



2021  
**SPE SOUTHWESTERN REGIONAL AWARDS**

RECIPIENTS



Thursday 20 May 2021

# About SPE Regional Awards Program

The Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) Awards recognize members for their technical contributions, professional excellence, career achievement, service to colleagues, industry leadership, and public service.

Regional awards recognize members who contribute exceptional service and leadership within SPE and make significant professional contributions within their technical disciplines at the SPE regional level. Awards are presented in the appropriate SPE Regions and Meetings.

This year's winners of the Southwestern North America regional awards are **16** exceptional E&P professionals who have demonstrated outstanding talent and dedication to their fields and have earned the votes of their peers and colleagues.

# SPE Awardees

## Technical Awards:

Technical Awards recognize significant achievements or contributions to the advancement of petroleum engineering in the area of the technical discipline. The recipients' contributions to the technology stand out sharply and help to advance the discipline.

RECIPIENT OF THE SPE REGIONAL  
Reservoir Description and  
Dynamics Award

RECIPIENT OF THE SPE REGIONAL  
Drilling Engineering Award

RECIPIENT OF THE SPE REGIONAL  
Completions Optimization  
and Technology Award

RECIPIENT OF THE SPE REGIONAL  
Formation Evaluation Award

# **Completions Optimization and Technology Award**

**Ademolu Adeyemi  
Olubajo**

# Nominator Statement

Designed a mobile transformer unit large enough to support 10,000 HP directly tied to the electrical power grid. This unit is designed to be moved with the frac and is a great accomplishment.

Ademolu is critical in being among the first in the Industry to operate frac pumps directly from the electrical grid. The results of Ademolu's work will alter the way in which future frac operations take place across the industry.

Significantly reduced emission footprint  
Increased pump efficiency by utilizing electrical motors instead of diesel.

Behind every winner is a great nomination

Nominate a colleague for outstanding work in the E&P industry.

## Drilling Engineering Award



**Rhett Bullock**

Rhett Bullock is a native Texan and has served as the Drilling Operations Manager at Endeavor Energy Resources since 2017, currently leading a rapidly-growing drilling program in the Permian Basin. He is a degreed Mechanical Engineer with a Minor in Business Administration from Texas A&M University, and is licensed by the state of Texas as a professional engineer in Petroleum Engineering. Mr. Bullock also has extensive training in Continuous Improvement philosophies, Lean Six Sigma, and Project Management. His unique background in engineering, business, and project management has supported his success in various drilling and completion roles in several US shale plays. Prior to joining Endeavor, Mr. Bullock served as the Drilling Operations Manager for Anadarko Petroleum Corporation after working as a drilling engineer, completion engineer, and senior continuous improvement production engineer across the Eagle Ford, Woodbine/Eaglebine, Austin Chalk, Southern Kansas, and Delaware Basin.

As an active member of the Midland community, Mr. Bullock has served and participated in a variety of volunteer roles, including Chairperson of the American Association of Drilling Engineers, West Texas Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and Keep Midland Beautiful. He enjoys spending time outside of work with his wife, Allie, and daughter, Reese, oftentimes hunting, fishing, and playing an occasional round of golf.

# Nominator Statement

Rhett Bullock demonstrated that he has the engineering competencies, professional engineering licensure for petroleum engineering, engineering design, and operational experiences, and the character that are a match for this award. He understands the importance of teamwork and his teams have delivered exceptional drilling performance with high-quality wellbores, using his continuous improvement methodologies across several basins to prove that safety and efficiency are not mutually exclusive.

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# Data Science and Engineering and Analytics



**Ronnie Arispe**

Ronnie Arispe is a Data and Analytics Specialist for ConocoPhillips, heritage Concho Resources due to a recent merger. Previously he worked for Apache Corporation as a Reservoir Technician. Ronnie is also co-founder of the SPE Permian Basin Data and Analytics Study Group and sits as the current Chair. He holds a mathematics degree from UTPB and has been accepted to a Masters's in Data Analytics at Texas A&M.

# Nominator Statement

Ronnie has been instrumental in implementing all the data analytics requirements for all the reservoir, production, completion engineers to do our job. He is a great mentor. His ability to quickly implement change is amazing. When he is not fostering collaboration internally he is fostering local meet-ups with different companies where we get to learn from each other and he also founded the data analytics chapter and set up the first analytics symposium in the Permian.

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## Formation Evaluation



**Pythagoras Okada**

Pythagoras is a petroleum engineer with 16+ years of experience. He started his career as a field engineer in Venezuela with Schlumberger later moving into service quality and business development. He worked at Concho Resources as Petrophysicist and currently works as a Staff Petrophysicist at ConocoPhillips. He holds an Electrical Engineering Degree and a Petroleum Engineering Master Degree from University of Houston. Currently his area of expertise is augmenting petrophysics with data science. He is currently pursuing a Master Degree in Data Analytics at Georgia Tech.

