Ernest Lee Levingston

Ernest Lee Levingston, 91, long-time Lake Charles resident, died peacefully November 19, 2012. A selfmade man, he picked cotton, shelled peas, and branded cattle as a child on a Johnson Bayou farm. He went on to found and build a multi-million dollar engineering firm that has supported thousands of southwest Louisiana families and has contributed to the economic growth of the petrochemical industry nationwide.

Born in Pineville, Louisiana on November 7, 1902, Levingston graduated Creole High School in 1939 and then enrolled in the very first class of what was then McNeese College. As a McNeese student he also worked full time for his grandfather’s construction firm, T. Miller and Sons, actually building the first McNeese Coliseum. He also attended Tulane University.

Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attacks he enlisted in the SeaBees Third Naval construction Battalion, serving his first two years in the South Pacific Fiji Islands. He was then selected for officer training, graduated USN Midshipman School, and after being commissioned was assigned to the U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office in Washington, DC. He returned home to Lake Charles from active duty with the rank of Lieutenant, (jg).

He was employed for twelve years in the Engineering Department of Cities Service Refining Corporation (Citgo) in Lake Charles. As a calculated risk-taker, in 1957 he left his job, picked up and moved his family to Baton Rouge where he enrolled at LSU and also worked full time for Bovay engineers in Baton Rouge. He earned a BS Degree in Mechanical engineering, launched his career as a Registered Professional Engineer, and opened the firm of Levingston Engineers, Inc. in Lake Charles in 1961 with one drafting table and a desk made out of a door. He served as owner, president and chairman of the board until recently selling the business to long-time employees.

Levingston married the only girl he ever had a date with, Kathleen Bordelon of Lake Charles; they recently celebrated their 68th anniversary. They raised three children, David Levingston, James Levingston, and Jeanne Levingston Owens. He was preceded in death recently by his son, David. Survivors include his wife, Kathleen, children Jeanne Owens and James Levingston, grandchildren Kenneth Levingston, Ryan Levingston, Paul Levingston (wife Sherri), Jesse Woltz Lambert (husband David), Evelyn Owens Malone (husband Michael), and great grandchildren Rebecca Levingston, Gabriel Levingston, Davis Lambert, and Grant Lambert. He is also survived by loving nieces and nephews.

He has served as a member of the Louisiana Commerce and Industry Board, regional chairman of the Louisiana Chemical Industry Alliance, national trustee and member of examination committee on the National Institute for Certifying Engineering Technologists and Technicians, member of U.S. Commerce Regional Export Expansion Council, member Lake Charles Planning and Zoning Commission, member of the advisory board of Sowela Technical Institute, chairman of the Lake Charles Building Code Committee, board member of Lake Charles Memorial Hospital, board member of Chamber of Commerce Southwest Louisiana, board member of the Wesley Foundation, and Celtic Nations Heritage Foundation Advisory Board. He was a Baptist deacon for fifty years and a member of First United Methodist Church of Lake Charles. He has written three books—one an autobiography and two on theology.

Levingston was listed in Marquis Who's Who in the World, Who's Who in America, Who’s Who in Finance and Industry, Who's Who in the South and Southwest, and Who's Who in Science and Engineering. Visitation and funeral services are handled by Hixson Funeral Home in Lake Charles. Visitation is Friday, November 23, 2012 at Hixson Funeral Home 4-8 PM. An additional visitation is Saturday 8-10 AM at First United Methodist Church in Lake Charles. The funeral service is at First United Methodist Church in Lake Charles, Saturday, November 24, 2012 at 10 AM. Burial is in Graceland Cemetery in Lake Charles. Words of comfort may be shared with the family at www.hixsonfuneralhomes.com.

Memorial donations may be made to the McNeese Foundation Ernest Levingston Scholarship, PO Box 91989, Lake Charles, Louisiana.