



## Challenges, excitement of drilling industry drive Mark Burns ahead

**MARK BURNS IS** currently hard at work in the Persian Gulf. The Noble Mark Burns, that is. It's a Levingston Class 111-C independent leg cantilever jackup named after Noble Corporation's Vice President and Division Manager - US Gulf of Mexico.

"It was a wonderful yet very humbling honor," Mr Burns said. "To be recognized in such a way by our chairman and CEO and our board of directors is a great honor, especially considering our company's 85 years of operations and the past and present employees bestowed this recognition. My family was as thrilled about it as I was."

And his family — wife **Melissa**, daughter **Brittany** and son **Blake** — each have equal share in this recognition, Mr Burns said, as they've moved with him and supported him as he traveled everywhere from Southeast Asia to the North Sea over the past 2 decades to manage Noble operations.

### ALL AROUND THE WORLD

His first job with Noble, in fact, took him all the way to East Africa and the island of Madagascar. Traveling so far away from home, however, didn't daunt this born-and-bred Texan.

"Noble gave me the opportunity to live and work internationally. That was extremely exciting for me," he said. "I knew from my early college years that I enjoyed working with drilling equipment from my first experience working on land rigs during the summer months. And when I joined Noble, the prospect of traveling was not a hindrance, it was a bonus. I have always enjoyed the excitement of traveling internationally and working with people from different backgrounds."

Since that first job with Noble in 1983, where Mr Burns began as a driller, he has steadily taken on more responsibili-



**Mark Burns has 23 years of service with Noble Corp and has been a leader of numerous IADC activities, including serving as chairman of the North Sea Chapter in 2003-04.**

ties, both in corporate and divisional postings. In 1989, he was assigned to Noble's Southeast Asia operations before transferring back to Houston in 1992 and serving as Manager of Technical Services.

"In 1996, in keeping with one of our company's long-term strategic goals, we sold our land rig fleet to focus on growing our offshore operations," Mr Burns said. "This allowed me to gain experience in managing jackup and deepwater semisubmersible operations, a segment of our industry that I find fascinating and exciting."

Mr Burns was transferred to Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1998, where he was appointed manager of Noble's UK operations in the North Sea. "My family and I enjoyed our years in Scotland very much and have fond memories of the land, culture and people," he recounted. Both his children graduated from the International School in Aberdeen.

In 2005, he was transferred back to Noble's corporate office in Sugar Land, Texas. As Vice President and Division Manager for the US Gulf of Mexico, Mr

Burns now manages the daily operations of 12 MODUs, including 7 deepwater semisubmersibles.

In reflecting on his career with Noble, Mr Burns said, "I am fortunate to work for a company whose health, safety and environmental efforts are a key focus of all employees at all levels. The drilling industry is a demanding and exciting environment, and our company has been in business for over 85 years, a unique achievement in a very competitive business sector. From a personal standpoint, Noble has been very good to me. And in my 23 years of service, I am proud to have played some small role in our company's growth and development."

### IADC SERVICE

Mr Burns has been an IADC member since he began working for Noble, serving in various leadership roles over the years.

Most recently, he was chairman of the IADC North Sea Chapter in 2003-04. As chairman, he dealt with the UK's implementation of the EU Working Time Directive and led the joint IADC/UK Health and Safety Executive Work Group on risk assessing and monitoring rig floor safety. But, Mr Burns said, he takes the greatest pride in helping to bring in the Dutch, Danish and Norwegian sectors and getting them more involved with IADC activities.

"The North Sea is a very regulated industry. It's a challenge to quickly and successfully move rigs from one operating sector to another. Each country has unique regulatory and statutory requirements, and encouraging and bringing together the different sectors to participate in the affairs of IADC is a great step toward improving understanding and cooperation," Mr Burns said.

Additionally, Mr Burns has served on the UK Step Change for Safety Leadership Team and the 2003 and 2005 SPE/IADC Drilling Conference Advisory Committees.

For the 2007 Drilling Conference, he's taking his leadership and expertise to the Program Committee and is heavily involved in planning the IADC Mooring Workshop, to be held 23 May in Houston.

IADC President **Lee Hunt** praised Mr Burns for his help in strengthening our industry's unifying voice. "Mark is a consensus builder and negotiator on different points of view," Dr Hunt said, "and he always keeps his eyes focused on the goal. He gets things done." ■