

117. Regina Davis: A Lifetime of Firsts

Gavin Kelly

Hey everybody you're listening to beyond 1894 this is the official podcast of Louisiana Tech University. My name is Gavin Kelly from the Office of University Communications, and our guest for this episode is Regina Davis. She is the ExxonMobil refinery manager in Baton Rouge. She's got quite a history, and she is a Louisiana Tech alum, and we're gonna kind of grill down into what made her choose Louisiana Tech, but also sort of her career moves after she's got had a trailblazer's career, I think. So we're gonna get into that today. Regina, I know you're busy. Thank you for making time for us.

Regina Davis

Absolutely, really glad to be here.

Gavin Kelly

So we ask all of our guests kind of how they decided on Louisiana Tech, and what appealed to them about the university early on, but also kind of what made you decide on your major, and kind of how you decided to approach your academics early on. So talk to us about where you're from and then why Louisiana Tech was the choice for you. Yeah,

Regina Davis

so I'm originally from New Orleans, Louisiana, from the West Bank. I'm a first generation college graduate, and so my my why on Louisiana Tech is is actually a little bit convoluted, or not as direct, maybe as some others. I was exposed to engineering as a career pretty early on in middle school. I went to a program that introduced kind of a call it minority females to careers in STEM and so that was kind of where I first got exposed to engineering. Thought about engineering as a career, but I also kind of had on the side, like maybe wanted to go to medical school, so I just wasn't quite sure. But engineering, for sure, was was something that that I had some interest in. And so when I started to get to the point where it's like, you know, deciding what I wanted to major in and where I wanted to go to school, I thought I would do the best of both worlds. I would do biomedical engineering. And so that was what I had kind of aligned on as my my choice of career and interestingly enough, in Louisiana, there were two schools that had biomedical engineering. So one of those was Tulane University, which was in New Orleans, so pretty close to home. And the other one was Louisiana Tech University. I had never heard of Louisiana Tech University prior to kind of in my later in my senior year, when I was trying to decide, you know, what I was going to do. That was before internet. So I'm dating myself, but I had a classmate who asked me, had I thought about Louisiana Tech? And so I got some brochures and got some information and scheduled a visit. And maybe I should say, part of the reason I had started looking because I'd kind of decided I was going to go to Tulane, but Tulane had offered me a full scholarship, but not like housing included, and I wanted to get out of my parents home and so and so I had started looking after, you know, to see if I could get a full, you know, full offer. And so I, I remember when we scheduled a school visit. It was like, about a four or five hour drive from, from New Orleans. My parents took me, and I just remember when I stepped on campus, it was like, I knew this. It was my school. I knew it. It was just something about it. I can't, I can't probably put it into words, but it was just

like, This is it. And I just remember smiling the whole time. And then, you know, I was blessed to get really great scholarship offers and so be able to stay on campus and have tuition covered, and so, so that's how I ended up at Louisiana Tech and starting out in biomedical engineering.

Gavin Kelly

What do you think drew you to the engineering discipline early on? I mean, you mentioned, like, finding an affinity for STEM, but what do you think it was about that that drew you in?

Regina Davis

Yeah, so what my mom was? I mean, she's such a I give a lot of credit to my mom. She was such a wise lady. She knew that education was going to be a differentiator for us. I have three siblings, but she knew that getting an education could kind of break that. Call it generational poverty, that cycle of poverty. And so she was intent on every, every summer we didn't get to take a break off, we did some type of summer program. And so I had gone to a few other programs, but this program that I went, I think it was in between seventh and eighth grade. It gave me, it was more accessible to, like, where I could actually figure out, oh, this is what these people do. So I got to meet astronauts and doctors and scientists and engineers, and so that was, it just was cool, I you know, and I don't consider myself a nerd, but I did like math and science, and so it kind of was a good fit. But I just remember something about the engineering when I when I met, you know, this female engineer, and got to hear what she did, and it just resonated with me. And so, um, so I think it was kind of the natural affinity I had my mom's foresight to kind of make sure that we were exposed, since we didn't necessarily have people in our family or, you know, our parents or relatives. Those that that I could kind of, you know, maybe get some feedback or learn from them, and so that exposure is what kind of heightened my awareness, but also piqued my curiosity. And like I mentioned, I also was not sure if I wanted to go into medical school, because, you know, kids say I want to be a lawyer. I want to be a doctor, so doctor was on the list. But I think after I got into the program and decided, you know, I'm not loving this biomedical engineering and moved to chemical engineering, it solidified that it was engineering, like the solving problems kind of, it's almost like, you know, taking a puzzle and being able to figure it out, they really kind of drew me in to that field.

