoted to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of GlobalSantaFe, overseeing worldwide operations and marketing activities for that company's 60 rig fleet. He held that position until late 2007 when GlobalSantaFe merged with Transocean creating the largest offshore driller in the world with a market capitalization in excess of \$50 billion. Mr. Ralls left Transocean following consummation of the merger.

A year later, Mr. Ralls was recruited to become President and CEO of Rowan Companies, another publicly traded offshore drilling company founded in 1923. Mr. Ralls held the position of CEO until 2014 at which time he became Executive Chairman of the company. During his time with Rowan, the company sold two of its smaller divisions for \$1.6 billion and reinvested those funds in a \$6 billion upgrade of its offshore drilling fleet, including an expansion into the ultra-deepwater market. Mr. Ralls retired from Rowan and his active career in 2016.

During his active career, Mr. Ralls was involved in many industry associations, including the International Association of Drilling Contractors, including a period as Chairman, and the American Petroleum Institute. He has also served as a director of several publicly traded companies and continues to serve on the boards of four of those companies at present.

Mr. Ralls lives in Austin and is a member of the Engineering Advisory Board and a Distinguished Engineering Graduate. He has four grown children, three of whom graduated from UT Austin, including one with a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering and another with a Master's Degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering.