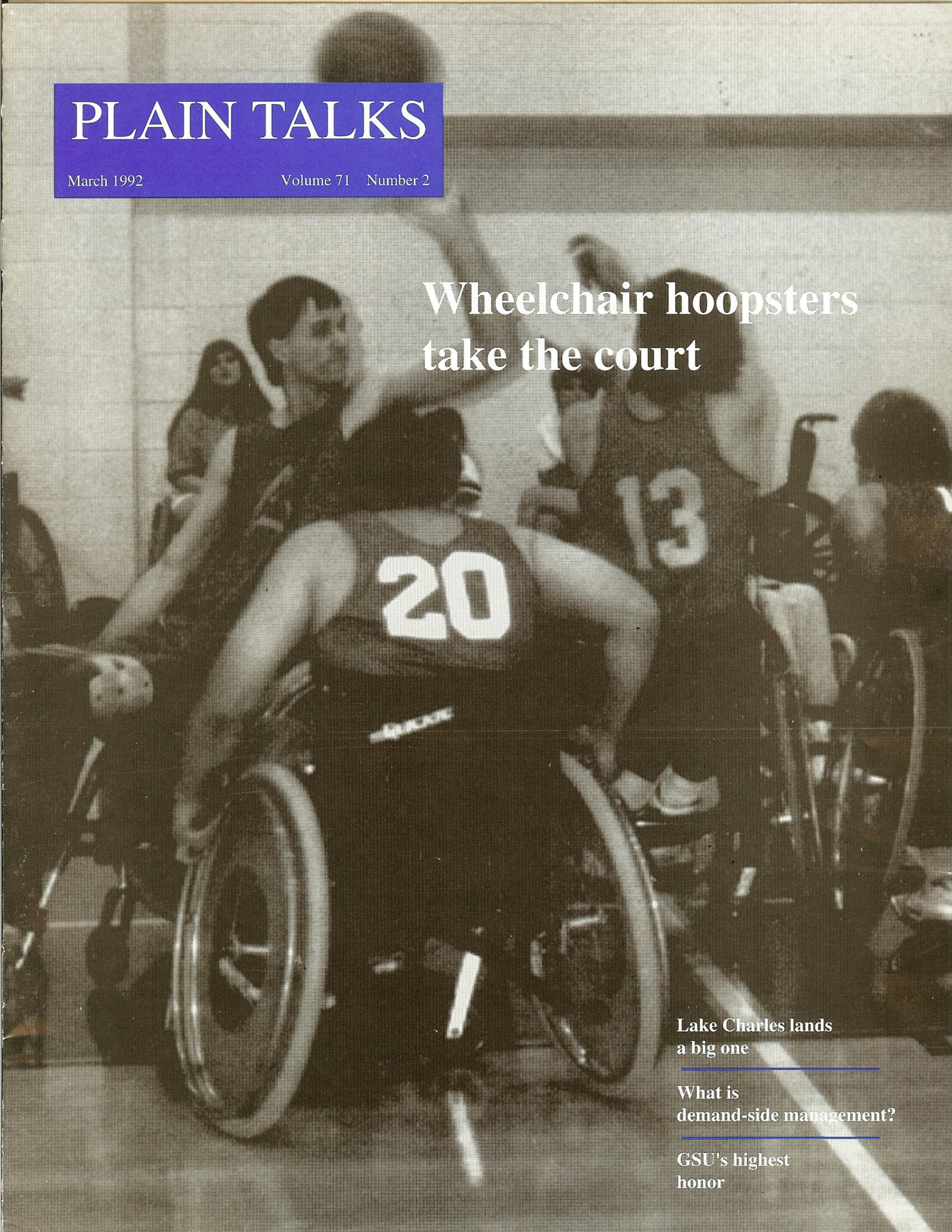


PLAIN TALKS

March 1992

Volume 71 Number 2

Wheelchair hoopsters take the court



Lake Charles lands
a big one

What is
demand-side management?

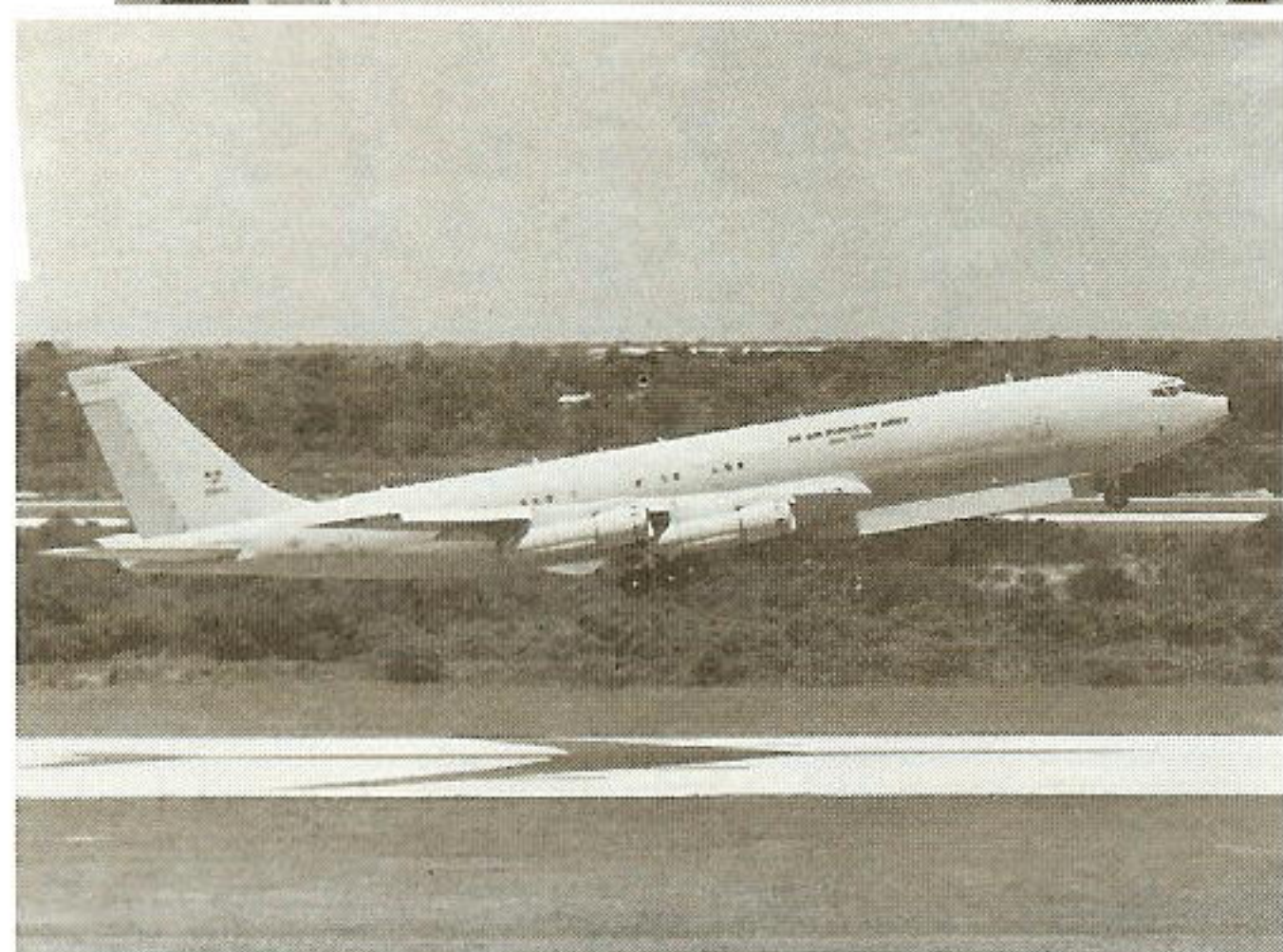
GSU's highest
honor

PLAIN TALKS

March 1992 Volume 71 Number 2



10



3



4



6



About the cover

Kirk Johnson, son of Buddy Johnson, superintendent-Southern District, goes for a loose ball as fellow team member Steve Bagley looks on. Johnson is coach of The Golden Wheels, a local wheelchair basketball team. For more information, see pages 4-5.

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CONTENTS

Grumman lands in Lake Charles

- 3 Less than a year after Boeing Louisiana Inc. announced its departure, Lake Charles landed the Grumman Corporation.

Wheelchair athletes conquer the court

- 4 Wheelchair basketball enthusiasts Steve Bagley and Buddy Johnson take pride in their Golden Wheels, a roundball team of rolling athletes.

Marketing vision includes demand-side management

- 6 What is demand-side management? GSU's Marketing Department explains the concept and how it will contribute to the company's future.

A look at our leaders

- 8 With the many changes in GSU leadership since the start of the year, a pictorial organization chart of top management is included in this issue.

Lifesaving awards showcase employees' compassion, concern

- 10 Several GSU employees recently received the President's Lifesaving Award, the highest honor bestowed by Gulf States.

- 11 Newsbriefs
- 12 Service Anniversaries
- 13 On The Move
- 14 Mailbox
- 15 Kim's Korner

Grumman lands in Lake Charles



The new Grumman Louisiana plant located at the Chennault Industrial Airpark in Lake Charles will be gutting old Boeing 707 jets and turning them into J-STARS, surveillance airplanes like this one.

by Scott Harper

When a large corporation closes its doors, the economic effects can be devastating. Last January, Boeing Louisiana Inc. announced its departure from the Chennault Industrial Airpark in Lake Charles. Instead of dwelling on the potential economic impact, community officials came together to bring in new business.

The task force gathered information and began marketing the airpark to several companies. The big break came when U.S. Sen. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana informed the Grumman Corporation of the available airpark in Lake Charles. Included on the Chennault Marketing Team was GSU's Jane Dufrene, economic development specialist, Lake Charles.

"Grumman was ready to build a new facility in Melbourne, Fla.," says Dufrene. "After Sen. Johnston told them about the airpark vacancy, they sent a team down in July to inspect the facility."

After many more trips and meetings, the Grumman Corporation announced it would locate in Lake Charles and sign a 25-year lease with the Chennault Industrial Airpark.

"We were very fortunate to be able to bring them here," says Gene Mullin, district superintendent-Sulphur, and member of the Chennault Industrial Airpark Board of Commissioners. "The timing was just perfect."

The 60-year old Grumman Corporation designs, develops and manufactures several of the world's most advanced tactical aircraft and supports NASA in managing the development and launch of the manned U.S. space station "Freedom."

"Grumman also built the wings for the space shuttle and the manned lunar modules that landed on the moon," says Dufrene.

Grumman Louisiana will primarily be working on the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, or J-STARS, airplanes. The J-STARS aircraft is a radar surveillance plane that senses movement on the ground or in water. J-STARS consists of an E-8 aircraft with a multi-mode radar system and mobile ground station modules which receive radar data for further distribution to ground commands.

Grumman employees will modify Boeing 707 jets by gutting the aircraft and turning them into J-STARS. The first plane is scheduled to come to Lake Charles at the end of March.

Grumman will work on other projects as well. "Whatever their research and development group designs in Melbourne will come to fruition in Lake Charles," says Dufrene.

Although J-STARS was still under development, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf requested the system to support allied forces in Operation Desert Storm.

"The planes were able to detect SCUD missiles and Iraqi tank movements," says Dufrene. "One general said they would never fight another war without J-STARS."

With a new corporation moving into the Lake Charles economy comes new jobs. "Initially, Grumman will employ about 250 people, with the total eventually going as high as 1,500," says Dufrene.

Forty employees from Melbourne have been transferred to Lake Charles. In an effort to acquaint Florida employees with Louisiana, the president of the Chamber/Southwest in Lake Charles organized a trip to Melbourne that included Dufrene and other community representatives.

"We made presentations to help them understand what life in Lake Charles can be like," recalls Dufrene. "They asked lots of questions about the weather, crime, insects, schools and the cost of living."

Dufrene and Mullin both agree Grumman is an employee-oriented company. "They are very employee-conscious and take good care of their people," says Mullin. "I know they will be a solid corporate citizen."

Dufrene was encouraged when Robert Baran, general manager of Grumman Louisiana, recently addressed the Lake Charles Kiwanis Club. "Mr. Baran said he had high hopes for Grumman Louisiana and that they would be here for a long time."

Wheelchair athletes conquer the court



Kirk Johnson, Coach Buddy Johnson's son, fights for a loose ball as fellow Golden Wheels team member Steve Bagley, No. 20, moves in for an assist.

by Susan Gilley

Basketball players often end up with scrapes and bruises after an especially physical game.

When the Beaumont Golden Wheels play, team members sometimes also sport knots on their foreheads after crashing to the floor from their wheelchairs.

"It's all part of the game," said Steve Bagley, a longtime GSU employee based in Edison Plaza. Bagley has played with the team since it formed two years ago, and previously played about two years with another team formed nearly a decade earlier.

Coached by GSU's Buddy Johnson, superintendent of the Southern District in Winnie, the team won third place in a tournament in Pasadena, Texas, last fall. Their opponents were from Texas, Colorado and Canada.

Johnson, whose

son Kirk is a team member, said the sport helps these athletes increase their strength, stamina and self-esteem. "These guys are athletes in a very rough-and-tumble sport," noted Johnson. "For instance, they will hold a wheelchair Olympics competition in Barcelona the week before the regular games, including categories like basketball, track and field," he continued.

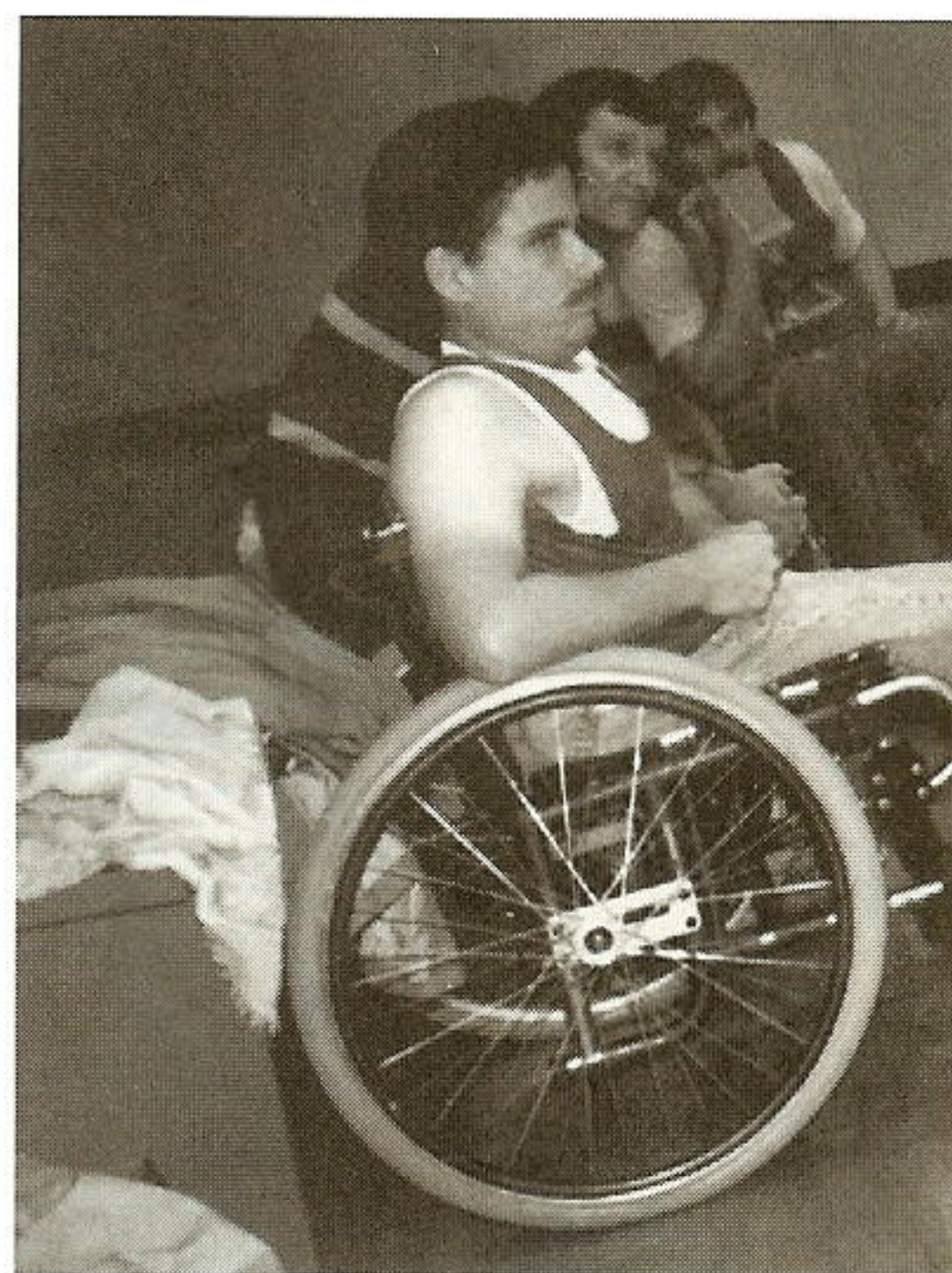
As in any athletic event, the pace of the game depends upon the caliber of the opposition, but even the least competitive games resemble "playing basketball in bumper cars," Johnson said.

In fact, the Beaumont team is limited only by their budget since players must play in conventional chairs rather than specially-designed, lightweight sports chairs. "We've got two or three guys who want to play with us, but we just can't provide chairs for them," Bagley noted. One of the recruits does not own a wheelchair since he gets around with crutches, while another has an older chair that he fears might not hold up under the strains of the basketball court.

According to Bagley, only two wheelchair basketball rules differ from college basketball rules. Players in



Johnson goes over the game plan with the team during halftime.



Left, Johnson's son, Kirk, takes a shot. Above, l to r, team members Wesley Dale, Johnson and Bagley confer during a free throw.

wheelchair basketball, who have handicaps of varying degrees, have to bounce the ball on every two rolls of the wheelchair or pass. They also have five seconds—rather than three—to get out of the painted area under the basket before they are penalized.

Members of the Beaumont team range in age from the 20s to the 50s, with some having played basketball before injuries placed them in wheelchairs and others having only recently attempted to play.

Johnson said he plans to coach as long as the team “will have me.” His primary goal, he added, is to help people “view everybody for who they are and not for what you perceive them to be.” He added that he also “wants to improve their athletic abilities.”

Bagley's goal is even broader: “I hope to get all the handicapped people in the area involved.” That will take time and money, he conceded, pointing out that recruiting efforts thus far have been stalled by the lack of wheelchairs. He is quick to praise State Rep. Mark Stiles and his wife, Sandy, who have sponsored the team in the past and are leading efforts to

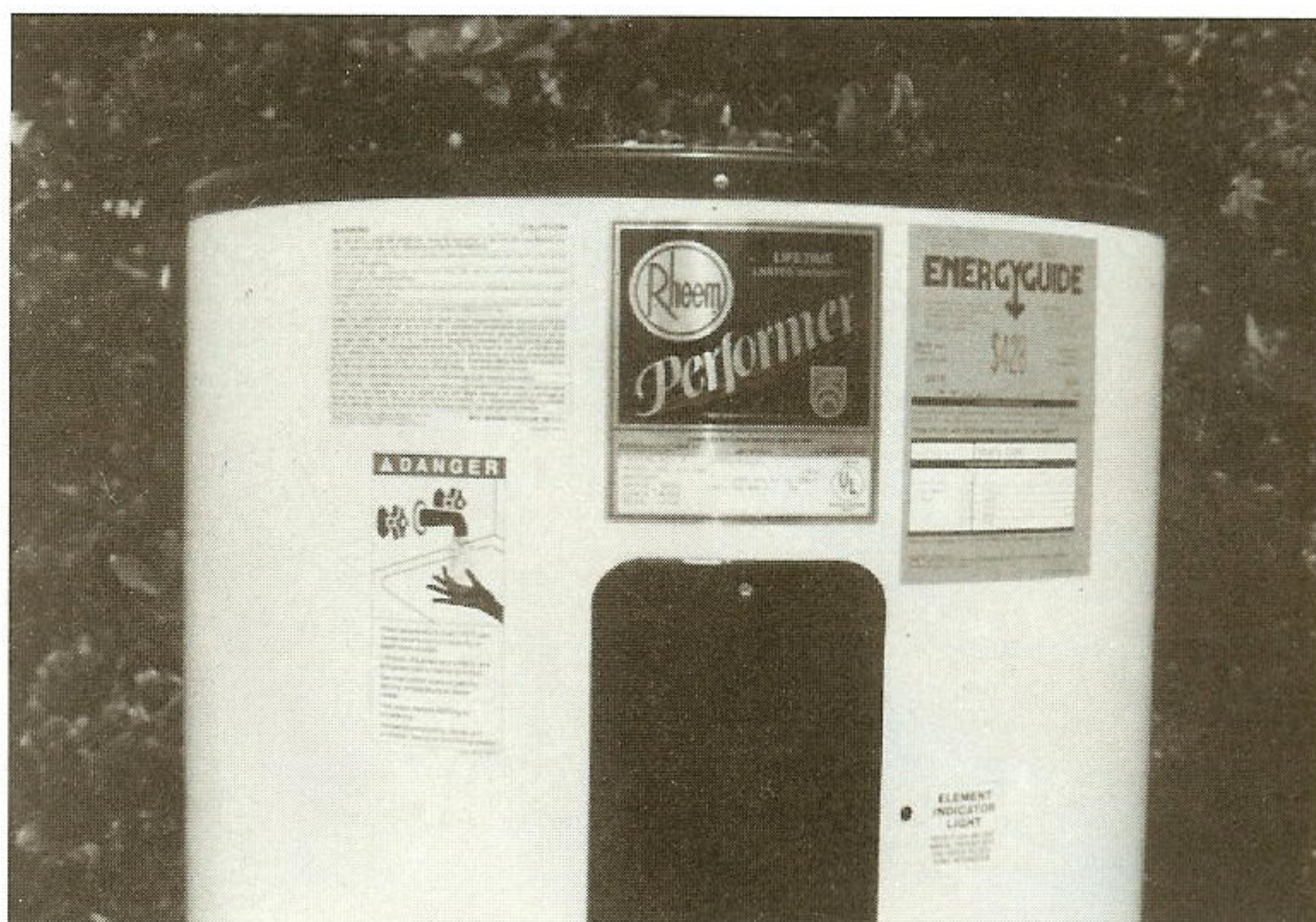
identify corporate sponsors.

He mentions a recent exhibition game during halftime at a Lamar University Lady-Cardinals game. “People really seemed to enjoy it.” He hopes the enjoyment will be contagious, prompting people throughout the community to support the Golden Wheels.



The Golden Wheels work a defensive trap against their opponents.

Marketing vision includes demand-side management



GSU's electric water heater campaign is one program that helps customers take advantage of the most energy-efficient equipment on the market. "...We're promoting the wise use and value of electricity," says Mike Morgan.

by Mark Viguet

A capacity-strapped utility in Oklahoma touts demand-side management (DSM) as the company's "plan for the 90s...a way to make more electricity available without building a power plant." A utility in the Pacific Northwest says DSM offers "security for its shareholders and customers." Throughout the utility industry, demand-side management has become an often heard—and misunderstood—concept.

So what, exactly, is demand-side management?

Demand-side management refers to those utility activities that influence the customers' use of electricity. DSM gets its name from action being taken on the customer, or demand, side of the meter rather than the GSU generation, or supply, side.

Many utilities plan to serve more customers with existing generation by implementing DSM programs that lower peak demand. A critical factor is the extent to which electric rates are raised to most customers to pay for various incentives to some customers who use less electric power.

Some capacity-short utilities, with support from their regulatory commissions, have already put very costly demand-side management plans

into place because these costs seem to be less than the construction costs of new power plants.

"Demand-side management means different things to utilities, customers and investors in different parts of the country, depending on their particular situation," says Jim Moss, vice president-marketing. "It's applied differently to a utility in the Northeast as compared to one in Texas or Louisiana."

Moss explains that GSU's capacity is adequate to meet the needs of a growing economy for the rest of the decade, and that large rate increases for costly demand-side management programs are not necessary for our customers. "Our philosophy now—as it has been for some time—is to encourage an expanding economy and more jobs with the increased use of electricity, but only if it's used wisely," Moss says. "Right now, aggressive demand-side management, requiring large rate increases, isn't advantageous for the company, our customers or our shareholders. Our DSM programs are important because they encourage wise energy use, without large immediate rate increases."

Mike Morgan, administrator-demand-side management, adds that while building our area economy now,



Kelley Carson, marketing agent, Port Arthur, designates a new Good Cents home. This program offers energy-efficient equipment options that are important load management tools.

when the capacity is available, the company is planning for a future when power may not be as plentiful.

"We're managing our load to best serve our customers and our shareholders," Morgan says. "In fact, many of the programs we've been using for years are demand-side management programs."

As examples, Morgan cites pinch technology offered to industrial customers which helps them make their plant processes as efficient as possible—often with the increased use of electric equipment.

Energy-efficient equipment options available to commercial and residential customers are also important load management tools. Incentives like GSU's electric water heater, heat pump and Good Cents programs help our customers take advantage of the most energy-efficient equipment on the market.

"Our programs are designed to meet our customers' needs, increase their quality of life and increase sales. At the same time, we're promoting the wise use and value of electricity. We want their electric equipment to be as efficient as possible," Morgan says. "That's wise use of energy and DSM. It's also good business."

The bottom line, Moss says, is to follow a path of least-cost planning. "Over the long-term, our efforts support the company's least-cost planning goals. Incorporating demand-side management options into our plans is a part of that least-cost planning," he says.

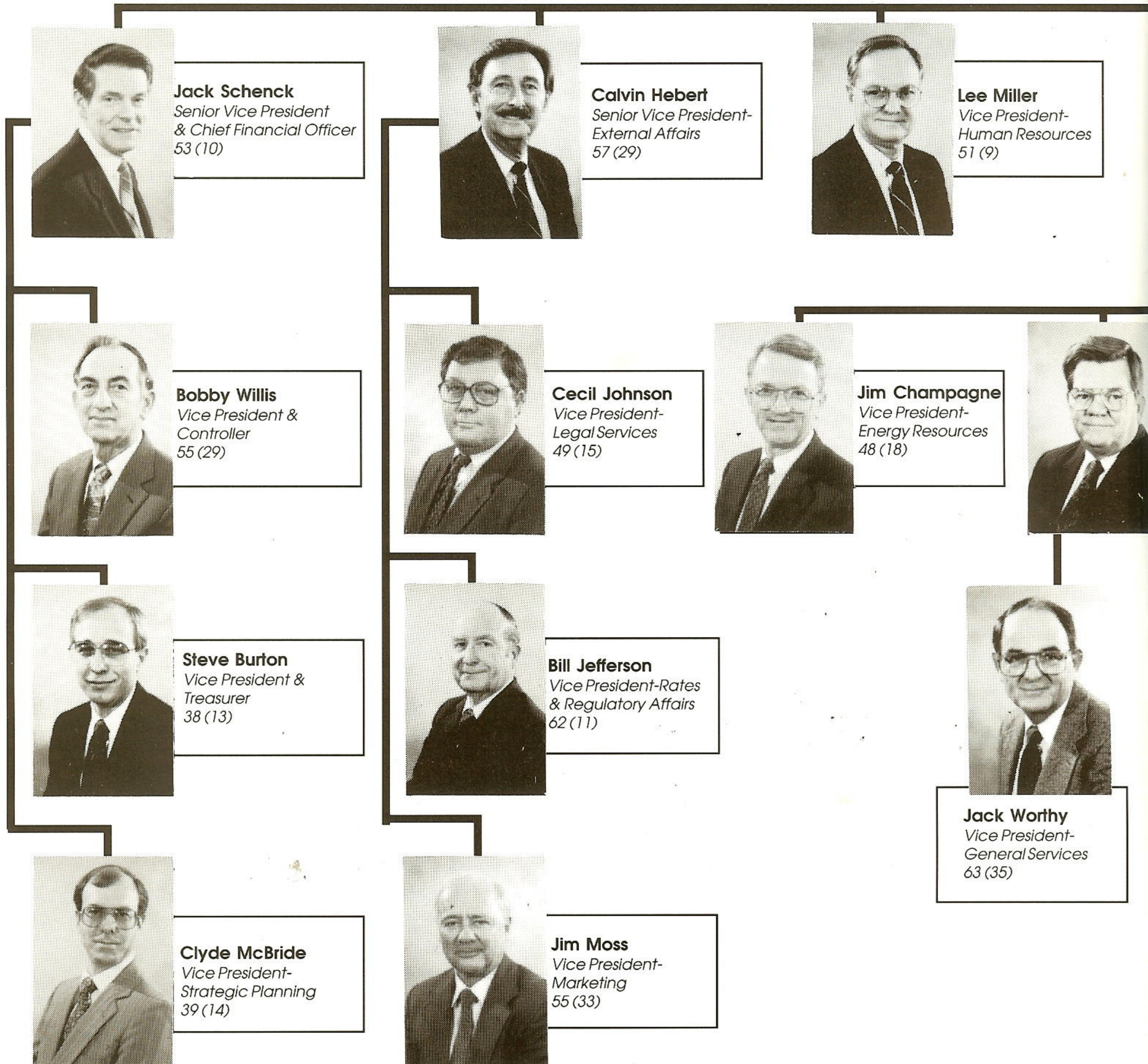
"Our vision is to be the best utility company in meeting our customers' needs in a profitable way for our investors. Demand-side management is a part of that vision of the future."