Gavin Kelly

Or, I'm sure there are, are there some faculty that you can name from your time at tech that sort of stood out to you and throughout your years here? Yeah,

Regina Davis

prop two, I would say, Dr Elmore. So for an interesting reason, actually, Dr Elmore and Dr Thompson. So I work for Dr Thompson, when I actually a new nuclear center, and he was really just a laid back kind of guy, and really allowed, you know, me and other students, to have access to not just him, but even like we got to do experiments. And so there was a lot of accessibility that he gave Dr Elmore for a different reason, so for sure, from an academic. But one thing, and you know, I share this because I think, you know, there might be people that have some similar could have some similar challenges or experiences. I actually got pregnant while I was at school in my right before my senior year. And, you know, there was a big question mark on, how was I going to complete school? You know, being a single mom, not having access to resources, and all those things. And in particular, some

conversations with Dr Moore Elmore where we're going to figure out how to, you know, how to get me to be able to take my classes that I need to take, and the way that the university, and in particular, Dr Elmore just had a personal touch and really trying to make sure that I was able to succeed. And I did online classes before online classes was a thing. I did office hours to kind of, you know, to keep up on things. I did a lot of things that weren't conventional, but it really did enable me to be able to be successful. And so, you know, I'm sure I can name a bunch more, but it was there were the personal touch, that personal aspect, the the desire to succeed. And one other thing about Dr Elmore that I remember, I was taking a, it's like a graduate level course in the summertime, and there was a really complex problem that he had given the class to work through at that whole class time. And then I went up to, you know, somebody, you know, he asked for volunteers to come and solve the problem, and I went up and did it, and he, I remember the feedback that he gave me, because even though I didn't get all the way to the end, it was so encouraging, because he let me know, like, hey, most students hadn't gotten this far. And it actually he told me he was impressed. So I just I remember that stuck with me, and it gave me confidence too, because it gave me this recognition that, you know, not only was I able to understand it, but actually excel in what I was doing and so, so, yeah, rambling a bit, but those were, I think I've had some really positive influences at the university, but those are a couple that stand out,

Gavin Kelly

very nice, very nice, I think, too, it's indicative of what a lot of people have said on the podcast about sort of the the more one on one nature of of the faculty. And that's kind of a selling point too, you know, we get people to try to attend Louisiana Tech. It's sort of like, you know, you're, you're an individual here in a classroom setting, as opposed to maybe some other places. So that was, that's good to hear from you. So the switch, I'm sure, to chemical engineering was intentional. What was sort of the plan beyond that? Did you have one, was it, I'm gonna stay in school for a little while after or I have this kind of job career path in mind? Or what was happening? There?

Regina Davis

No such a good that's a good question. So one of the things that I reflect on now is that, you know, it was like one step was to get into university, then how do you approach University? I didn't necessarily at the front end, have some of the foresight and insights that I have, you know, at the back end. So for me, it was I needed to graduate in four years, because that was the scholarship, you know, that I had. And I didn't really think about anything outside of graduating in four years and then getting a job. What I would say is that, you know, and I've told this to my kids as they've gone to university, there's a couple things that I came to recognize. Number one is the importance of internships and Co Ops. So throughout my, you know, university career, I didn't actually enter. Earn until, like, right, I'm in my senior year. I go to career fair, I'm shopping my resume around, and I kind of get a sense that people aren't very interested. And so I, you know, took a little bit of a, you know, a personal courage conviction. I talked to one employer and I asked them, I said, you know, real talk, am I someone that you would actually consider hiring full time? And they let me know you don't have any experience, and that's actually, you know, kind of a differentiator relative to some of my peers. And so I asked them, I said, Well, if I delayed my graduation, you know, would it be possible that I could get an internship? And of course, he couldn't commit anything I hadn't interviewed or anything yet, but, you know, he told me, I can't, you know, I'm not going to tell you what you should do, but I think if you were able to get an internship, would make you more marketable that type of feedback. And so that's what I did. I delayed

my graduation. I actually graduated in the winter of 98 versus that, you know, that spring and and I got an internship that summer, and it helped me to recognize that this is what I really enjoyed. I did, like what I was doing. I had no idea of the types of careers until I was in the career fair and kind of researching, but new manufacturing was, was the more likely that I was leaning towards, versus, like, doing, like, pure research or things like that. And so having that summer of interning at a refinery and getting a sense of what life would look like really solidified. Yes, this is what I you know, what I enjoy doing. So I'm always very intentional. I do a lot of recruiting, and my feedback to students, is to be open to internships and and Co Ops, because it's so valuable on multiple fronts, including helping you to get a sense of, is this what I really like? Would I prefer something different? Maybe trying some different things, and then at the conclusion of that, knowing which what really resonates with you, you also get the opportunity to kind of, you know, get yourself into what being in the workforce will look like, versus having been in school for all the years we've been in school, right? And so I think it wasn't, I would have to say I did not have an end in mind, except I wanted to work. I wanted to be an engineer, the best engineer I could be. But I had no idea of industry, location, any of those things. I will say that because I did have a, you know, I had a young daughter at the time, and that did sort of draw me into the Gulf Coast area, and kind of wanting to stay close to Louisiana, where I had family and could have a support but, but yeah, it kind of evolved as I went. So, you know, if I had to go back and tell my myself back then, I would have been like, Hey, don't worry about the four year graduation deal, get co ops, get internships, get as much exposure, and, you know, those opportunities as possible, because it really makes a difference.

Gavin Kelly

So I'm guessing it paid off. And I'm guessing after you graduated, you kind of It wasn't too long before you had a job waiting on

Regina Davis

you. Yeah, matter of fact. So I went back. I actually had a full time offer before I left for that internship. So it was at a refinery and, like, right outside of New Orleans. But I also had, I think I had maybe three other job offers that year, and I remember it being, we were going into a bit of a recession when I graduated, and so, like, oil prices. Remember, imagine gasoline being 99 cents a gallon. That's what it was, because crude oil was \$20 a barrel. It's like that. You never see that kind of stuff again. But, you know, so it was in a bit of a recession, and so it hiring was down. And, you know, I credit both the quality of it, education and the ability to be prepared for interviews, all the things you got when you went to the Career Center that helped to prepare me, as well as having that internship and being able to really, you know, in depth talk about my experience made me, you know, shine in interviews. So having multiple job offers, even in a downtime, I also, you know, thought as a highlight, but I ended up going back to the place I entered. I knew the folks there. The culture fit very well, and it was, you know, in my hometown. So it made a lot of sense for a lot of reasons. So

Gavin Kelly

what were sort of those early career goals, like, once you started working full time, where the sort of like, where do you see yourself 10 years from now? Question that I'm sure everybody loves. Were you sort of solidified in that early on, or were you just trying to take things kind of a day at a time and be the best you could be