# Nominator Statement

Pythagoras has been driving the Permian petrophysical analysis to the forefront in technology, incorporating machine learning algorithms to reduce interpretation times from years to few months, integrating petrophysics and reservoir engineering seamlessly to generate the most accurate dynamic and static reservoir characterization models to date, leading by example that the discipline has to look beyond water saturation.

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## Management



**Chad McAllaster**

Chad McAllaster joined Endeavor in December 2019 and is responsible for the company's southern Midland Basin development activities and Supply Chain. Mr. McAllaster has over 20 years of upstream oil and gas experience and has worked in the Mid-Continent, East Texas, Rockies, Deepwater GOM, Permian Basin, and Mozambique asset areas. Prior to joining Endeavor, he served as Vice President of Delaware Basin Development for Anadarko Petroleum Corporation. Mr. McAllaster earned a bachelor's degree in Petroleum Engineering from Texas Tech University and a master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Denver. He is a current participant in Southern Methodist University's Executive Leadership program and is a licensed professional engineer in Texas, Wyoming, and Colorado.

Actively involved in the local Midland community, Mr. McAllaster serves as Chairman of the Board for the Midland Chamber of Commerce. He is an avid road cyclist and enjoys supporting local charitable events, such as BikeMS Cactus and Crude Ride benefitting the MS Society.

# Nominator Statement

For his 20 years of leadership and effective management in the oil and gas industry in various organizations.

Managing a team of 20 engineers and supply chain analysts supporting the Midland Basin.

Served as Vice president of the Delaware Basin asset team for Anadarko.

Served as Vice president operations of the Maverick Basin (Eagle Ford) for Anadarko.

Served as General Manager of the Maverick Basin (Eagle Ford) for Anadarko.

Served as General Manager, Business Planning, International and Deepwater Operations.

Served as General Manager - Coal Bed Methane Assets

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## Production and Operation



**Yingda Lu**

Dr. Yingda Lu holds a B.S. from Tsinghua University and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, both in Chemical Engineering. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Hildebrand Department Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin. Prior to this role, Dr. Lu worked as a research associate at the University of Tulsa, a faculty member at the China University of Petroleum in Beijing, and a post-doctoral researcher at Reservoir Engineering Research Institute. Dr. Lu's research focuses on the flow assurance issues that impair efficient oil and gas production.

# Nominator Statement

Dr. Lu conducted several impactful works that significantly advanced the modeling and theories of wax crystallization, gelation, and deposition during oil and gas production. His works provide significant insights on how to process waxy oils more efficiently.

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## Projects, Facilities and Construction



**Christopher Smith**

Christopher Smith is a Senior Facilities Engineer at ConocoPhillips. He started his career in 2012 after graduating from Texas Tech University with a B.S. Mechanical Engineering. Since then, he has worked in multiple disciplines from brown field operations support to CO<sub>2</sub> processing plants across the Permian Basin. In his current position, he supports green field development by design and project management of new facility projects in the Delaware Basin unconventional play. His primary project focus areas are safe operations and reduced emissions while meeting budget and time constraints in an evolving industry.

# Nominator Statement

Chris has designed one of the most advanced facilities in the company, through his guidance commingling issues in New Mexico were completely eliminated and he is always thriving to improve design to save cost.

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# Reservoir Description and Dynamics



**Yvonne Scherz**

Yvonne Scherz is a Sr Staff Reservoir Engineer at Endeavor Energy Resources. She graduated from Tulane University in New Orleans with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. She is a registered professional engineer with over 30 years' experience in various roles in the Industry. Ms. Scherz began her career at Mobil Oil and has worked at large independents including The Superior Oil Co., Mitchell Energy, Kinder Morgan and EP Energy. Prior to joining Endeavor, she was a consultant in Acquisitions and Divestitures, evaluating unconventional properties in the Marcellus, Haynesville, Eagle Ford, and the Permian Basin.

# Nominator Statement

For her 40 years of industry experience and technical excellence in Reservoir Engineering.

Technical lead on data acquisition and analysis of unconventional oil wells. As a Subject Matter Expert in Fracture Driven Interactions (FDI), have authored SPE technical papers on the subject and presented them at the Hydraulic Fracturing Technical Conference (2019, 2020) and URTec (2019). Invited speaker at multiple forums and industry panels.

