



Russell Ray Simonson

September 12, 1912 - February 27, 2009

Russell Ray Simonson was born on September 12, 1912, in Wetaskin, Alberta, Canada of parents James and (Iva)dell. Grandfather Simonsen came to the United States after the Prussian War of 1870. Soon after arriving he changed the spelling of his name to Simonson to Americanize it. His old home ranch in Canada was almost on top of a well-known and prolific oil field called Pegeon Lake...rather interesting in that he has been involved in the oil buisness since 1936...some 73 years to date.

When he was two years old, Russ's parents moved to southeastern Montana where he spent his early childhood. During five of these years he lived on an Crow Indian Reservation. Then in 1923, the family moved to California and settled in the San Fernando Valley. While attending Canoga Park High School he met Gladys Estelle Convirs. They were married in 1935, spent 62 wonderful years together and had two daughters, Caryn and Merle. The maternal side of the family were of English, Irish and Dutch extraction and had come to America before the Civil War.

Russ attended U.C.L.A. and graduated in 1934. Two years later he earned his Master's Degree in Geology and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He played the clarinet in the Bruin Band and became a member of Sigma Gamma Epsilon and Sigma Xi.

Russ's first job after college was the Pacific Coast Alkali Company for four months. He mapped an area near Death Valley in search of borax deposits. He was employed from 1936 thru 1941 as a field geologist, stratigrapher and micropaleontologist for the Union Oil Company and worked in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys. His work as a micropaleontologist earned him recognition and a "pioneer bug man" of California in a report presented by Bob Kleinpell at a Pacific Section SEPM symposium in 1972. The North American Consolidated Company based in Taft, hired him for six months as a gologist/engineer at the end of 1941. From 1942 until 1965, he was a geologist for the Ohio Oil Company. Rather than accept a promotion that required moving to Ohio, Russ decided to work on his own as a consulting geologist and stay in Glendale, California. 1605 Glorietta was a well-known address for some 58 years.

Foreign and domestic clients allowed extensive travel oppourtunies. He developed production for domestic clients in California's Central Valley, Louisiana and Alaska. In 1979 and 1981, he worked as a consultant for Tetra Tech Inc. and co-authored a private report on the North Slope's National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska on seismic and geologic interpretations for 16 oil companies and a government agency. He has been an independent operator since 1976 and has production interest in a number of wells in California and Texas. Along the way, he has authored numerous papers and also served as president of the Pacific Section of the American Associatin of Petroleum Geologist.

Assignments with the Ohio Oil Company included work as a district geologist, division geogsit and exploration manager, the latter during a period when the company drilled what was then the world's deepest oil well in the Paloma field some 14 miles southwest of Bakersfield. While with the Ohio Oil Co., formerly known as Marathon Oil, Russ had a part in finding production in the South Mountain, West Montalvo and Belgian Anticline oil fields, as well as the Beehive Bend Gas field in California. In Alaska, the Kenai, Sterling, Beaver Creek, West Fork and North Fork gas fields and the McArthur River, Trading Bay and Swanson River oil fields were developed on land acquired or work done under his supervision. The Kenai gas field is a major reserve with more than 2 trillion cubic feet. The McArthur River, Trading Bay and Swanson River oil fields are classified as "giants", i.e. more than 100 million barrels, with a combined ultimate recovery of about 1 billion barrels of oil.