Regina Davis

again? This is, you know, reflection, the insights you gain with time. When I started, it was like I had arrived. I was the first, you know, first college graduate, and not just my immediate family, but my extended family, so in like, my mom had 15 brothers and sisters, so I have a huge family, and being the first was huge. So it was like, that was a huge check mark for everyone. And so I kind of almost was like, that was the goal. I know it sounds limiting now, but like at the point that was like, my goal was to graduate, to get a job, because that was, like a huge step. Relative to what, you know, the experiences that that I've had in my family had had. So when I started working, it was like, I didn't have this viewpoint of, okay, I want to do this for this mom time. I'd like to move around, like, none of those things. It was literally, I just want to be the best engineer that I can be. That was it. And so, you know, I reflect on and it was like it wasn't very aspirational. But one of the things that I think is that it's okay to not necessarily have, like, a solid plan, what I really encourage, and what I think I've done like later in my career, and I still do today, is having mentors that can give me insights and tell me what is possible, to help shape, you know, what I might be interested in. And so for those first few years, I would say they were really kind of right place, right time opportunities came available and I got to do different things, versus me saying, Hey, I'm raising my hand. I'd like to do this thing. It wasn't until I was probably in my third assignment, and I had my my supervisor at the time was a great guy. He was, like, a guy's guy, type of engineer, very hand on. Back then, I'm not, you know, it's probably not, shouldn't be saying this. But back then, we used to open up our own valves and do our own, like, install our own pressure like, I had a backpack full of tools. And that was the type of supervisor that he was, he was, like, very hands on, but I do remember that I'm not the most, I would say, I'm not the most mechanically inclined. I like to figure things out, but it's not like I'm out fixing on my car stuff like that. That's just not the type of person I am, nor the type of engineer. And so I think he, he kind of viewed me as maybe not the strongest engineer, to be quite honest, because I didn't like, you know, maybe shape up as as, you know, the guys, guy, type of engineer, and I got to a point where I started to recognize, like, okay, am I, you know, are there opportunities for me? I'm starting to see some of my peers do some different things, and should I be thinking about those things? And I just remember that experience was interesting, because I think there was a question on, what could I do? And it wasn't until someone who, you know, found out that I was interested in, in going into, like, one of the business type of roles, something I was a little still using engineering, but not necessarily the field kind of contact engineering, but, but she heard I was interested, and she said, Hey, and I heard you're interested in, you know, and coming into, you know, more the business side of things, you know, would you be interested in? The role? Absolutely jumped into it. And what I'll tell you is that that's probably the pivot point for me, where number one, and I can say this pretty proudly, I knocked that rule out of the park. I really did a great job. And it kind of set up where maybe I was viewed as, she's pretty good to like, she's really great, you know, type of thing. And so trajectory wise, that's when my career started to like, I started to see all these, you know, potential opportunities, and I was starting to be, you know, just talked to and I had discussions about what things I wanted. And so I would say prior to that, it hadn't really been like, I was even encouraged to think about those things, or like, you know, it just was, keep your head down and do your work. And it wasn't until I got into that role, and it kind of, I guess, showcased my abilities, that then it started to become more like, Okay, I need to think about what types of things I'm interested in, and so, you know, if I had to do it over, I think having a mentor, a mentor early on that I could have, like, just ask some of those open ended questions. Versus, I just, you know, wherever my boss tells me to

go, that's when I'm going to go. Whatever he tells me to do, it's going to do. Versus, kind of taking a little bit of that ownership, you know, and driving things. But like I said, the other aspect of it is, you know, I don't know if just talking to my boss would have yielded that, because he might have had a different view. And it was actually having others that could help to also, you know, provide me feedback and advocate for me that was important. Yeah,

Gavin Kelly

and it's again, hindsight is 2020. It's easy right to look back and say, you know, it the right thing happened at the right time, and it paid off because of where you are now, but it sounds like too it opened up a sort of a whole new world for you mentally about your own career. So walk us through, you know, maybe this is a bit of a stacked question, but walk us through your career so far, then walk us through those next steps and kind of where that took you. Yeah, so