"Our vision is to be the best utility company in meeting our customers' needs in a profitable way for our investors. Demand-side management is a part of that vision of the future."

Jim Moss

A look at our leaders

The pictorial organizational chart on these pages was put together after recent executive promotions and we thought employees across the system would like to see it.



Age () Years of Se
As of Dec. 31, 199



Joe Donnelly
*Chairman of the
Board and
Chief Executive Officer*
62 (12)



Ed Loggins
*Senior Executive Vice
President-Operations*
61 (33)



Jim Deddens
*Senior Vice President-
River Bend
Nuclear Group*
63 (8)



Ann Cobb
*Vice President &
Corporate Secretary*
56 (31)



Bill Barksdale
*Vice President-
Engineering &
Technical Services*
60 (34)



Tony Gabrielle
*Vice President-
Special Projects*
64 (11)



Charles Glass
*Vice President-
Operations*
63 (42)



Ron Ciesiel
*Vice President-
Computer Applications*
39 (17)



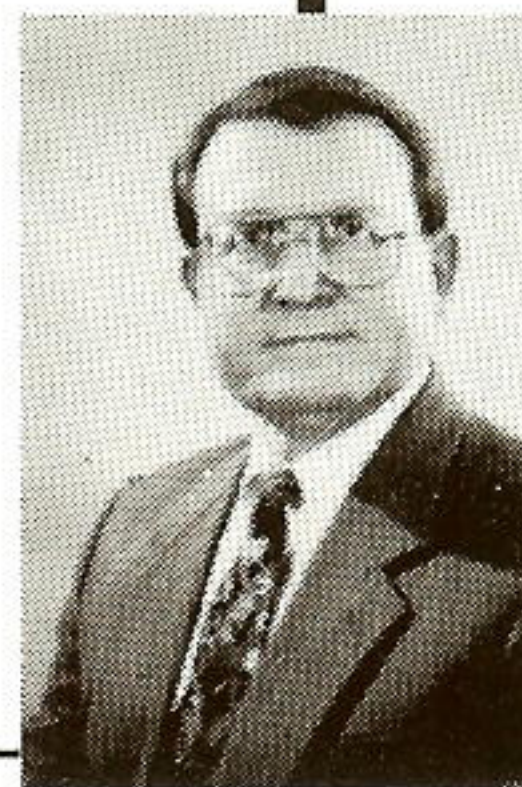
Ted Meinscher
*Division Vice President-
Lake Charles*
59 (41)



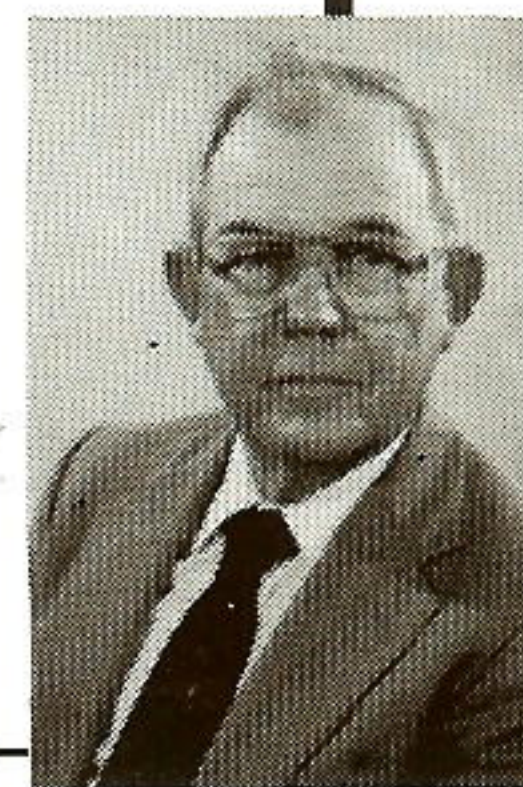
Ron McKenzie
*Division Vice President-
Port Arthur*
51 (25)



John Conley
*Division Vice President-
Western*
60 (33)



Arden Loughmiller
*Division Vice President-
Beaumont*
53 (30)



Doug Watkins
*Division Vice President-
Baton Rouge*
60 (33)

Lifesaving awards showcase employees' compassion, concern

by Scott Harper

Gulf States' employees care about the community in which they live and serve. One way of showing that concern is by caring for the needy and saving lives. Several employees recently received the President's Lifesaving Award. In Beaumont, John Jorden, line foreman; Shelton Stevens, utility foreman; Jerry Irvine, Tony Hamm, Eugene Williams, Ralph Harrington and Richard Cortez, all linemen-1st class, were honored.

A tree trimmer in Beaumont was pruning limbs away from power lines when he fell from his perch, sprawling across the lines. Thanks to the quick response of GSU employees, the trimmer survived the incident virtually unscathed.

According to company reports, Jorden was getting out of his truck to check on a tree crew when he heard the unmistakable sound of electric arcing. Upon finding the young man, he raced back to his vehicle to call for an ambulance and a line crew and to request the electricity be cut off from the line. Jorden then used his extendo stick to deenergize the transformer near the secondary conductors holding the man.

A nearby line crew arrived almost immediately. Harrington climbed the pole and walked on the telephone cable to the injured man. Hamm and Stevens climbed up a ladder to the trimmer while Irvine threw a rope across the secondary wires to hold him. Irvine, Cortez and Williams then lowered him to the ground when the men above released him.

In Woodville, Gordon McCabe, collector, received the award for saving his son's life. McCabe, his wife, Marilyn and son, Justin, were enjoying a steak dinner when Justin started choking. McCabe leaped into action to apply the Heimlich maneuver. Almost immediately, a piece of steak flew from Justin's throat, enabling him to breathe again.

Conroe's Jerry McHam, claims representative, was honored for saving a young man's

Ronnie Steptoe



Left to right, CEO Joe Donnelly with award recipients Richard Cortez, Eugene Williams, Ralph Harrington, John Jorden, Jerry Irvine, Tony Hamm and Shelton Stevens.



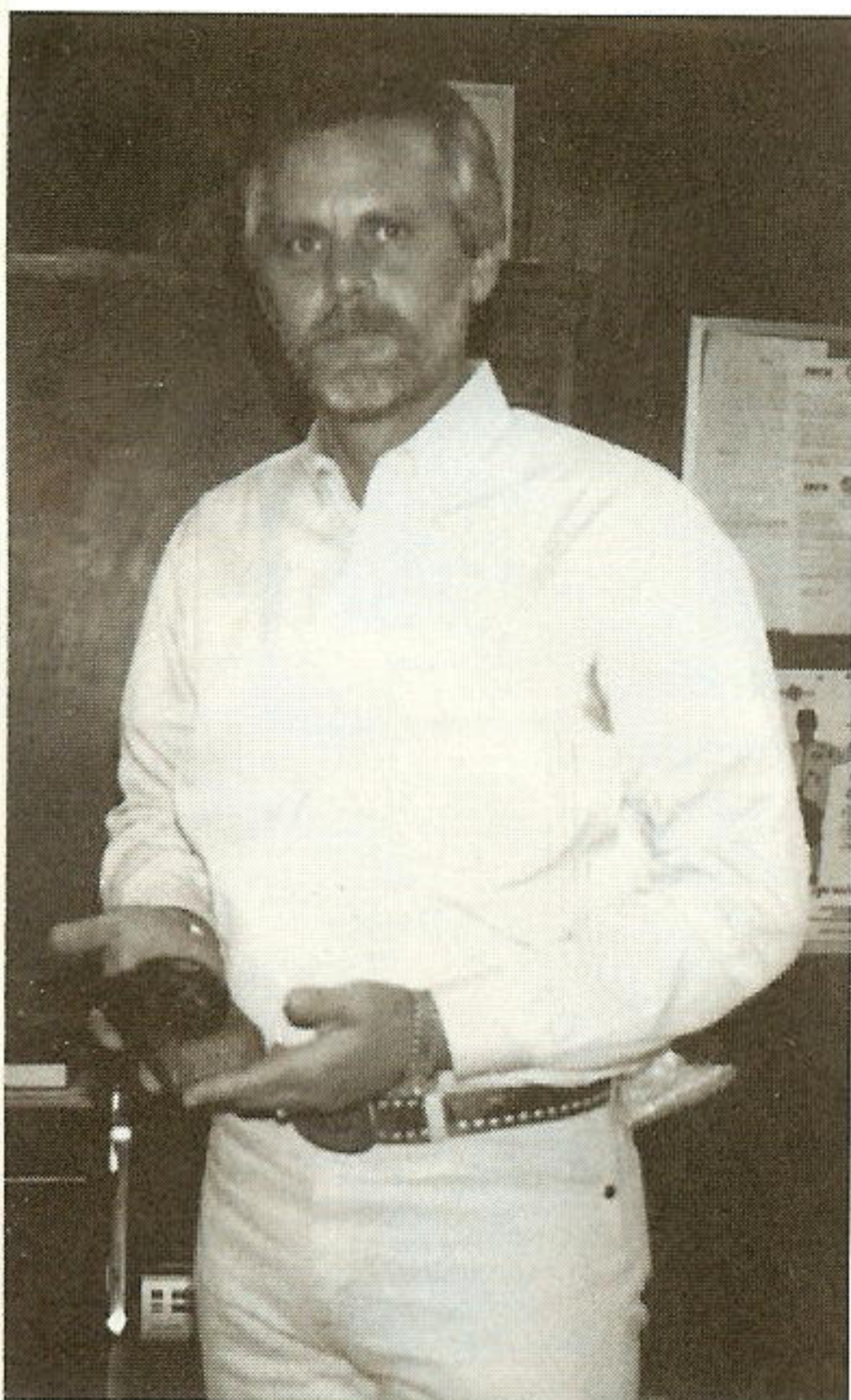
Above, l to r, Shirley Bailey, MCEA, and Lewis Creek employees Cindy Shackelford, Billy Dugger, Mike McGowan and Angie Kroll. Left, Gordon McCabe, with his family, receives his award from former chairman Dr. Linn Draper.

life at the Montgomery County fairgrounds.

McHam noticed a couple frantically working over their small child. Witnesses say the mother was trying to remove the toddler from a stroller, but the child was turning blue and was not breathing. McHam also saw the mother was trying to remove something from her child's mouth.

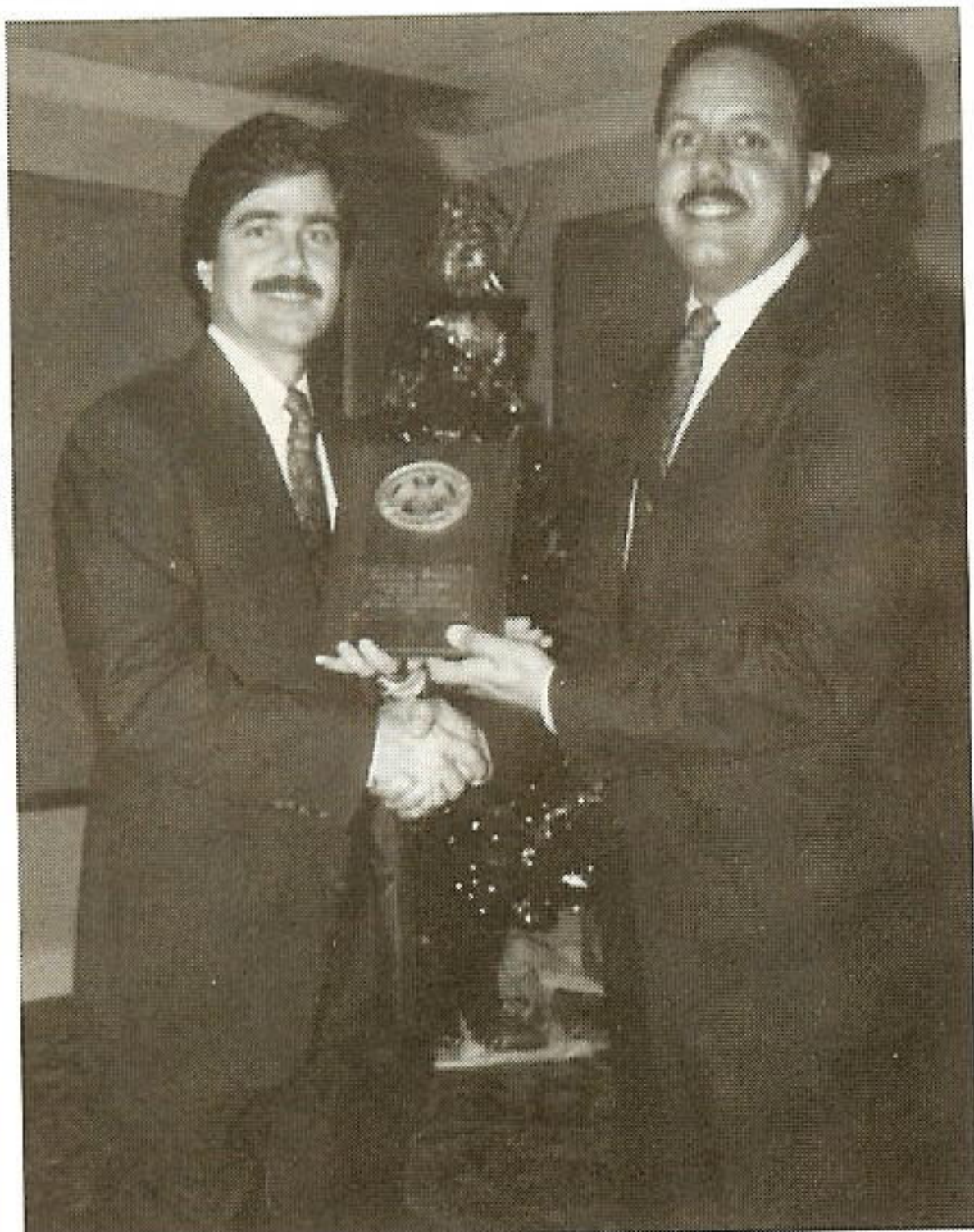
McHam realized the child was choking and applied the Heimlich maneuver which dislodged a french fry from the youngster's throat.

