

KEITH F. WALKER

1921-2018

Historical Legend

Keith was born on March 21, 1921 in Dallas Texas. He graduated from Highland Park High School in 1938 and attended college at Southern Methodist University where he graduated in 1942 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Geology. While in college he played on the varsity tennis team. He was senior class President and also President of his fraternity Phi Delta Theta.

After graduation and the outbreak of WWII Keith joined the Army AIR Corps serving from 1942-1946. His induction in the military included cadet school at Yale University and training at Lowry Field in Denver, Colorado. Advanced training was at MIT in Boston where he studied aerial mapping. After initially being stationed at Peterson Field in Colorado Springs, Keith was transferred to the China Burma India Theater.

Keith spent 2 years stationed in Guskara India flying in B-25s from India through Burma and into Western China. The Allied Forces were flying cargo missions over what pilots called the Hump, the eastern Himalayan Mountains, to resupply the Chinese war effort. Pilots found the route



quite dangerous because of a lack of good maps, navigation equipment and weather information. Keith's job was to take aerial photos and make good maps of the area.

Following his time in India, Keith was transferred to the Philippines where he was the commanding officer of the Sixth Photo Squadron and obtained the rank of Captain. After WWII Keith attended the University of Oklahoma where he received his Master of Science Degree in Geology using the GI bill. He also earned his private pilots license. Keith returned to SMU where he was a professor of geology.

In 1948 Keith took a group of SMU students, all of which were WWII veterans, on a

summer field trip to Alaska to study geology. While teaching at SMU he met the love of his life Mary LuAnn Foster. Ann was a student in one of Keith's geology classes. Rather than studying the night before her final Ann had gone out dancing. She flunked the final exam dropping her grade from an A to a B, a source of grumbling for many decades. Keith asked Ann out after the semester and in September of 1949 they married. Keith and Ann were happily married for 61 years.

In 1949 Keith decided that he wanted to go into the oil industry. Preferring a smaller company he accepted a job with JD Lewis and Company in Ardmore. In February of 1950 while working for Lewis, Keith drilled his first well the #1 Martin-Williams in section 22 of 1S 3W to a TD of 2532'. It IP'd for 55 Bopd and went on to make over 129,000 barrels of oil. He drilled an offset, the #1 Martin that also made a nice well. The third well, the McCrory was a dry hole.

Keith went to work for HF Gibson in 1951 and remained until 1956. He did not drill or operate any private wells during this time. Keith and Ann's oldest son Dale was born in 1951. Luann was born in 1955 and Bob followed in 1957. In 1956 Keith went out on his own to start Keith F. Walker Oil & Gas. Between 1956 and 1960 he drilled over 45 wells. Most were successful producers in the Eola-Robberson field of Garvin County.

While running the business for over 50 years, Keith drilled more than 600 wells in Oklahoma and Kansas. Keith also drilled wells in Wyoming, North Dakota, Nevada, Colorado, Nebraska, Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Texas. In partnership with others from Ardmore he drilled some gas wells in the Alberta Basin of Canada. Although some of these ventures worked out, his best success was always in Oklahoma.



Keith was always an entrepreneur. While the oil and gas company was his main business he also invested in other local businesses such as the First National Bank of Ardmore. He served on the FNB's Board of Directors from 1965 to 2017 and as chairman from 1986 to 1992. He eventually became the majority shareholder.

During this time the bank grew substantially. The First National Bank of Ardmore went from one location to nine stretching from Norman to the Red River.

Keith was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Ardmore. He served on the board of deacons and the board of trustees. He also served on the board of directors of the YMCA, the Omniplex Science Museum of Oklahoma City and the OIPA.

Keith was always a great athlete. He enjoyed volleyball at the YMCA and also tennis. He regularly won the over 40s Ardmore tennis tournament.

Keith and Ann retained a love of travel and dance throughout their lives. In later years they enjoyed cruises. They competed in national Fred Astaire dance competitions winning several national grand championships. With their friends they formed the TLE, Two Left Feet, dance club in Ardmore. They enjoyed teaching dance to younger couples.

One of Keith and Ann's favorite places was Breckenridge Colorado. On their way to Alaska in

1949 for their honeymoon, they stopped in Breckenridge. They never made it to Alaska. In 1965 along with some other Ardmore friends they built a condominium complex. The family spent many happy Christmas and summer vacations in the Colorado Mountains.

In 1955 and 1956 Keith published two field studies, the North Wildcat Jim Field and the West Brock Field, in the AAPG Geology of Southern Oklahoma publications. Keith was always excited by the business and was an eager supporter of new ideas. He kept regular office hours even into his 80s. He involved his children in the business from early in their lives. He always conducted himself as a gentleman with his word being his bond. Quiet and unassuming, he was a kind and loving father and husband as well as a successful oil and gas finder.

It is with great pleasure that the Directors of the Oklahoma Geological Foundation present Keith F. Walker as a Historical Legend Award recipient for 2018.

