



Ronald K. DeFord, Ph.D. 1975

Ronald K. DeFord of Austin has had two separate and outstanding careers: as a highly distinguished geologist in the Permian Basin, and as an innovative and respected professor of Geology at the University of Texas at Austin. He also served a short term as an associate professor of English at his alma mater.

He was born in California and received two degrees from the Colorado School of Mines, in 1921 and in 1922. During the 10-year period of 1923 – 1933 he did pioneering work in the Permian Basin and other areas as a geologist for the Midwest Refining Company; he joined Argo Oil Corporation in 1933, soon becoming Chief Geologist and establishing an office in Midland. He came to know both the surface and sub-surface geology in Colorado, Utah, Kansas, Wyoming, New Mexico and Texas, and was instrumental in the location of the discovery well of the Hobbs field, and others.

While working out of Midland he was a leader on many geologic field trips sponsored by the West Texas Geological Society, of which he is a past-president and an honorary life member.

The quality of his mind and his basic interest in communicating his knowledge and broadening his experience led him into the science teaching field in 1948. At the University of Texas at Austin he earned further distinction as a professor of Geology and as departmental graduate advisor.

He traveled widely in the Soviet Union, and has attended several international geologic conferences. He has been given high geologic honors in countries other than our own.

He has received high honor awards from four other professional societies and from his alma mater. In 1968 he was awarded the title of Professor Extraordinario de la Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico.

But Ronald's life has not been devoted exclusively to science; he also has a deep recognition of his responsibilities as a citizen. He has an intense interest in cultural activities; he was a founding father of the Midland Community Theater, was the first president of that organization and served on its Board of Governors until he moved to Austin.

Ronald K. DeFord is, in short, a leader and luminary in the world of geology and in other worlds. He has given inspiration along with perspiration to his profession and as a leader and a giver he is recognized here.