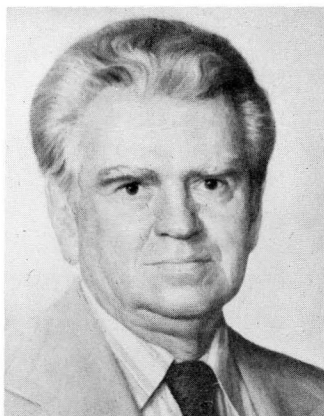


Memorial to John Martin Kelly

1914-1977

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John Martin Kelly was the first petroleum engineer to become an Assistant Secretary of the Interior. John was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, on October 1, 1914, the son of James B. A. Kelly and Elizabeth B. A. Ford. He received his Bachelor of Science in mining engineering from New Mexico School of Mines in 1936 and his Professional Degree of Petroleum Engineer from the same institution in 1939. In later years he achieved considerable success as a petroleum consultant and as a petroleum businessman through the Elk Oil Company, which he founded, but his career was marked throughout by his dedicated commitment to the public interest. His death on September 19, 1977, in his adopted city of Roswell, New Mexico, was a premature end to the life of a senior statesman of the

petroleum industry who was still making significant contributions to both the public and private sectors.

John's first professional positions were as mining engineer with the Rosedale gold mines in 1936 and as mine chemist with the American Metal Company in 1937. From 1937 to 1941 he was petroleum geologist in charge of conservation for the Hobbs, New Mexico, Proration Office and for the Lea County Operators' Committee, one of the first voluntary oil conservation organizations in the United States. From 1941 to 1945 he served as secretary and executive director of the New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission, director of the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, state geologist, coordinator of mines in New Mexico for the War Production Board, and member of the National Council of Petroleum Regulatory Authorities under the Petroleum Administration for War. For the next fifteen years John devoted himself to the oil business as president of the Elk Oil Company in Roswell, New Mexico. Throughout that period he served also as a consultant and mineral advisor to the New Mexico State Land Office.

This mixture of experience with the aspects of regulation, conservation, exploration, and production in the mineral industry prepared him well for the post of Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Mineral Resources, to which he was appointed in January 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, and in which he served with distinction until he resigned in June 1965 to return to private business in Roswell. Problems of resource adequacy and environmental strain were beginning to emerge about the time of his appointment, and John played a strong leadership role in their identification and analysis, recognizing the importance of maintaining both a strong mineral industry and a healthy, satisfying environment. His leadership capabilities were also reflected by and utilized in assignments related to United States participation in the activities of several

international organizations. He served as United States delegate to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Petroleum Planning Committee and to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Energy and Petroleum Committees from September 1961 to June 1965; he came to be highly respected in those committees as a statesman of high integrity and ability. He also chaired the United States delegations to the second and third petroleum conferences on Asia and the Far East, sponsored by the United Nations in 1962 and 1965. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, the Department of the Interior gave him its gold medal, the Distinguished Service Award, in April 1966.

Even after John returned to private life in 1965, he continued in the public service in advisory capacities—as consultant to the Secretary of the Interior through 1968, member of the Advisory Committee to the United States delegate to the OECD Petroleum Committee, member of the National Petroleum Council from 1965 until the time of his death, and member in 1976 of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Advisory Committee of the Federal Energy Administration.

Throughout his career John Kelly took an interest in the New Mexico Institute of Mining Technology, which honored him with a Doctor of Science degree in 1963 and appointed him to its board of regents in 1975. He played an important part in the founding of the New Mexico Recovery Research Center, the new home for which was dedicated in October 1978 and named the John M. Kelly Petroleum Building. The picture shown is a copy of the portrait (painted by Peter Rogers of Santa Fe) that hangs in the lobby of the building.

John Kelly was a member of and gave his support to many professional societies; among them are the American Institute of Mining Engineers, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Geological Society of America. He also served on the board of directors of the American Petroleum Institute and the Independent Petroleum Association of America.

On December 29, 1938, John married Esther E. Ladenburg, who gave him a home life and family that were his lifetime joy. Esther Kelly and their children—Joseph James, Patricia Elizabeth, Mary Ann, and John Michael—have established a scholarship fund in his name at New Mexico Tech.

John M. Kelly, the man, can readily be seen from the description of his activities, for no one could have done all of the things he did who was not exceptionally quick and perceptive in his analysis of a wide variety of practical problems, wise and decisive in business and administrative judgments, outgoing and friendly with his associates, and kind and understanding in his personal relationships. John Kelly had all of those qualities, and he used them well in the service of his nation and state, his industry, and his profession.