Regina Davis

started out kind of as a, we call a process contact engineer. So assigned a couple of units, and I was the, you know, the one that was making sure pressures, temperatures, I was, you know, if there were issues, I was troubleshooting. I was identifying projects and improvement plans, all that type of stuff. So I'm really, really cool stuff. Got to climb in towers and do a lot of stuff that, you know, was like, you know, just fun stuff. And then I went into, like, more of this business role, and it was what we call a coordination role. So I was sort of responsible for deciding, you know, what, we were going to recruit our feed socks. We were going to run, and what products we were going to make, and so, so that kind of exposed me to problem solving a different way, not so much in the, you know, pulling out the statics book or, you know, solving a pressure drop calculation, but actually still trying to figure out how to optimize and how to, you know, troubleshoot, but just on a business, on the business side, I did get my MBA as well, and so that was kind of complimentary to that. But then I went into a supervision role, and I supervise, I was Operation supervisor, and had a number of folks that, you know, that reported up to me, and that gave me more of the direct leadership kind of experience. And so, you know, within ExxonMobil, one of the things we do ask folks, are, you know, are they interested in a technical, rare career, or a, you know, management career? And sometimes they'll interchange, and they can go back and forth, and they may change. But I would, I think, as I went into that, that leadership role being, you know, first time supervisor, supervising wage employees as well as, you know, frontline supervisors, a lot of people that were up from the ranks, so not a lot of, like, you know, professional technical type of folks. It really kind of showed me that, hey, you know, my leadership and being able to move an organization and to, you know, drive improvements, was actually one of my strong points. And so at that point, what we do with the next time mobile, a lot of times, is in order to give people the right experiences. Is we, you know, we kind of move around. I call it almost like corporate, corporate military. So every four to five years, I'm moving. And so I was in New Orleans for that new that refinery in the New Orleans area for about nine years before I went to Virginia, and in Virginia, I worked a couple of roles. That's where our downstream headquarters was at at the time. And I worked a couple of roles that exposed me even more, not just to the business, but how we think about the business on a regional and even global scale. And so did those couple of roles. Came back to a plant, and in that plant, I was in Beaumont, Texas, and I did a couple of assignments. There actually three assignments there. I'm a technical kind of department manager, a process department manager, and I got to do something really cool where I actually was a lead lead to do a whole reorg of our whole organization.

And it was all around leadership, setting folks up. It was really cool stuff, and that's actually become one of my passions, which I can still go back to engineering and the problem solving, but it's really thinking about, how do you set people up? How do you set clear expectations, how do you empower the organization to deliver the results that you want? And so that was probably one of my defining moments. After that, I got an opportunity to go to Canada. So I was in Alberta, very cold, Edmonton, for six years, and did some management roles. I was a technical manager, a process manager, and then became the refinery manager. And then after, after being there for six years, I came down back to Louisiana, I like to say I've come home running one of our biggest complexes in in it's one of the biggest ones in the world. But for sure, with the next I mobile, and that's been like a huge blessing. And if you would have told me, Hey, 20 you know, 25 years later, after starting my career, that I'd be running this facility, that would be laughable at the time. I would I could not, I would not even have been able to wrap my head around that. And so it's been amazing to see how I've developed as an individual, both, you know, personally and professionally, and, you know, recognizing the foundation that I had and how it's really just set me up for success my career. Very good,

Gavin Kelly

very good. Yeah. And also it you don't often see somebody sticking with the same company, the same employer, for such a long stretch of time, I think especially these days. But I think when you get so many opportunities within it's hard to it's hard to stray away from that. If the good stuff keeps coming, you know, why give up on it? You're we're getting a little reflective, which is good. I think I mentioned this to you before that we discussed this. But it is February, it is Black History Month, and you are the first black woman to be leading the refinery in Baton Rouge, where you are. So sort of, I guess, get a little bit more reflective. Is that something that stood out to you when you first started in this position? Was it something that was meaningful to you? Was that pointed out to you early on, and kind of, how has that influenced the way you look at your own career at this point?

