ROBERT E. RETTGER
(1897-1981)

By E. W. Hard
Dallas, Texas

Robert E. (Bob) Rettger, well-known and outstanding geologist, geophysicist, oil finder, and past-president of the AAPG (1962), died in Dallas, November 8, 1981, after a short illness. He is survived by his wife, Ima; a son, Rob; a daughter, Mrs. J. R. (Priscilla) Bell; six grandchildren; and one great grandchild.

Bob was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, April 6, 1897, where he attended elementary and high school, and then went to Wabash College for two years. Becoming interested in geology, he transferred to the University of Wisconsin in 1917. In 1918, he enlisted in the artillery and spent a year in France with the American Expeditionary Force. Returning to the university, he obtained the bachelor's (1920) and master's (1922) degrees in geology, and met and married Ima Winchell, daughter of the distinguished professor of geology, Alexander Winchell.

After a few months with the Wisconsin Geological Survey, Bob became an assistant professor of geology at Cornell University where he remained for approximately 2½ years. He then joined Sun Oil Co. as district geologist in San Angelo in 1926 and was also located in San Antonio. He was promoted to senior geologist in Dallas in 1935; to geophysical coordinator of Sun's southwest division in 1949; to assistant division chief geologist in 1957; and to division chief geologist in 1961. He retired at the end of 1962.

In 1956 he was given a special assignment to study the geology and petroleum possibilities in the Middle East, South America, and France, which led to Sun's eventual involvement and to large discoveries in certain parts of the first two areas.

During his professional career, Bob did a magnificent job for Sun. He also did a great deal of work for the AAPG and the local geological and geophysical societies. In addition to being AAPG president, he was associate editor, Bulletin, in 1929-33; district representative, Dallas, in 1937-38 and 1948-49; secretary-treasurer in 1942-44; and representative on API board of directors in 1954-55. He also served as West Texas Geological Society president (1930); Dallas Geological Society president (1939); and Dallas Geophysical Society vice president (1953) and president (1957).

Bob was also an honorary life member of the Dallas Geological Society and a member of Society of Economic Geologists, Society of Exploration Geophysicists, Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association, Sigma Xi, Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Gamma Alpha, and was chairman of, or active in many AAPG and local society committees.

Several of his scientific papers, reports, and one of his speeches were published. In the latter, "A Texas Geologist Looks at the Oil Industry" (Shale Shaker, v. 13, no. 6, February 1963), he expressed two thoughts which are widespread today: (1) the U.S. cannot depend on foreign crude, and (2) eliminate government controls and let free enterprise take over.

Bob had a great many friends both within and outside Sun Co., and those of us who had the privilege of working with him or under his direction will always remember his extraordinary knowledge and acumen, his sense of humor, and the fairness and consideration he showed to his associates and subordinates.

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