VINCENT WALTER VANDIVER
(1897–1989)

By Donald R. Jones
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Vincent W. (Van) Vandiver, an AAPG member since 1920, died at the age of 91 on February 21, 1989, in Pasadena, California. Van was born in Jefferson City, Missouri, on September 1, 1897, the third child of John M. and Jane Crump Vandiver. He was descended from a famous Missouri family, including his cousin Congressman W. D. Vandiver, who was credited with originating the saying, “I’m from Missouri—you’ll have to show me.”

Van graduated from Broken Arrow (Oklahoma) High School in 1915 and entered the University of Missouri. His father had done some investing in Oklahoma wildcats and asked him to “learn something about oil,” so Van majored in geology. He became a member of Kappa Alpha fraternity and played the clarinet in the marching band. In 1918, Van enlisted in the army and was sent to the officer’s training school at Camp Pike, Arkansas, where “they shaved our heads and made us march all day.” With the end of the war, he was discharged from the army in December 1918, prior to obtaining his commission. He returned to the university and was elected senior class president in 1919. He graduated from the university with an A.B. degree in geology in January 1920.

Van’s first job as a petroleum geologist was with the Carter Oil Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he did surface mapping in Kansas and Oklahoma, mainly on the Osage Indian lands. After eight months of this work, he answered the siren call of foreign adventure and accepted a position as a field geol-