

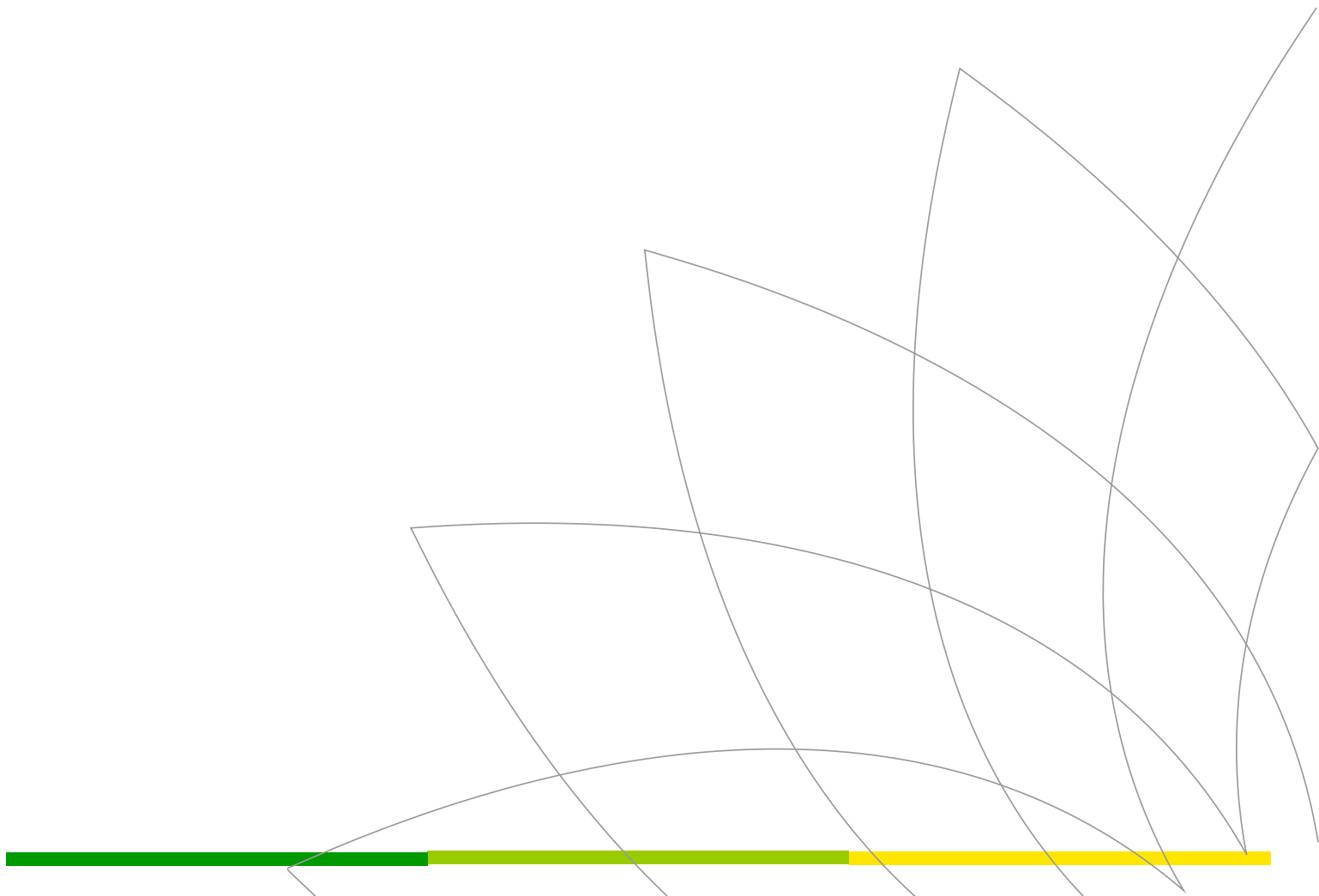


Petroleum Executive of the Year acceptance speech

Bob Dudley

Group chief executive

9 October 2018



Introduction

Your excellencies, the organizers of this great gathering of our industry, ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

It's great to be here tonight in London, and a real honour to receive this award.