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# Sustainability and Stewardship in the Oil and Gas Industry



## **Mazaruny D Rincones Garcia**

Nuny Rincones is a Petroleum engineer with 16+ years of experience; she started her career as a Field Engineer in Venezuela with Schlumberger later moving into management and business development. She worked at Sheridan Production as Petrophysicist Team Lead and currently works as a Reservoir Characterization Engineer at ConocoPhillips. She Holds a Petroleum Engineering Degree from Universidad Central de Venezuela and a Master of Science in Petroleum Engineering from University of Houston. Under Dr. Lee's guidance her master's thesis was awarded the first place at the SPE student paper competition, SPE-177018-MS. Her area of expertise is conventional and unconventional reservoir evaluation and reservoir performance. Jan 2021 marked the next adventure starting an MSc in Analytics at Georgia Tech.

Nuny Believes that you cannot become what you cannot see and that is how the Diversity and Inclusion committee was born, in order to portrait different faces of success. Diversity and Inclusion is a Journey and not a destination and I am proud to be part of the solution.

# Nominator Statement

Nuny is the lead example of sustainable development, when she arrived in the Permian Basin, she quickly realized there were not as many diverse faces doing presentations, or simply portraying how diverse the industry really is. She took it upon herself to launch the Diversity and Inclusion committee and she already has a year lined up with great speakers from diverse backgrounds making sure the chapter embraces her vision for the year “you can not become what you cannot see.”

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## **Service Awards:**

The SPE Regional Services Awards acknowledges exceptional contributions to the Society of Petroleum Engineers at the section or regional level and recognizes singular devotion of time and effort to the programs and development of the member's section and region that set it apart from the services rendered each year by many members of the Society.

## **Distinguished Achievement Award for Petroleum Engineering Faculty**



**Steven Henderson**

Steven Henderson is Associate Professor of Practice at Texas Tech University where his courses focus on petroleum geology and formation evaluation at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Beginning his career as a wireline engineer in the Permian Basin, he was with Halliburton Wireline and Perforating for 20 years. In 2016, Steve made the jump from corporate training to academics, joining the faculty of the Bob L. Herd Department of Engineering at TTU. Recent studies he and his graduate students have undertaken include reservoir characterization and stratal block mapping in the San Andres horizontal play, log-derived permeability modeling in Mid-Continent and Permian Basin carbonates, log characterization of a potential ROZ/CDR in the Illinois Basin, and accessible methods of log data quality assurance. Steve is a graduate of the University of Texas (BS, 1990) and Texas Tech University (MS, 1992; PhD, 1995) with degrees in petroleum geology. He is a Certified Petroleum Geologist and Texas Professional Geoscientist, and member of SPE, AAPG, and SPWLA.

# Nominator Statement

I am honored to nominate Dr. Steve Henderson for the SPE Distinguished Achievement Award for Petroleum Engineering Faculty. Steve's impact on the petroleum industry through his writing, research, and the thousands of hours and hundreds of students he has trained in petrophysics is immeasurable. As I have followed his career from his graduate school days as a Ph.D. candidate, I have been impressed by his work. He is an excellent scientist, an inspired teacher, and a darn good writer.

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Nominate a colleague for outstanding work in the E&P industry.

## Public Service



### **Akinfolami A Akintunji**

Akinfolami (Flo) Akintunji has spent 12 years working in operation and production engineering roles for operators, and currently works in both capacities for Unitex Oil & Gas, LLC. He started his career with Atinum E&P Inc. working with assets on the gulf coast, including offshore, and now manages ~800 conventional wells located primarily in the Permian Basin. Flo has a BSc. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin, a Masters in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Houston, and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Texas Permian Basin.

In addition to being active with SPE, having served on the Permian Basin board in various capacities including as the 2018-2019 Chair, he is an active board member with the local YMCA, an officer with Pop-Up Toastmasters, and a Deacon at his church – First Baptist Church of Midland. Flo and his wife Renny have two children, Tade (3) and Ari (1), and have enjoyed calling Midland home.

# Nominator Statement

Flo serves as a board member of the local Midland YMCA. In addition to general board duties, Flo serves on the Health/Fitness/Marketing & Membership subcommittee. In this capacity, he works with fellow committee members to promote public awareness of the YMCA offerings, as well as monitoring the needs and interests of individuals in the community so as to make informed recommendations for YMCA services.

Flo serves as the president of the South West Oilman's Tennis Tournament (SWOTT). The yearly tournament brings the local oil field community together for tennis fun while raising funds for local charity organizations, and Tennis High School programs.

Flo serves as a Deacon at First Baptist Church of Midland. As a Deacon, Flo serves several older church families (including widows), and serves on various church committees which facilitate the proper functioning of the church.

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Nominate a colleague for outstanding work in the E&P industry.

