WILLIS I. WRIGHT
(1907-1982)

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Willis I. "Will" Wright died in Calgary, Alberta, on June 11, 1982, after an 18-month bout with cancer. He will be remembered with great affection by all who knew him. Will was born on December 14, 1907, in Moncton, New Brunswick, the youngest of seven remarkable children born to his seafaring and farming parents. One brother, George, farms near Moncton, and one sister, Mrs. Charles Kinsman, a retired nurse and teacher, now lives in St. Petersburg, Florida. Will was predeceased by his sister Charlotte, who was a teacher, and three brothers: Dr. C. B. Wright, M.D.; Dr. James Wright, for many years the provincial geologist for Nova Scotia; and Dr. J. Frank Wright, who had a long and distinguished career with the Geological Survey of Canada.

Will Wright belonged to that elite group of professional geologists who pioneered the early geologic exploration of wilderness areas in both North America and South America. These men had a broad knowledge of science, a spirit of adventure, and a dedication to geology. The work was done often without benefit of adequate topographic maps or modern transportation methods, and demanded a great deal of resourcefulness, hard work, and the ability to survive under primitive conditions. It is to men such as Will Wright that we owe so much for their contribution to the basic exploration that led to the discovery and development of our abundant petroleum and mineral resources. In recognition of his field mapping in northeastern British Columbia, the Canada Permanent Committee for Geographical Names has recently accepted a formal proposal to perpetuate and honor his memory by designating as Mount Wright, a 2,132 m (6,995 ft) peak at the headwaters of Headstone Creek about 45 km (28 mi) west of Pink Mountain, British Columbia, on the Alaska Highway.

Will received a bachelor's degree in geology from Acadia University at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, in 1930. After some part-time study and research at the University of Toronto, he enrolled at the University of Minnesota, and was awarded a PhD in geology and mining in 1937. During this time he was honored by memberships in Sigma Xi, Gamma Alpha, and Sigma Gamma Epsilon.

While living and studying at Minnesota, Will met Patricia McDonald. They were married in December 1938, beginning what was to be for them a long and happy life together. They had three children, C. Donald, Mary Jane, and Susan.

Wright's professional career began with surface mapping for the Geological Survey of Canada and various mining companies on the shield areas of central Canada. In 1939 his interests shifted to sedimentary rocks, and he went to Venezuela for 2 years as a senior field geologist with Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. (now Mobil Oil Corp.). After service during the early days of World War II with the United Kingdom and Canada Munitions Inspection Board, Will rejoined the Socony-Vacuum Exploration Co. (now Mobil Oil Canada, Ltd.) in Calgary, Alberta. These early years involved many consecutive summers for Will (or "Doc") mapping in the foothills and mountains of northeastern British Columbia, and the Yukon and Northwest Territories. In the first years, Will moved his base camp northward behind the U.S. Army building the Alaska Highway, making side trips by packhorse, canoe, on foot, and finally by helicopter. In fact, in 1950, "Doc" Wright was the first to use a helicopter for surface geologic mapping in Canada. The vast and detailed knowledge gained from these assignments made him an expert in the geology of northern Canada. He was named Mobil's district geologist for northern Canada in the oil boom that followed the major discovery at Leduc in 1947. Will retired as senior staff geologist on January 1, 1973, after 30 years with Mobil.

Wright was a member of the AAPG and the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists. He was an active committee member of the Canadian Petroleum Association, contributing his extensive understanding of the petroleum potential of northern Canada in the preparation of recommendations to the Canadian government for the drafting of administrative exploratory regulations for the region.

Will Wright was one of the kindest, most honest, charitable, and gentlemanly persons we have known. He constantly looked for, found, and cultivated the best in people. As a rule, his charity and compassion were known only to the many recipients. He always had or made time to give help, direction, and encouragement to his associates and to the younger geologists who worked for him. He was a happy man with firm geological as well as moral and ethical convictions, and he insisted on these standards for himself as well as for his associates. He was a dedicated and loyal person as a husband, father, and grandfather, and a true professional in his relationships with his employer and business associates.

During his working career and after his retirement, Will