

Warped

by Scott McCullar



Waldo

by Kevin Thomas



# Former football star now passing oil rigs

DALLAS (AP) — In three years, Mike Mullen has sold more than 125 oil rigs.

The three years weren't the go-go years of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He's done it since 1985 — during three of the most pathetic years the domestic oil and gas drilling equipment industry has ever seen.

Mullen got into the oil business in 1975 and has been able to stay in it ever since — continuing to make money in the up and down cycles that his career has overlapped.

It could be said Mullen has good timing: Many still remember the Dallas native as a linebacker for St. Mark's School of Texas and later as an All-America at Tulane University. In 1973, he was drafted by the Miami Dolphins — and in his 1974 rookie season played with the Dolphins as they beat the Minnesota Vikings for their second consecutive Super Bowl championship.

"I had an opportunity to jump to the rival World Football League for a lot more money and what I thought was more job security," Mullen said from his office in suburban Highland Park. "The league cratered. I became aware of how unstable that type of profession can be."

And so he moved back to Dallas, ending his short-but-sweet football career, and launched another risky career — in the oil business.

But Mullen has learned to work the industry's downside to his advantage.

He started his second career with Sedco International, going to work in Iran and the North Sea. He returned to the United States in 1979 as the last domestic oil boom was taking off and operated a drilling company in five Southeastern states out of Natchez, Miss.

In 1983, as the industry was working its way out of the 1982 decline in oil prices, Mullen was hired by Dallas-based InterFirst Bank for a first-of-its-kind job. InterFirst hired the drilling contractor to be its manager

of oil-related assets and to help restructure loans to contract drillers. In two years, Mullen managed \$480 million in drilling equipment that the bank had taken back through foreclosure and lay dormant in three equipment yards.

In 1985, Mullen said he saw an opportunity to start his own company — "which was to buy assets from banks at distressed values with

the intent of marketing them at a later date."

With a pool of investors he founded Dallas-based Energy Equipment Resource Inc. and became the managing partner of a multimillion-dollar venture capital fund that speculates in oil rigs.

Since its inception, gross sales have exceeded \$12 million. This year, Mullen's company has had sales of \$4.6 million.

## Reign over UIL could be tightened

AUSTIN (AP) — The Sunset Advisory Commission adopted proposals Thursday that supporters said would tighten state control over the University Interscholastic League, which was created 75 years ago and governs athletics and other extracurricular activities in all Texas public schools.

Although proposals by the citizen-legislator commission must be approved by the Legislature to become effective, its recommendations often trigger changes by organizations it reviews periodically.

On Thursday, three Sunset members — including two Mexican-American legislators — indicated that they object to the absence of women and minorities in the UIL's decision-making process.

The proposal by Jane Hickie would require the State Board of Education to review all rules governing extracurricular activities, not just changes proposed by the UIL. The board has had review authority since 1984, but rules in place at that time were approved without an in-depth review, according to the Sunset staff analysis.

A fund would be established in the state treasury for the UIL, with school membership fees being deposited in the fund. The Legislature would appropriate money from the

fund to cover UIL administrative expenses.

A fund outside the state treasury would be set up to collect contest fees and gate receipts, with a portion of the money paying for competitions and other amounts being rebated to the schools.

Currently, UIL membership and miscellaneous fees are deposited in an account administered by the University of Texas.

Sunset director Bill Wells noted that the proposal would move the UIL into the appropriation process for the first time.

Hickie said her proposal does not guarantee that women and minorities would be included on the UIL's policy-making bodies, but the vote appeared to be a signal that that was its intention.

"It would allow the State Board of Education to structure the representation to reflect" the student population, Hickie said.

Rep. Lena Guerrero, D-Austin, said, "I'm concerned that if it was left up to the UIL, it would never change the structure. We intend to change the structure and gain some state control."

"Funding (control) would be our ultimate opportunity."

# Throttle switch failure blamed for Delta crash

IRVING (AP) — A switch for a system that would have warned the pilots of Delta Air Lines Flight 1141 that the jet's wing flaps were improperly set for takeoff had corroded, a veteran engineer told federal investigators Thursday.

But engineer Donald R. Ryder told the National Transportation Safety Board that the F197 throttle switch subsequently passed engineering and circuitry tests after it was taken from the plane that crashed Aug. 31 at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, killing 14 of the 108 people aboard.

The plane's flaps, which provide extra lift during the slow speeds of takeoff and landing, have been a focus of the federal investigators.

