Ben C. Belt
1889-1962
Inducted 1969

Ben C. Belt was born April 9, 1889 in Marshall, Missouri. He attended the University of Oklahoma at Norman and graduated in 1910 with a B.S. degree in geology. After graduation, he went to work for Mexican-Eagle Oil Company in Mexico as a field geologist until 1914, then moved to Mexican-Gulf Company as a chief geologist in Mexico and Cuba in 1916. In 1917 he was transferred to Fort Worth as Chief Geologist for Gulf Oil Corporation. He returned to Mexico in 1921 to serve as manager for Pantepec Oil Company in Tampico. In 1924, Belt travelled to Australia and New Zealand to investigate petroleum resources in those countries for Vacuum Oil Company.

In 1925 Belt returned to Gulf as Chief Geologist for the Fort Worth District but spent most of his energy in West Texas. Because of his understanding of the geology of the area, Belt believed that the Permian Basin would prove to be an important producer. With L. P. Garrett, Belt developed major proposals in West Texas for Gulf. Long term leases on major West Texas ranches were purchased long before other companies recognized the significance of the Permian Basin. Drilling operations proved the Central Basin Platform as a significant producer. The Yates, Goldsmith and McElroy fields were developed under Belt. This production played a major role in transforming Gulf Oil Company from a small producer to a giant international corporation.

Belt was transferred to Gulf's Houston office in 1929 and promoted to assistant to the Vice President in 1933. He was appointed Vice President and managing executive for the company in 1950. Mr. Belt retired from Gulf Oil in 1955, but continued consulting for Gulf and other companies.

Belt also served his community as President of the Houston Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Texas Research League, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Houston United Fund, and a member of the Board of Directors of the University of St. Thomas. He was a member of the American Petroleum Institute, the Mid Continent Oil and Gas Association, the American Association of Geologists and the Houston Geological Society. Belt also received a Distinguished Service Award in 1956 for outstanding service to the petroleum industry.