Patrick, thank you my friend for your very kind introduction.

My family is here tonight, so at least now they'll know what I've been doing all these years.

I'd like to thank Energy Intelligence for this recognition.

As is always the case in our industry, no one achieves anything on their own.

This is recognition for a lot of people.

So, I gratefully accept it on behalf of what I like to think of as three families.

First is my own family of course, particularly Mary, my son, Chase and his wife Val, my daughter, Laura, and my sister Sue. I am so happy that they are all here tonight. It has brought us together for a week, which is a rare event.

Then there's the BP Family – my 70,000-plus colleagues around the world today.

It's also recognition for the hundreds of thousands of people – partners, contractors, government officials who we work with every day, because our industry is a kind of family too.

It's unique.

I can't think of another one that both competes and works together in the way we do – as I say, just like a family.

Looking around the room, there are many people here I've known for decades, and it is such an honour to be introduced by one of them.

Thank you again, Patrick and other CEO friends, past and present.

On this night last year, he shared with us his thoughts about his time in the industry and his reasons for joining.

Mine were pretty simple.

I wanted to see the world and oil and gas seemed like a great way to be able to do that.

Fonda memories

I've certainly seen a lot of the world and enjoyed every minute, or almost.

We all have tough days – I guess you all know what some of mine have been – but it has always been interesting.

Even on first day of work back in 1979 I had to make my way through a crowded demonstration to get to the doors of the Amoco building in Chicago.

Jane Fonda was on the megaphone leading the protest against big oil.

Wading through the crowd in my new suit and tie, somebody looped a sign on the button on my jacket.

It said: 'Stop big oil.'

When I finally got to my floor, the elevator door opened and the first person I saw pointed and said, "you should take that off here." I wondered if this career was going to be a good idea.

Protests like that were pretty common at the time.

That was the world we were living in.

Protest rallies in the west.

Tensions in Iran.

Conflict in Afghanistan.

Big swings in the price of oil and gasoline.

In many ways we've gone back to the future, but sometimes it feels like our industry is less appreciated now than back when I started.

There are a lot of loud voices who say the world would be a better place without oil and gas.

We're characterised as being the root of the problem...

At odds with society...

And a sunset industry.

That's not the case everywhere in the world, but certainly is in the west, and that's a real concern of many of the CEOs.

We've perhaps taken for granted that consumers understand the essential nature of our work. And now they're taking us for granted.

We've got to constantly communicate all the work we are doing for a better future.

Because when you look back over the past 20, 50, 100 years, our industry has fuelled so much of the world's remarkable progress.

A noble profession

People are living twice as long today as they did a hundred years ago.

Around 8 out of 10 people used to live in extreme poverty. Now it's less than one in 10.

Over the same timeframe, there's been around a four-fold increase in the global population and a 10-fold increase in energy consumption.

There's an undeniable correlation between energy and quality of life and that's why I'm really proud of what we do.

And, there's a lot more to get done.

Over a billion people on the planet still don't have access to electricity. They're looking to us for their energy in all forms – as will another 2 billion people as the population goes up over the next 20 years or so.

As if that were not enough of a challenge we must produce and deliver that energy in ways that are cleaner and better – kinder to the planet. That's the dual challenge...

And why we get up in the morning and go to work.

Support

We do an important job in our industry – and one that carries great responsibility with it.

It puts a lot of demands on people – long hours, a lot of time away from home, and a lot of pulling up your roots and putting them down again in a new town, often in a new country.

It's not a job you can do without the support of your family and I've been blessed in that respect.

Mary has been with me all the way – and our children for most of it.

Chase was born in Aberdeen and Laura in Houston.

When she was 12-years-old in Moscow, I remember somebody asking Laura where she was from.

She said, "I don't know, I think we're homeless."

It brought home to me just how much we moved around.

But it's been their adventure as much as mine and we've learned a lot together along the way.