Regina Davis

You know, it's, it's such a it's, it's a great question, and this topic is a little bit, can be a little bit polarizing, especially in our current environment. So I'm going to give you some reflective thoughts. There have been a number of points throughout my career where I've been told I only got an opportunity or an experience because I was either a female or black or a black female, and that started all the way from University. To be, to be quite honest, I remember some of my peers when I had multiple job offers, and it was really tough. I can totally appreciate that they not just insinuate but tell me pretty flat out, like, hey, the reason you got all those job offers is because you're, you know, a minority female, a black female, which is painful, because it's like, wait a second, I studied just as hard as you guys. I knocked my things out of in my interview. I can tell you, I knew I knocked those out of the park because I got specific feedback around my interview skills, right? So to diminish what I, you know, what I was bringing to the table, because of, you know, my gender or my race, was definitely disconcerting, and that's happened throughout my career as time, there's been times where it's been insinuated or directly told to me, including when I came to Baton Rouge, that, hey, you're here because you're a black female, because I'm the first person of color and the second female. And it's interesting, because I like my predecessor, actually he and I, if you stacked our resumes, we had, like, almost the same resume. But no one insinuated to him that he was only here for a certain reason, right? And so the reason I say it's mixed is because, here's what I can tell you, unconscious biases truly exist. There's not

like I see them. I know them for myself. I mean, we it's part of how we're made. And so when, when you start looking at things and say, Well, why hasn't there been a female or why hasn't there been a person of color, it's not typically because they're just not qualified. It's because unconscious biases exist. And if I'm trying to take a bet on somebody, I'm probably going to bet on somebody who I feel more confident and comfortable with, and that person will probably, you know, look, think similar to me, even if I think I'm challenging myself. And so I do wear with pride the fact that I have been the first in many situations. I wear that with pride, because I do feel like that just opens the door of what's possible. I can't tell you how many young women, whether they're women of color or not, have just talked to me about how inspirational it is to see someone like me in the position I'm in. And so I'm never going to shy away from being proud that I am the first what I don't want that to do is to create a shadow or a thought that I'm the first because I was given an opportunity, versus I'm the first because I knocked it out of the park. I have all the goods and all the capability that come with being able to manage these type of business, you know, businesses, and so I think, you know, I'm hopeful that the narrative starts to get less into trying to have it to prove yourself, and more into like, hey, let's number one, be okay with challenging unconscious biases. They truly exist, if I can give like, a little short story to share how that exists. Because when I was coming up in the in, you know, in the company like Exxon Mobil, I was told that women needed to have thicker skin. So that's what I translated in my mind. So as I went on in my career, and as I had young women who might be working for me or walk working in my organization, and we were thinking about roles for them, I wanted to make sure that they had thick enough skin. And it was like that was an unconscious bias that I didn't even realize I had created. But I was challenged on it. There was a young lady who was pretty soft, spoken, and I was like, Oh, I'm not sure she'll be successful. Blah, blah, blah. We ended up putting her in the rope. She knocked it out of the park. And that's when it dawned on me how unconscious biases can creep in. And we think we're doing the right thing. We think that it's actually based off of not something mean spirited, but it's actually potentially limiting the diverse perspectives, and so I'm, you know, in this space that I'm in, I'm thinking about how to create the space to have open dialog, but also make sure that I'm representing that it's not about giving someone an opportunity, it's about making sure that we are addressing those barriers, those unconscious biases that could limit someone who otherwise is totally capable and could actually be what we need because of their diverse perspectives and thoughts. So I'm very passionate in the subject. I really am hopeful that, as you know, the next few years progress, that it becomes a more productive discussion. I am concerned with what I see. I'm concerned when we're doing things like laying down maybe some of the employee resource groups, or some of the focus on trying to have an inclusive and diverse workforce. But I'm still encouraged that, you know, when you have leaders like me that are willing to, you know, have the uncomfortable, uncomfortable conversations that they can be fruitful.

Gavin Kelly

Thank you for that. First of all, I don't, don't know if we could have got a better answer out of you if we'd scripted it. So I appreciate it also. You. I think maybe when this this career, this engineering career, this Exxon Mobil careers, is done, you might need. To start maybe writing some books, doing some public speaking, some keynote stuff. So thank you for that. I Let's kind of keep going a little bit on this reflective part. Plenty of career left for you. I know we're not going to like looking it's sort of a looking back type question, but I don't want to frame it as like there's so much to look back on, because there's so much ahead so but what have you sort of learned about yourself over your you know, almost 30

years working in the career, even going back as far as at the university, the person that you've become versus the person you were, all the growth you've been through, you know, what the leadership roles you've taken on, you know, going from a position where you weren't in a leadership role, and then becoming a leader, and then leading whole refineries at a time. What does that sort of taught you about yourself, maybe personally and professionally? Yeah,

