



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Robert A. Viktorin

Distinguished Mechanical Engineer, 2019

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1981

Drilling Manager (Retired)
ExxonMobil

Robert (Bobby) Viktorin's parents were native Central Texans but he was born in Morgan City, Louisiana on May 28, 1959. His father worked in the oilfields at that time and they moved back to Austin in 1966. Bobby attended elementary school at St. Ignatius and high school at Del Valle. During his high school years, he worked in his dad's business moving houses and at his grandfather Callahan's General Store. He pondered attending A&M or Rice, but the ME Department at UT offered a scholarship and that sealed the deal, making him a longhorn for life. It also left a life-long impression that scholarship money is key to recruiting students.

After graduation in 1981, Bobby joined Exxon Company USA as a drilling engineer. There he drilled one of the first Exxon horizontal wells, capped a blowout well and drilled a blowout relief well. He developed Exxon's first Wellbore Risk Management program for managing well casing pressures implementing it both in the US and Malaysia when he transferred there in 1988.

In 1991 he returned to Houston as a drilling engineering supervisor and drilled wells in Texas and Oklahoma. In 1996 he transferred to Exxon's Upstream Research Center and led the well mechanics team in performing R&D activities and providing corporate wide support for drilling. At the time of the 1999 Exxon and Mobil merger, he was responsible for combining the Well Design research programs of the two companies and capturing synergies for future research.

Bobby returned to the ExxonMobil drilling organization in 2001 and developed best practices for drilling technology with a focus on extended reach drilling (ERD). He joined the Russian Drill team and executed the first ERD well on Sakhalin Island, which set industry records for length and reach and is the predecessor to the current world record Sakhalin well of 15000 meters (9.3 miles). Bobby has co-authored several industry papers on ERD drilling and presented at International ERD Forums.

In 2010, Bobby moved to Kazakhstan as the in-country Drilling Manager. Over the next 6 years he held Drilling Manager positions in Russia, Germany and Abu Dhabi. He returned to Houston in 2016 and managed ExxonMobil's joint interest drilling department. His final assignment was in the mergers and acquisitions group before retiring in March 2019.

Bobby was on the ExxonMobil recruiting team at UT for over 10 years and hired over 20 UT engineering students. Bobby was on the ME External Advisory Committee (EAC) for 6 years at UT. While serving on the EAC he took particular interest in increasing the number of women in ME. Bobby and his wife Carol continue to support women in Mechanical Engineering via an endowed scholarship.

Bobby and Carol have retired on Lake Conroe, Texas. They enjoy spending time with family and traveling and snow skiing.