The Flores MBA Program is the flagship academic program of the E. J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University. The Distinguished Speaker Series is an integral part of the LSU Flores MBA Program. Interaction with successful executives provides students significant educational enrichment to complement their classroom curriculum. By providing insight into the forces and new ideas shaping American and international business, the series offers MBAs real-world examples of concepts. This semester, the E. J. Ourso College of Business is proud to showcase three executives who are recognized as leaders in their industries and communities.

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Ross J. Centanni

Ross Centanni is the chairman of the board of directors of Gardner Denver Inc. and serves as the company’s president and chief executive officer as well. Gardner Denver Inc., established in 1929 as a spin-off of Cooper Industries, is recognized worldwide as a leader in the manufacturing of compressors, blowers, pumps, and fluid transfer equipment and technologies.

A resident of Quincy, Ill., Centanni graduated from LSU in 1967 with a bachelor’s in industrial technology and received his M.B.A. from the then LSU College of Business Administration in 1971. Centanni had the rare perspective of attending the University prior to and following the Vietnam War as a student.

After beginning his professional career with R.F. Goodrich Company in Akron, Ohio, Centanni eventually joined Occidental Petroleum and later Cooper Industries in 1980 as the director of its Corporate Planning and Development Group. In 1993, he was chosen to serve as president and CEO of the Bedrock upstart Gardner Denver. Last year, the company was ranked in Fortune magazine’s “100 Fastest Growing Companies.”

Patricia C. Hewlett

Patricia C. “Pat” Hewlett is the chief information officer for the world’s largest energy company, ExxonMobil Corporation, and is responsible for the organization’s information technology group. She has held numerous leadership and managerial positions within ExxonMobil in a career that now spans more than 30 years.

A resident of Houston, Tex., Hewlett graduated from LSU in 1972 with a bachelor’s in mathematics. Her connections with the University remain strong. Hewlett is a member of the E.J. Ourso College of Business Dean’s Advisory Council and was inducted into the college’s Hall of Distinction in 2005. Additionally, she is the chair-elect of the board of directors of the LSU Alumni Association and has previously dedicated time to advisory councils for the accounting and the information systems & decision sciences departments.

Hewlett has served in many capacities for industry and professional organizations. She has been a member of the Research Board, the Conference Board’s Council of Information Management Executives, the Working Council of CIO’s, the College Relations Committee of the Dallas Chapter of the Financial Executives Institute, and the director and information systems committee chair for the Houston chapter of the Financial Executives Institute. In 1997, Hewlett was inducted into the YWCA’s Academy of Women Achievers, one of the U.S.’s most prestigious honors for professional women.

Active in her community, Hewlett has dedicated much of her time to various endeavors. She has served as the director of the Houston Downtown Management Corporation, as a director, secretary, and fundraising committee chair for Avondale House, a United Way Agency serving autistic children, as a United Way Panel volunteer; and as a Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo committee volunteer.

Sarah Borders

Sarah Borders is a partner with King & Spalding and serves as the head of the firm’s Global Finance Practice. Established in 1885, King & Spalding provides the highest caliber legal counsel to clients from the United States and abroad. The firm has more than 800 lawyers and offices in Atlanta, Ga.; Houston, Tex.; Dubai, London, New York, N.Y.; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and Washington, D.C.

A resident of Atlanta, Ga., Borders graduated from LSU in 1984 with a bachelor’s in business and public administration and earned her J.D. Law from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1988. Once a law clerk for Judge Henry A. Politz of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Borders has extensive experience representing both creditors and debtors in some of the nation’s largest workouts, restructurings, and bankruptcy cases. Her insolvency practice spans a number of industries including retail, textile, real estate, and healthcare. She has recently served as debtor’s counsel to numerous corporations, including World Health Alternatives Inc., Titan Inc., and Rhodes Inc.

In addition to being a fellow in the American College of Bankruptcy, Borders has been included in the last several directories of The Best Lawyers in America and was recognized as one of Georgia’s “Legal Elite” in 2005 and 2006. A restructuring issue expert, Borders has been called upon to speak at the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, the Federal Judicial Conference for Bankruptcy Judges, and multiple seminars for the American Bankruptcy Institute and the Practising Law Institute.

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