



S. P. Yates 2005

September 19, 1914

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.

S. P. was born in Artesia on September 19, 1914. He graduated from Artesia High School and attended the University of Texas in Austin where he earned bachelors and master’s degrees in chemical engineering. He attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology one year before returning to Artesia to work in the oil business.

Over the years, he pioneered new technology in drilling and water control. After the discovery of the Empire Abo field, S.P. started a new technique with air drilling, which was used throughout the Permian Basin. Working with his younger brother John, he believed that techniques could be found for dealing with overproduction of water in Dagger Daw. They worked out a new process, and the two men earned awards for their water-control development. He successfully drilled hundreds of wells and in 1959 founded Yates Drilling Company.

Today, he remains as chairman of the Board and Director of Yates Petroleum Co., and Vice President and Director of Yates Drilling Company. He has served in numerous positions with New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, Independent Petroleum Association of New Mexico, Independent Petroleum Association of America, TEAM Bank of Dallas and the Boy Scouts.