

## PERSPECTIVES

# Contract drilling is a tough, cyclical business, but for Moe Plaisance of Diamond, nothing's more fulfilling

By Linda Hsieh, associate editor

MOE PLAISANCE LEARNED two important lessons from his father at an early age. One, this business has a cyclical nature that can mean tough times for drilling contractors. Two, don't be afraid of those tough times — if you do a good job, you'll be recognized and you'll keep working.

For Mr Plaisance, both lessons have proven true. Currently **Diamond Offshore's** vice president of international operations, he's been with the company or a predecessor since 1970, through the industry's ups and downs. His many awards include the 2003 IADC Contractor of the Year Award, the MMS Corporate Leadership Award and the IADC Distinguished Service Award.

"My dad taught me to never shy away from work, to derive satisfaction and pleasure out of my work, and I have," Mr Plaisance said. One of the most fulfilling projects he has undertaken is the IADC Deepwater Well Control Guidelines, which "benefitted the industry by going beyond conventional well control and aiming for prevention," he explained. "Serving as chairman of that task force was truly a career high for me because I got to work with the best people in the drilling industry."

## GETTING THINGS DONE

Those guidelines, published in 1998, were completed by the task force in just one year, Mr Plaisance pointed out. "We're very fortunate to have a good industry association like IADC. It's proactive, flexible, and most importantly, you can see things getting done," he said. "That's the same thing as what I've always enjoyed on a drilling rig — you're accomplishing something. You start at the top and keep going until you drill a well to total depth. There's a sense of accomplishment in that."

While Mr Plaisance isn't ready to retire yet — "I'm ready to work. I still have a lot of fun in this job" — he is concerned by the upcoming "crew change" and what that may mean for the new generation.



**"I don't think I could've done what I've done in my career without the understanding and strength of my wife, Vickie. She's been a wonderful partner, and we're truly best friends in many ways," said Moe Plaisance of Diamond Offshore.**

"It's not that we can't find technically and mechanically oriented young people, it's teaching them the idiosyncrasies of our business. This industry has too many things that are not written down. Mentoring these young people is important — it's how we're going to really pass on the knowledge."

Over the 40 years of his career, Mr Plaisance has gone from working on barge rigs drilling in 5 ft of water to drilling wells in greater than 8,000 ft of water. "Not only water depths, but well depths also have increased, and we're trying to deliver big-diameter holes at these depths," he said. "I'm proud of the way our industry has kept up with equipment demands and technological challenges." 💧

## 'Big oil' stigma an impediment in US

**Q:** What's your perspective of the industry, as the vice president of international operations at an US-based drilling contractor?

**A:** Outside the US, there isn't the same "big oil," "environmentally unfriendly" stigma to the drilling business. I have never been anywhere internationally where we haven't been welcomed. When they see a drilling rig, they know it means someone's going out there to find hydrocarbons that could mean something for their country — new jobs, energy independence, energy for local infrastructure.

Finding oil and gas has significant impact for a country, including the United States. Unfortunately, we don't recognize that here as much as we should.

Our industry can drill in an environmentally responsible way, yet we have a drilling moratorium on about three-quarters of the US coast. To see all of that area with potential sitting idle really bothers me. When people complain about the prices of gasoline or heating oil or natural gas, they should stop and think about where they all come from. 💧