Employees at Lewis Creek recently won a company Target Zero safety contest. The contest winners used their monetary prize to purchase groceries which they donated to the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance (MCEA) before the holidays.



Jerry McHam

NEWS BRIEFS



Smith, left, accepts Associate of the Year Award from Geno Guercio.

Smith receives HBA Associate of the Year

Dennis J. Smith, coordinator-marketing, Baton Rouge, was presented the 1991 Associate of the Year Award from the Baton Rouge Home Builders Association at the group's annual banquet last December.

Smith has been an active member of the local HBA for over 10 years and was recently elected vice president of associate affairs. He serves on the board of directors and is a member of the organization's executive committee.

His other activities include chairman of the 1991 Habitat Home and Garden Show, co-chairman of the 1991 membership committee, past chairman of the energy committee and a member of the wholesale committee. He was chairman of the ad hoc utility liaison committee, coordinating state regulation, utility company policies and the needs of area builders.

He is an active member of the HBA's Remodelors Council. Smith is also active in the state organization, currently serving on the board of directors.



The Baton Rouge Sideliners were entertained by the 5th grade chorus from Westminster Elementary School last Dec. 11 at the UCT Hall during their annual Christmas luncheon. About 150 retirees and spouses enjoyed the performance. Gulf States adopted Westminster Elementary in 1989 through the Greater Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce Adopt-a-School program.



Each year, the employees of the Denham Springs office open their pockets for the less fortunate during the holiday season. They get together three food baskets for three needy families in the community. In 1991, with the help of a local Superstar grocery store, they were able to give more with each basket. Linemen delivered the baskets on Christmas Eve and were greeted with many thanks and tears. Two recipients were widowers with small children and another was a stroke victim, paralyzed on the left side, raising two small children. Pictured above with the food baskets are (l to r) Mike Wheat, Harry Latiolais, Steve Bernard, Donny Davis, Buddy Stevenson, Clint Chenevert, Jay Marchessault, Dwayne Scott, Mark Lee, Glenda Boyd, Billy Henderson, John Koles, Cindy Albritton, Carl Paline, Ronnie Causey and Kathy Smith.

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

January

1992

20 YEARS

John H. Dencausse
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Earl R. Mitchell
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
Arthur C. Morrison Jr.
Electric T&D
Beaumont
Edward Stewart Jr.
Plant Production
Neches Station
Joe A. Simpson
System Production
Beaumont
Terry F. Haas
Design Engineering
Beaumont
Ben R. Rimes
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
William P. Tindall III
Engineering
Beaumont

10 YEARS

Norma G. Bonura
Accounting Services
Beaumont
John D. Cruthirds
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Mark E. Rotolo
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Mark W. Wilson
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Lloyd D. Brandon
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Carol B. Moore
Electric T&D
Conroe
Stephen J. Pair
Plant Production
Nelson Station
Mark E. Puls
Electric T&D
The Woodlands
John H. Thomas
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Johnny A. Trahan
Customer Service
Orange
Ronald L. Bovard
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Marsha C. Thrasher
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Michael W. Gremillion
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Thomas E. Senter
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Milton R. Billodeaux
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Valerie R. Carl
General Services
Beaumont
Kenneth D. Cross
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Beverly M. Goodie
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Clayton T. Jones
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Michael Semien
Electric T&D
Beaumont
Bradley J. Stotz
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Charlotte H. Gautreau
Division Accounting
Gonzales
Susan F. Mott
Division Accounting
Orange
Thomas J. Hardy
Engineering
Beaumont
Stephen R. Radebaugh
RBNG Plant Operations
River Bend
John W. Flanagan II
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Gloria A. Fontenot
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Jimmy O. Ott
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Efrain Solorzano
Electric T&D
The Woodlands
Marcia F. Ross
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Lloyd E. Dawson Jr.
Plant Production
Sabine Station
William M. Ackoury Jr.
Plant Production
River Bend
Cynthia T. Dubose
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
Gloria A. Duhon
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Lenwood L. Jack
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Thomas M. Johnson
Plant Production
Sabine Station
Sherman A. Lewis
Design Engineering
Beaumont
Mary E. Garrett
Division Accounting
Conroe

ON THE MOVE

Promotions from January 1 - 31, 1992

Bellard, Paul B., River Bend, to nuclear control operator, Plant Production (6).

Blanda, Louis G., Beaumont, to supervisor-corporate studies, Corporate Planning (11).

Broussard, Paul R., Sabine Station, to system chemist, Production Support (10).

Burton, Stephen K., Beaumont, to vice president and treasurer, Financial Services (13).

Carver, Willie A., Jr., River Bend, to nuclear control operator, Plant Production (4).

Chatterton, Walter G., River Bend, to technical specialist, RBNG-Oversight (3).

Ciesel, Ronald W., Beaumont, to vice president-computer applications, Computer Applications (17).

Dinda, Gerhard H., River Bend, to senior quality assurance engineer, RBNG-Oversight (3).

Dokken, Brian C., Beaumont, to supervisor-investor services and administration, Financial Services (10).

Donnelly, Joseph L., Beaumont, to chairman-elect and chief executive officer, Executive (12).

East, John L., River Bend,

to nuclear control operator, Plant Production, (5).

Eisworth, Gerald G., Denham Springs, to lineman 3rd class, Electric T&D (7).

Fontenot, Dale M., Beaumont, to senior systems analyst, Energy Resources (8).

Fontenot, Robert J., Beaumont, to senior rate engineer, Rates and Regulatory Affairs (13).

Galow, Geoffrey G., Beaumont, to assistant treasurer, Financial Services (11).

Harrington, Al J., Port Arthur, to engineering assistant, Electric T&D (9).

Hedgepeth, John C., River Bend, to nuclear control operator, Plant Production, (12).

Jackson, Reginald K., River Bend, to technical specialist, RBNG-Oversight (3).

