Bobby Gene Newton was born in Newton County, Oklahoma, the son of an oil rig drilling foreman and nephew of tool pusher.

As a young boy he was raised in the heart of the great Oklahoma City oil field where his father and uncles worked, where his mother hung out her laundry, and where Bobby marveled at the mechanical wizardry of the latest drilling rigs in his backyard.

In high school, development activity in Kansas took his family to south-central Kansas where Bobby met and married his high school sweetheart, Fern Moorman.

Bobby attended college at Colorado School of Mines. He worked his way through school rough necking in the new fields discovered in the Denver-Julesberg Basin just east and north of Denver and graduated magna cum laude with a degree in geologic engineering. Bobby fondly remembered the demolition engineered by his cohorts at CSM of the Colorado State University gridiron insignia one October day circa 1950.

Hired out of college by Stanolind Pan Am Petroleum (later to be known as Amoco) in 1952, Bobby became a promising geologist whose exploration successes included the discovery of the Sherwood Unit in the Powder River Basin. He was a field geologist in the Basin and Range in the fall of 1954, when after learning that Pan Am could not wire funds to Elko in time to get his field team back to Casper before the Thanksgiving holiday, he took up a collection from the group, walked into the Elko Casino, played black jack until he had won enough money for everybody’s train ticket home, and walked in the office Monday morning to give the business manager hell for not wiring them funds before the holiday.

There was a cadre of exploration legends that worked together at Pan Am in the 1950s and 1960s including Jim Vanderbeek, Bobby Gene Newton, Malcolm Knock, Bill Barrett, Dick Tremaine, John Meeker, and Lee Adams. On payroll Friday nights they would all assemble for an evening of poker at one of their homes and invite some of the younger exploration hands to come. They carefully watched the new hands to see how they managed their alcohol consumption and how they managed their pile of chips. It was a pre-requisite for being a successful oil exploration manager in those days: self-control and personal risk management.

As a district exploration manager, Bobby’s team led Pan Am’s Rocky Mountain growth by acquiring major interests in Cottonwood Creek Field and Pan Am’s first major lease position in the Labarge Platform. Later as exploration VP for Amoco Canada, Bobby led their effort to explore on the East Coast Canadian Offshore. Bobby was about as frank and abrupt as a manager could be. Today we marvel at managers who can have effective fierce conversations with their staff that clarify company direction. When describing why Pan Am was ceasing exploration efforts in the Williston Basin, Bobby told his staff, “Because it has an inch of oil everywhere and paying quantities nowhere.”

In the 1980s as Amoco exploration VP, Bobby led Amoco’s entry into the deepwater Gulf of Mexico and the first entry by Amoco Egypt into the Nile Delta offshore, which today is a major gas producing area. He was instrumental in helping Amoco develop their research directed petrophysical training program for geoscientists and engineers. Bobby is a former director of Earth Science Research Institute (ESRI) and retired with his lovely bride, Fern, in Hinsdale, Illinois, in 1986.

Bobby Gene Newton passed away peacefully May 16, 2010, after a long illness.