Jon Brumley was raised in Austin, Texas. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1961 and earned an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania, then worked for a time at an actuarial consulting firm. In 1967, he went to work for Southland Royalty Co. as a risk analyst, taking over as president a few years later. When the company was sold to Burlington Northern Railroad, Brumley left to co-found XTO Energy, focusing on the acquisition and development of long-lived oil and gas properties. XTO created the Cross Timbers Royalty Trust by carving out non-operated producing properties, selling half the shares in the public market, and distributing the other half to the original investors. Soon after XTO Energy went public, Brumley accepted the position of Chairman and CEO of MESA, Inc., which merged with Parker & Parsley to become Pioneer Natural Resources. In 1998, Brumley resigned from Pioneer and, with his son and other partners, co-founded Encore Acquisition Co. Over the course of his career, Jon Brumley has listed eight companies on the New York Stock Exchange and was a founder of all but two of them.