Kelley, Joseph B., River Bend, to nuclear control operator, Plant Production, (4).

McBride, Clyde W., Beaumont, to vice president-strategic planning, Financial Services (14).

Million, Alan F., Nelson Station, to equipment operator, Plant Production (8).

Murphy, James P.,

Conroe, to lineman 4th class, Electric T&D (2).

Patin, Brian W., River Bend, to nuclear control operator, Plant Production, (6).

Nunez, Benjamin D., Beaumont, to planning engineer, Engineering (2).

Plaisance, Donna B., Baton Rouge, to stenographer-senior, Division Accounting (2).

Rouchon, Anthony A., River Bend, to nuclear control operator, Plant Production, (4).

Schenck, Jack L., Beaumont, to senior vice president and chief financial officer, Executive (10).

Stanfield, Iris S., Beaumont, to senior data analyst, Corporate Planning (22).

Stott, David J., Silsbee, to lineman 2nd class, Electric T&D (7).

Terro, Chris L., Lake Charles, to apprentice-line and service departments, Electric T&D (1).

()denotes years of service

It's Graduation Time!

Once again, **Plain Talks** will be doing a special photo feature on the high school and college graduates of GSU families. Please send a photo of your graduate and the following information to **Plain Talks-Graduation, EP-8**. A graduation photograph is preferred. All photos will be returned. The deadline to receive photos and information is **Friday, May 8**.

Graduate's name _____ High School/College _____
Employee's name _____ Relationship to employee _____
Employee's job title _____ Work location _____
Daytime phone number/extension _____

MAILBOX



Kathy Holland

Far and beyond the call

Beaumont customer Willie M. Wheaton sent this letter regarding assistance provided by **Kathy Holland**, customer contact clerk, Beaumont:

"This letter is to show my appreciation for the assistance that Kathy gave me when I went into the GSU office. She went far and beyond the call of duty to assist me in being able to keep the utilities on in my home, and at the same time, she was very polite and professional. Employees such as Kathy should be commended. I would just like to tell Kathy thanks."

Ten-fold return

"Words simply cannot express how very fortunate our special children are to live in such a caring and generous community of people such as our GSU friends," writes Susan Naquin, executive director, The Hughen Center, Inc., Port Arthur, to the Reddy Volunteers of Port Arthur Division and Sabine Station.

"Your special efforts mean so much to all of us here at Hughen. Thank you for making this past Christmas the best ever! Thank you for the television, and the money for the birthday club, door openers, and the television stands."

"We all certainly hope that all of your generosity and kindness return to you all ten-fold."

Making a difference

"On behalf of the Board of Directors and volunteers of Education for Tomorrow Alliance, please accept our appreciation for your commitment to education and your tremendous efforts on behalf of the programs of ETA," writes Kathy Pettit, coordinator, Education for Tomorrow Alliance, The Woodlands, to **Carol Morris**, customer information coordinator, Conroe.

"The Science and Engineering Network to Support Engineering (SENSE) has benefited greatly from your participation in program planning, recruitment and your introduction of the Teach-In Event."

"The Science and Technology 2000 teachers and volunteers were pleased to receive GSU's science fair booklets and Energy Education catalog distributed during the S & T Teacher Workshop."

"ETA's Community Advisory Committee's Town Meeting was successful in the information gathered and the opportunity to interact with State Representatives Kevin Brady and Bob Rabuck. GSU is very generous to allow ETA to use the Conroe Auditorium and provide refreshments. Thank you for your time and energy to make arrangements and host the meeting."

"We are very fortunate to have you as a member and volunteer of ETA. You are truly making a difference in shaping the future of the students we serve."

Survivor appreciation

Mrs. B.L. Sargent, Beaumont customer writes the following note:

"Thanks for waiting on our payment...I've survived enough to tell you I appreciate you all very much."

Conservation education

Beaumont customer Jeff Haven sent this thank you letter to the Beaumont office:

"I am writing in order to thank you for your assistance in determining how I could make my home more energy efficient. **Beverly Williamson** did a fantastic job of educating me on what I needed to do."

"Already my house has changes in effect. Ms. Williamson assisted me in putting things in place and advising me on future steps. With this help I know my bills will be smaller and I will be conserving energy."

Williamson is an energy auditor located in Beaumont.

Shoney's special order

Michael Brame, industrial representative, Conroe, received this note of thanks from William G. Emendorfer, president and CEO, Shoney's Corporation, Athens, Tenn., regarding his help at the Conroe restaurant:

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts in helping us to obtain utilities to our sign at our Conroe location...thanks for a job well done."

Lions Club roar

"Thank you very much for speaking to our Lion's Club today," writes Terry Bourdier, program chairman, Beaumont Founders Lions Club, to **Les Jones**, customer information coordinator, Beaumont. "Your program on electrical safety was informative and entertaining, and hopefully the booklets you shared with us will prevent possible accidents with electricity."

"It was evident by the response of the members that your program was enjoyed by all. Thanks again and we hope to have you back."

True confessions of a former reporter

by Kim McMurray

Although I've been with Gulf States for more than 13 years, some of my fellow employees still consider me untrustworthy, disloyal, unhelpful, uncheerful, disobedient, discourteous, unfriendly, not at all thrifty, definitely not brave, unclean and irreverent. You know, the opposite of a Boy Scout.

The reason they feel that way: I'm a former newspaper reporter.

It's the same way some people view Boris Yeltsin. He can't be trusted because once a Communist, always a Communist.

I can't claim forgiveness by saying I was born a reporter. Although I **was** born into a newspaper family and often said I had printer's ink in my veins, most people don't accept that as an excuse for past sins.

I started out as a reporter covering Little League games when I was still in junior high school and continued working part-time on my hometown daily until I got out of high school. For 12 years I was a full-time member of the "working press."

Working press. I always liked that phrase. It helped us identify with the working man, the common man.

In reality, we knew very little about the working man, the common man or any other kind of man (other than bartenders, of course). In fact, we didn't know much about much of what we were writing about.

Our readers **thought** we were experts—or at least somewhat knowledgeable about subjects we were writing about—when that often wasn't the case at all.



Having dealt with many reporters during my time with Gulf States, I often ask myself: Was I that uninformed when I was helping mold public opinion? The answer is yes.

I don't fault the reporters themselves as much as I fault the universities that graduate communications and journalism majors who are ill equipped to go out and cover many aspects of modern society.

The average reporter knows very little about basic economics and finance. Start talking utility finance and accounting and his or her eyes glaze over. (And so do mine.)

We've had reporters covering us in the past who obviously attended the Geraldo Rivera School of Journalism. They saw Gulf States as their ticket to the bigtime and maybe to a Pulitzer Prize.

I've got many other theories about why we get the media treatment, and mistreatment, that we do. But I'll save them for another day.

I worked for the **Beaumont Enterprise** (some call it the Empty-Prize) for 10 years and, although it's my alma mater, it has made me very angry from time to time. I imagine all Gulf Staters feel the same way.

My wife was in a skit in a musical/comedy show the other day where she had the distinct honor of getting to hit the editor of the **Enterprise** over the head repeatedly.

I should have been ashamed, but I wasn't. And I know there were many envious Gulf Staters quietly cheering her on.

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