



**Jesse C. Barnes, Sr.**  
**1892 – 1975**  
**Inducted 1981**

Jesse Clement Barnes was born and raised in Alabama and might never have come to the Southwest were it not for contracting tuberculosis at the age of 19. In those days, relocation to an arid climate was a common treatment for the disease. Living in Tucson, Arizona, he went to work in the insurance and hotel management businesses, interrupted by service in the Army's Quartermaster Corps during World War I. In 1936, now 44, he journeyed to East Texas to learn the oil business, focusing on mineral rights ownership and leasing. A year later, he came to West Texas to become a wildcatter. He bought leases in Winkler, Ector and Pecos counties and drilled wells that extended the Keystone Field in Winkler County. Teaming up with geologist Russell Conkling, they drilled the wells that discovered and defined the TXL Field. In the 1950s Barnes was one of the first independents to believe in the promise of deep drilling to locate lucrative oil and gas deposits.