

MEMORIAL TO BEN H. PARKER 1902-1969

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Ben H. Parker was born in Oklahoma on November 3, 1902. He was the son of Milton Edson Parker and Mamie Parker who were pioneers in Oklahoma when the Territory was opened to settlement in 1889. He attended both grade and high school in Oklahoma City. The state capitol stands on land given to the State of Oklahoma by the Parker family.

Ben's college career began at the age of 16 when he entered the Colorado School of Mines. He was a serious, dedicated student who also contributed a great deal to campus activities. He received his Professional Engineer's degree in 1924.

While at Golden he met Elizabeth Thorley, then a student at the University of Denver, whom he married soon after graduation. Their son, Ben Parker, Jr., also is a practicing geologist and engineer.

During the mid and late 1920's, Ben served as a petroleum geologist and engineer, largely in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado and South Dakota.

In 1931 he returned to the Colorado School of Mines for graduate studies, and was awarded the Doctor of Science degree in 1934. He worked briefly with Gulf Oil Company, became a partner in a consulting firm with James Boyd, then joined the faculty of the Geology Department of the Colorado School of Mines in 1936. This was the beginning of his long and contributive association with the College. In 1938 (during a leave of absence from the College) he took his family to the Argentine for a year where he established an exploration program for the national oil company, Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales.

After World War II the Board of Trustees asked Ben Parker to become President of the Colorado School of Mines, a position he held until 1950. During these years he laid the foundations for the modernization of the College to meet the rapidly changing demands in engineering education.

In 1950 he returned to industry as Executive Vice President of Frontier Refining Company and later as President, a position he held until Frontier merged with Husky Oil Limited in 1968. Afterward he served as a consultant to the petroleum industry.

He continued to serve as a valued supporter of the Colorado School of Mines as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1950 to 1957, and as President of the Board until his passing. During the past twenty years he played a major role, not only in establishing new and constructive policies at the College, but also in guiding the over-all direction of engineering education at Golden.

Many honors were conferred upon Ben in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the academic and professional worlds. In 1949 he was awarded an honorary LLD degree from Colorado College, and in 1966 an honorary Doctor of Engineering degree from his Alma Mater. He was elected President of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists in 1960, and later was awarded an honorary membership for distinguished achievement in the field of petroleum. He was one of the founders of and major contributors to the American Institute of Professional Geologists, and served as its President in 1965. He was a Fellow of The Geological Society of America, a member of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers, the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America, the American Institute of Professional Geologists, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and the Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists, which he helped to organize. Also, he was a Director of the Colorado School of Mines Research Foundation, and since 1952, a member of the Colorado State Board of Examiners for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. He had served as President of the Board of Directors of the Golden State Bank since its founding in 1961.

Ben was a major contributor to geologic literature. His papers, listed in the bibliography, cover a wide range of fields, including many on the genesis of petroleum, petroleum geology and occurrences in the Rocky Mountain region, the petroleum geology and petroleum industry of the Argentine, and many others.

He was given recognition in *Who's Who in Engineering*, *American Men of Science*, *Who's Who in America*, *International World's Who's Who*, and in *Statesmans' Who's Who*.

Ben Parker always will be remembered at the Colorado School of Mines and in the geological and engineering professions as a highly contributive and fine man whose dedication, wisdom and guidance will serve as an inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

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