**Young Member  
Outstanding Service Award**



**Bo Ren**

Dr. Bo Ren is a reservoir engineer (research associate), working for the State of Texas Advanced Resource Recovery (STARR) program at the Bureau of Economic Geology, UT-Austin. His research interests include low-carbon energy, CO<sub>2</sub> EOR and storage, and reservoir optimization and management. He develops and uses full/reduced-physics models and physics-guided machine learning models to understand multiphase flow associated with both carbon storage and energy production. Bo has published over 40 technical papers. He holds a Ph.D. degree from UT-Austin and a B.S. degree from the China University of Petroleum, both in petroleum engineering. He serves as an associate editor for SPE Reservoir Evaluation & Engineering and Journal of Petroleum Science and Engineering, and also a program committee member for SPE ATCE and SPE URTEC.

# Nominator Statement

Dr. Ren has distinguished himself in all manner of volunteer work for the SPE, and for establishing strong links between his Chinese institute and his current employer.

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**Young Member  
Outstanding Service Award**



**Akiko Lynette Billings**

Akiko Billings has always been a strong advocate for continuous improvement. From growing up in the Fiji Islands to migrating to Stockton, California, to graduating with a B.S. in Petroleum Engineering from the Colorado School of Mines in 2013 and starting her career in the Permian Basin, she has had a diverse background that has allowed for innovation and creative solutions. Akiko has been an active member of SPE, and has served as the Communications, Membership and Programs Chair for the Hobbs Section, the Vice-Chair and Communications Chair for the Permian Young Professionals Board and the Communications Chair for the Permian Section. During her term as Communications Chair, she redesigned The Pipeline Newsletter as well as the section's website ([spepb.org](http://spepb.org)), while saving \$20,000 in printer costs for the year and growing SPE's online following five-fold (~2550 followers).

# Nominator Statement

During a time when advocating for oil and gas is vital, Akiko Billings has been proactive in her marketing efforts for SPE, encouraging members to keep up their networks online and save the section costs changing publishers for the pipeline, she has done through and through an excellent job.

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## Regional Service Award



### **Shivani Rajiv Vyas**

Shivani Vyas is a Technical Services Engineer at Odessa Separator Inc. (OSI) who is responsible for designing and providing solutions for optimized well performance. She holds a bachelor's degree in Petroleum Engineering from Texas Tech University, is technically driven, strives to make a positive impact and has co-authored several papers including for SPE ATCE, SPE Artificial Lift Forum and South Western Petroleum Short Course.

Shivani firmly believes in innovation and giving back to the community. She is actively involved with the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) and currently serves as a Chair for the SPE Young Professionals (YP) – Permian Basin (PB) Section. In the past, she has also served as a Vice – Chair for SPE YP Permian Basin. It has been under her leadership and vision that SPE YP - Permian Basin section successfully initiated and conducted programs like Resume Workshop, Mentorship Program to develop member's personal and professional skills. This chapter has been successful in increasing frequency of community service involving members and helping local organization like WTX Food Bank, Jubilee Center, CASA and local community college like Midland College when the industry and community was going through extraordinary circumstances of the Pandemic.

Before receiving this award, she has requested to mention that all the activities with SPE YP Permian Basin section have been made possible thanks to immense support and cooperation she received from her fellow team of board members within Young Professionals. She also is very much grateful for guidance she has received from SPE Permian Basin board members.

# Nominator Statement

Shivani has done a great job as a Chair, SPE Young Professionals Permian Basin Section and she also is spearheading a new online mentoring initiative that is connecting young professionals with mid-careers. She has elevated the chapter with her energy and professionalism

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## **Regional Service Award**



**Mazaruny D Rincones  
Garcia**

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Nuny Believes that you cannot become what you cannot see and that is how the Diversity and Inclusion committee was born, in order to portrait different faces of success. Diversity and Inclusion is a Journey and not a destination and I am proud to be part of the solution.

# Nominator Statement

Nuny successfully launched the diversity and inclusion Permian Basin Committee with the slogan “you can not become what you can not see”. She saw the need for diverse representation in the Permian basin and has prepared an extensive speaker lineup for the entire year. From Bias training to augmenting petroleum engineering through data science her mission is to make sure every face in the Permian sees themselves as an able and capable individual regardless of race, religion, and gender.

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# **Regional Service Award**

**Cathy Harris**

# Nominator Statement

She serves as chair for the SPE Permian Basin Completions and Operations Committee.

She arranged the logistics and made the first SPE Permian Basin Section Production Management Symposium a possibility.

She makes sure the logistics of SPE workshops, symposia, and study group meetings are held efficiently and does more than her fair share to make sure events run smoothly.

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**Congratulations to all of this  
year's winners!**

**If you would like to participate in next year's awards,  
you can find out more information about the SPE  
awards at <https://www.spe.org/awards/>.**