MEMORIAL

GEORGE ELMER ABERNATHY
(1888–1948)

On February 6, 1948, Doctor G. E. Abernathy, geologist in charge of the Southeast Kansas Field Office, State Geological Survey of Kansas, Pittsburg, died in a St. Louis hospital. Thus Kansas lost a most valuable exponent of her economic geology, for Dr. Abernathy was extremely well informed concerning the geology of and the application of engineering to the mineral resources of a large area. His community and State lost a valuable citizen, and many of us lost an irreplaceable co-worker and friend.

George Elmer, the son of James Luther and Laura Alice Abernathy, was born at Willow Springs, Missouri, on August 4, 1888. At the age of sixteen he graduated from the Willow Springs Military Academy, and he then became superintendent of the Willow Springs electric plant which position he held for three years. In 1914 Abernathy was graduated with the B.S. degree in mining engineering from the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy, and in 1927 he received the E.M. degree from the same school after having earned the M.S. degree in mining engineering from the University of Kansas in 1925. In 1936 he took his Ph.D. degree in geology at the University of Kansas. Thus during a very active career in engineering and teaching he found time to further his academic training.

Abernathy was married to Anna Gordon in 1911 at Rolla, Missouri. A son, Gene Elmer, was born in 1913. Mrs. Abernathy, the son now of Eureka, Kansas, a brother, Roy E. Abernathy of Chaffee, Missouri, and two grandchildren survive him.

Dr. Abernathy's experience was unusual in scope and variety in his chosen fields. In 1907 he was millman in an experimental mine of the Utah Copper Company, Bingham Canyon, Utah. He was mine and shift boss for the Anaconda Copper Company, Butte, Montana, in 1908 and 1909. In 1911–1912 he was superintendent of precipitation and refining for Los Dos Estrellas, El Oro, Mexico. After graduating from college in 1914 he and his brother installed the Dixon Power and Light Plant at Dixon, Missouri. In 1917 Abernathy was a mine foreman for the Arizona Copper Company, Stoddard, Arizona. He was again in Butte in 1918 as mining engineer for the Butte and Superior Mining Company. In 1919–1920 he was general mine superintendent for the Chateaugau Iron and Ore Company, Lyon Mountain, New York.

In 1921 the mining engineer turned to teaching and became an assistant professor at Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg. He became associate professor in 1926 and professor in 1928. In 1937 his desire to become more active in advancing the mineral industries of Kansas caused him to accept the position of geologist on the staff of the State Geological Survey of Kansas. As a teacher, Professor Abernathy trained and inspired several young men for distinguished careers in engineering and earth sciences, but more important, he enthusiastically taught the fundamentals of geology to hundreds of students, many of whom became teachers and are carrying on a phase of his work.

Dr. Abernathy had the ability of balancing the dignity of his profession and accomplishments with the humility of a student earnestly seeking after the truth. As a Survey geologist his contacts with fellow workers, business tycoons, and the humblest citizens were marked with the same courtesy.

Abernathy was an inventor and held patents on several engineering designs.

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