Experiencing the world

It's certainly been a very different experience for my children than the one I had growing up.

I was born in New York, but raised in a small town in Mississippi.

My father was a naval scientist and travelled a bit himself, but I don't recall knowing anybody who had a passport.

What I do remember from that time is my father gave me a stamp collection – one he was given by my grandfather.

To me it was a window on the world – snapshots of palm trees, pyramids and people from countries with exotic-sounding names.

As a young boy, I wanted to visit these places for real.

It was this yearning to travel, to see the world and how different it was that got me thinking about a career in oil and gas.

I figured an engineering degree would be a good way in and went to the University of Illinois to study – which is where Mary and I met that first year.

After joining the industry and spending the first five years working in the US I finally got the chance to see the world and came to the UK and work in Aberdeen.

Back in the 1980s, the North Sea was just about the most exciting place in the world for an engineer.

It was the cradle of offshore engineering – and in many ways it still is.

Aberdeen was where I first saw the sheer scale of what we do up close and where I learned just how complex offshore engineering could be, dealing with some of the deepest waters and harshest conditions on the planet.

I was hooked on our industry and have been ever since.

After Aberdeen I made another unconventional move and went off to China.

The work was just as complex, but not in the same way.

It's where I learned to really listen and respect different cultures and ways of doing things.

That's how you learn to understand what your partners are trying to achieve, and you build strong and lasting relationships.

I've carried that lesson through the years – listen carefully first, ask questions later.

Or, as Chase and Laura might prefer me to do – especially during their teenage years – listen first, and don't ask any questions at all!

Russia was another formative experience.

Like China, it's another proud nation with a long history and rich culture. You have to appreciate both to understand Russia today.

Relationships

That's how BP has been able to do business in Russia for over 25 years now.

We've been in Azerbaijan just as long.

Double that in Egypt and Trinidad and Tobago – over 50 years.

And even longer in the Middle East.

All different places of course, but the same recipe for success.

Listen, be respectful, and try to understand what your partners are looking to achieve.

Then you can find a way to operate that works to everyone's benefit – particularly in countries whose resources you produce, as that's often the lifeblood of a nation's economy.

Deepwater Horizon

Stewarding those resources is a huge responsibility, and it comes with a need to manage some significant risks.

That leads me to the Gulf of Mexico spill, which shook BP to the core.

Eleven people died and we will never forget that.

At BP we knew we had to do everything in our power to make things right for the many thousands of people affected.

And to do that we committed to doing three things:

- restore the Gulf's environment,
- restore its economy
- and to make our business safer.

To honour those commitments, we sold off around a third of the company.

I was reminded of that recently when the Washington Post ran an article about BP.

The headline referenced an oil giant that was forced to shrink to grow again.

Back to growth

We are growing again.

There's a spring in the step of BP people around the globe that I haven't seen for a long time.

And while it feels better, we're also on guard against complacency especially when it comes to safety, and we are determined to retain our hard-earned humility.

I'm proud of the people who made it happen and proud of our team who are here tonight. There are many people from the BP family to thank and you will know who you are. Every exec knows it cannot happen without great assistants, and a special thank you to Kim, Heather, Mark and Norman without which nothing would happen.

Conclusion

Tonight has been more about reflecting, but let me finish by looking ahead.

We are in the midst of a major energy transition and transitions can be unsettling.

But I think the reality is that there has never been a more important and exciting time for our industry.

We have a duty to keep the world advancing through this transition.

And we have an army of problem solvers at the ready – along with a history of navigating many, many challenges in the past.

So, as I look to the future, I see possibilities everywhere.

I'm envious of all the young people entering our companies today.

They're in for quite an adventure.

Luckily after four decades I still am as well. I started out seeing exotic places on stamps from around the world. Now that I got to see those places for real, what I see tonight are the faces of so many of the great friends and inspirational people I've met along the way.

It's been a privilege working with all of you in an industry as important as ours.

And together I look forward to solving the dual challenge and driving the energy transition.

Thank you again for this recognition and for the great friendship you show me.