



John A Yates 2005

August 10, 1929

The Yates Brothers, as they are called, could not stay away from the business in which they had been raised. In their own unique style, they continued and expanded Yates Petroleum. Harvey, Martin II, better known as “Bitsy,” Saint Clair Peyton, better known as “S.P.” and John have pioneered their own oil ventures, wildcatting and risk-taking enterprises while working for the collective interests of the parent company started by their father, Martin Yates Jr., in the early 1920’s.

They have developed some of New Mexico’s largest, most significant fields and built a solid reputation for leadership in the petroleum industry. Their discoveries include the Grayburg-Jackson field, Loco Hills, Dagger Daw, Empire Abo, Eagle Creek, Penasco Draw, Pecos Slope Abo and dozens of Morrow gas fields. Their search for oil and gas has taken them into Texas, the Rocky Mountain states, offshore and overseas.

The Brothers individual awards and accomplishments are a testament to their father’s undying spirit and optimism. They and their family members have been the force behind Yates Petroleum and other Yates’ companies, guiding their future beyond Artesia’s city limits and New Mexico’s state boundaries to incorporate a world of opportunities. The Yates’ lives have always been filled with uncommon experiences. From surviving a tornado to hanging on against fierce winds of regulatory adversity, the Yates have stood together. Each son inherited the Yates’ dominant characteristic – persistence mixed with a genetic defect – a love for the oil business.

John Ashby Yates was born in Artesia, New Mexico on August 10, 1929. He studied economics at Dartmouth College then returned to Artesia to work in the oil business. It was John who encouraged the Brothers to operate together as an entity – Yates Petroleum. Evolving from the Martin Yates Estate, which only held interests in other companies but little to operate, the company began operating wells. Today, Yates Petroleum has more than 400 employees and operates 5,000 to 10,000 wells. The company is the largest lease holder in New Mexico.

John’s determination led to the finding and developing of Pecos Slope Abo Field, an area overlooked by log experts who believed it contained salt-filled sand and no natural gas. He drilled more than 400 producing wells in several years, marking his success as a wildcatter.

He has served on the National Petroleum Council and is a member of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, Independent Petroleum Association of New Mexico, American Petroleum Institute, Roswell Geological Society and has been inducted into the All American Wildcatters Association. The IPAA awarded him Chief Roughneck of the Year. He also received an honorary doctorate from the New Mexico State University.

John was always conscious of the continuous need to find new oil & gas sources while protecting the environment. He is a willing teacher to man, valuing family, friends, and dedicated employees. He is caring, upright and just a good ol' boy.