Regina Davis

wow, it's such a good question. I think maybe a couple things my leadership style and I embrace it, is, I want to be viewed as an authentic leader. I want to be, you know, viewed as being transparent, someone that's accessible. So even as I've moved into roles that have been, you know, increasing responsibility, a lot more people, I still want to have that connection, and it's interesting, because I'm introverted by nature, for sure, and I would not have imagined that I would be able to be in roles where I have to engage as much as I do, whether it's inside the plant or in the community. A lot of what I'm doing now is engaging with people. Of course, I'm in meetings and making decisions, but a big part of my job is like, you know, going out in the field and engaging with the operators and talking to the first line supervisors and in the teams, and going into the community, and maybe, you know, interfacing with policy makers. And so there's so much engagement that I would not have even viewed I would be have been able to do earlier on in my career, just because, you know, it wasn't something that I grew up being able to do. It wasn't something that I was good, that I thought, and I'm introverted, and so that, you know, I've had to learn some extrovert skills in that space. So that's probably one communication has been so I appreciate your comments on communication, because I can tell you early on that I got a lot of feedback around, you know, how I presented, you know, whether it was clear, oh, like, lots of different feedback. And one of the things I truly feel blessed with is that ExxonMobil is a company that really, really, you know, strives to develop their workforce and will invest in their workforce. And so I had the opportunity to go to communication courses and do things to help, you know, help improve. Just, you know, whether it's on a one on one or, you know, in a huge audience, I would not have imagined, with where, the way that I've been able to develop my communication skills, that wasn't something I hadn't even imagined that I would would have been able to do. So then I think, you know, my resilience, you know, and I, again, I share pretty candidly about the struggles I've had, the challenges that I've had, because I think it's important for people to see that, hey, you can have, you know, things happen, and you know, a lot of it is how you approach it, how you you know, even where your head Space is at, like, okay, I can do this. I can figure this out. Like I shared, you know, being a single mom in in university, for a lot of reasons, is challenging. My mom told me, Hey, you're gonna probably have to come back home. You're gonna have to sit out and and I also remember my mom telling me, you know, if you if you ever sit out of school, you probably won't go back and so for me, it was like, Okay, what do I need to do? And I had people that rallied around me and helped me, got me the doctor's appointments, found an apartment, did all the things that I needed to do that. It just showed me like, when I put my mind to it, I was able to do it. And I have definitely seen myself continue to grow in that area when I've had challenges, things that have been really, you know, Wow, am I going to be able to get through this and get through it and be better for it? And so, yeah, so I there's, there's so much that I've learned and so many more things that I could probably say, but I have evolved so much as a person I really have and, you know, just thinking about how blessed I am in the experiences that I've had and the way that I'm able now to also give back and and mentor others is, yeah, it's hard to, it's hard to wrap my head around like, you know, 20 something years ago, that this would be kind of a

space that I'm in. But lots of growth, lots more I probably could share. But those are a few that kind of come to mind. Well, I appreciate

Gavin Kelly

it, and lots more growth to come. I'm sure, like I said, there's still a lot of lot of career ahead, it sounds like, but, but thank you for that, and again, thank you for for making time, for for this zoom call this morning. I know it's we're creeping up on mid morning on a work day, so I'm sure you've still got a full schedule ahead. But thank you also for you know, your willingness. To engage with Louisiana Tech and for representing tech so well. I've enjoyed this a lot. It was it was great getting to know you this morning. I really appreciate it. And yeah, just wanted to say thanks. And I've really enjoyed this discussion. Thanks for being on the podcast

Regina Davis

today. Thank you. I look. I'm so honored that thou was even asked to be part of it. And it's pretty cool to be one of the ambassadors for Louisiana Tech so thank

Gavin Kelly

you, Regina. We'll talk soon.

Gavin Kelly

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