The flaps were found in the incorrect position after the crash, but it is not known whether they were set that way or whether they were out of position because of the impact or by mechanical failure.

An exhibit by the NTSB indicated "the switch exhibited blue-green cor-

rosion-type substance around the normally open terminals on the exterior of the housing." The exhibit also said the plunger hole on the switch was enlarged.

The Air Line Pilots Association said before the public hearing began Tuesday that its experts believed the plane's takeoff warning system was inoperative and that the pilots had no idea that the plane's flaps were improperly set — some up, some down.

Ryder said the switch worked perfectly in tests of circuitry designed to resemble that of the plane.

But upon questioning, Ryder said the same switch had not worked in other tests by an NTSB investigator.

During his test, Ryder said, the button and the plunger of the switch slipped by each other, meaning they didn't make contact. He blamed the failure on "mismanipulation," saying the installation was different from what one would find on a 727.

Ryder said any problems with inoperative switches should be found

during routine maintenance and that the switches are virtually self-cleaning, brushing the contacts clean with each use.

Witness Robert E. North of Pratt & Whitney said his company's three engines mounted on Delta Flight 1141 showed no sign of damage that might have occurred before the crash. The third engine showed major interior damage, but North said he believed the evidence indicated the damage must have occurred after the crash.

On Wednesday, a Boeing aerodynamics supervisor testified that the plane was traveling fast enough to fly even if its flaps had been retracted.

Investigators have been puzzled by the fact the plane's flap handle was found up, the retracted position, although some of the plane's flaps and slats were extended.

NTSB officials say the hearing is only for fact-gathering and that no conclusions will be released until a report is made public in six months.

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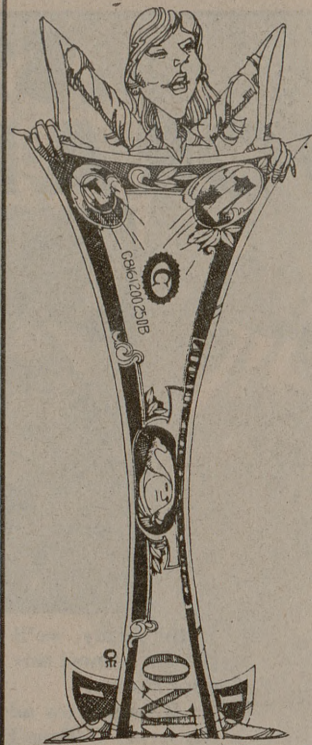
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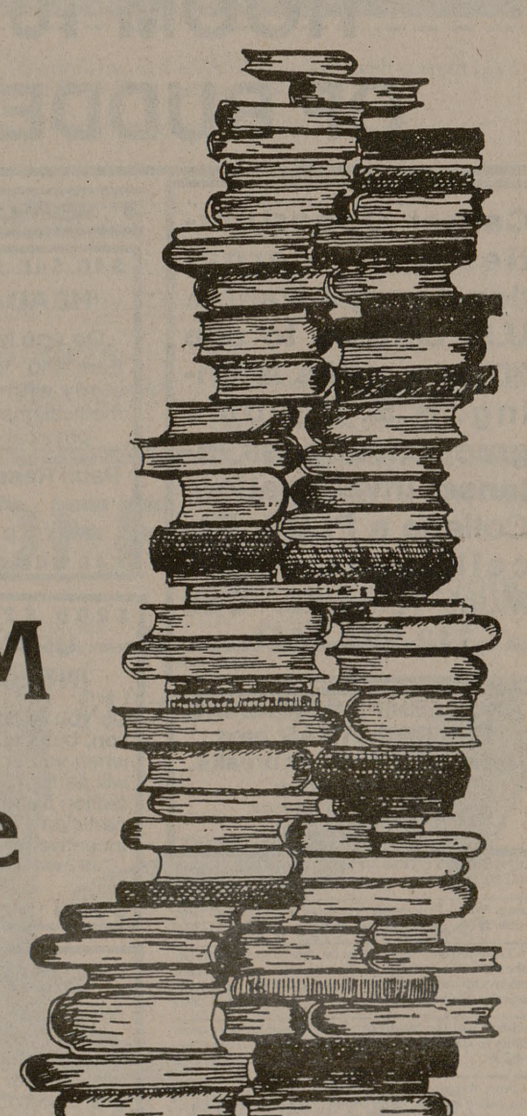
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