

Wise, educated and widely traveled - Ohmer may be retired but he's not resting

Kelly Lusco
Chamber Insight Editor

He's walked on every continent except for Australia. He's seen the mountain sides of Ireland, seen the colorful buildings of Tokyo and traveled through the Panama Canal.

He's at lots of Chamber events and is pretty lucky when it comes to having his business card pulled out of the basket - he's Dr. Merlin Ohmer.

A native of New Orleans and resident of Thibodaux, Ohmer served as the Dean of College of Sciences at Nicholls State University from 1969 through 1987. His main responsibilities were to guide the programs in all of the sciences and to be sure they were up to date.

"I was also responsible for developing new programs, being sure that the curriculums were solid and making sure that we met all requirements of associations," he said.

Ohmer developed the Master of Science in Math program. He developed the curriculum, prepared proposals, found qualified teachers, and received permission from Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents. The process took a couple of years and was very involved. He then helped the program through the accreditation process. "There were three prominent mathematicians who came in for three days to evaluate the program," he said. The process was strenuous, but successful and very

rewarding to Ohmer.

Ohmer also developed the Computer Science Program which offered both two and four year degrees. Now the University offers only four-year Computer Science degrees.

As far as his own education, Ohmer earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Physics at Tulane University, his Master of Science degree in Celestial Mechanics/Mathematical Physics at Tulane University, and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Mathematics at the University of Pittsburgh. He also served in the US Navy.

After earning his degrees, Ohmer considered staying up north. He served as a visiting associate professor of Mathematics at the University of Pittsburgh and later at Tulane University before taking a position at the University of Southwestern University, now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Ohmer recalled walking one mile to campus everyday, enjoying a stroll to and from campus for lunch and an evening walk home. He hiked four miles a day to and from campus, and said that's how he stayed in shape. To date, Ohmer still goes to the gym every morning.

While at ULL, he got offers from Purdue and San Antonio, then an offer from Nicholls State University. Ohmer had taught worked with former NSU President Vernon Galliano, and Galliano wanted him to join the family at Nicholls State.

Ohmer debated the offer

from Nicholls State for a year, then got permission from the current ULL president and Dr. Galliano to come on down to Thibodaux.

"The thing I enjoyed the most was working with students, helping them prepare for their futures, counseling them and advising them," he said.

"I helped to get over 100 students into dental and medical schools," Ohmer said. While serving as the Chief Health Professions Advisor, he helped them apply to medical schools, gave them test-taking tips and helped them to prepare for admissions tests.

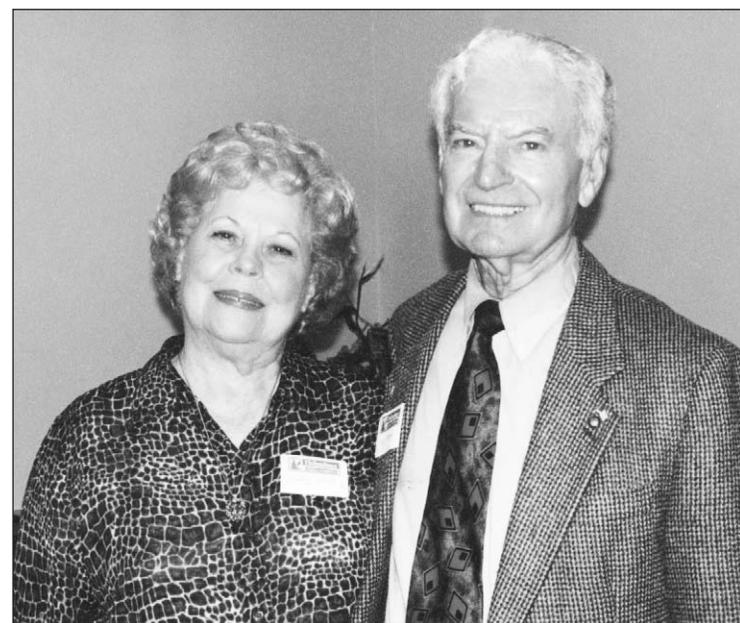
In addition to teaching and assisting students, Ohmer also authored eight books and three manuals and also served as a consultant for others writing books. He also continued to take Navy cruises every summer while in the reserves.

He was an asset to every university and community he served. Ohmer retired in 1987 and decided to travel the world.

He and his wife Beverly have seen a good bit of the world.

"We've traveled the length of the Mississippi River and the Ohio River on paddle boats, crossed both oceans, gone through the Panama Canal and been on every continent except for Australia," he said. Australia is on the list.

His favorite place he ever traveled - Ireland "Those people are so nice and they love Americans." Other places he enjoyed were Tokyo,



Dr. Merlin Ohmer and wife Beverly pose for a photo at the recent Business Card Exchange sponsored by St. Genevieve Elementary School.

Germany and Canada.

Ohmer was a Chamber member when he taught at Nicholls State, and decided to join again last year. He and Beverly enjoy membership in the Chamber.

"It doesn't give me financial benefits, but it gets me to be with people and see what other people are doing. Chamber membership is good - it expands our friendships," he said.

And you can see Ohmer at every Business Card Exchange that comes up. "Retirement for me is not sitting at home all the time," he said.

Beverly won a set of flash-

lights and Dr. Ohmer won an ice chest at the recent Business Card Exchange at St. Genevieve Elementary School. He decided to give the ice chest back not to be greedy. "If I won the lottery I'd keep it after giving some of it away," he said with a chuckle.

Ohmer said that he enjoys meeting people at Chamber events, and helps anyone any-time he can. He's retired but very active in the Thibodaux community.

Mr. and Mrs. Ohmer have three children, Merlin Paul Ohmer, Carol and Susan and six grandchildren.

Thibodaux
Chamber of Commerce

For All Your Landscaping Needs
Call Us Today!

CHACKBAY NURSERY & LANDSCAPING, INC.
Large Selection of Trees, Shrubs, Bedding Plants, Tropicals, and Much More!
Mexican Pottery
837 Hwy. 20, Chackbay 633-9608

ROBICHAUX

2002 Ford Ranger
XLT Trim
Air Condition
#T2717
\$10,995

2002 Ford Mustang
CD Player,
Aluminum Wheels,
Air Condition
#C2283
\$15,987

Sale price excludes tax, title & license
272 WEST MAIN STREET, THIBODAUX • 446-3100 "PARTS AND SERVICE OPEN SATURDAYS UNTIL NOON!"