



Halbert P. Bybee, Ph.D.
1888 - 1957
Inducted 1991

Halbert Pleasant Bybee was born in 1888 on a Rochester, Indiana farm, the only son of William Lawson and Martha Kessler Bybee. He attended Shellbark Grade School and Talma High School. Upon graduation he entered Rochester College and earned his B.S. degree in 1908. After graduation, he served as principal of a rural high school in Richland Center, Indiana from 1908 -1909. He then served as an instructor in Science at Clinton College in Clinton, Kentucky from 1910-1911. In 1912 he received his B.A. degree from Indiana University and then his M.A. in 1913. In January of 1914 he accepted a teaching position in geology at the University of Texas, his first connection with the University where he would play such an important part. Bybee earned his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1915.

In the fall of 1914 he accepted a teaching position at Washington University to be closer to home. However, enrollment in the geology school at UT continued to increase and Bybee agreed to return to Austin in November. He was promoted to Adjunct Professor in 1916 and to Associate Professor in 1920.

From 1925 to 1929 Bybee worked as a geologist for the Dixie Oil Company in San Angelo, Texas. In 1929 he rejoined the staff at the University of Texas as Geologist in charge of University Lands, working mainly in West Texas until 1936 when he returned to Austin as Professor of Geology while continuing his work with the University Lands. During his work with the University Lands, Bybee guided the orderly and successful development of the natural resources of millions of acres of West Texas land. He organized and originated the regulations implemented for leasing and managing the University Lands. These resources established the Permanent University fund, the chief endowment fund for Texas universities. In 1936 Dr. Bybee returned to the faculty of the Geology Department of UT while continuing to direct the work of University Lands. He served as chairman of that department from 1937 to 1941.

But Bybee's influence as a teacher overshadows his work with the University Lands. He imparted to his students the high standards of ethics, common sense, directness of action, and human kindness which guided their careers during the turbulent early years of the petroleum industry. Many of Bybee's students attained the highest positions of responsibility in oil companies and other organizations. Their shared attributes of usefulness, integrity and ability reflected their association with Bybee.

The Hal P. Bybee Memorial Fund was established as a separate endowment within the University of Texas' Geology Foundation in recognition of Bybee's long standing interest

in teaching, his encouragement of scientific activities, and his interest in increasing contact with other geology professionals.

Bybee was active in the Kiwanis, University Club, Boy Scouts and the Baptist church. He belonged to many scientific societies, including the American Association of Petroleum Geologists since 1919, two years after its founding, and published more than a dozen scientific studies.