



Ernest W. Marland
1879 - 1941
Inducted 1979

Ernest Whitworth Marland hailed from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1898 with a law degree and took a job with pioneer oil firm Guffey and Galey, where he began teaching himself geology. Marland found his first oil in West Virginia in 1906, made his first million, and lost it all in the panic of 1907. His intense drive then led him to the Midwest to look for oil. He formed Marland Oil Company, which ultimately became one of the nation's largest integrated oil companies. Intrigued by the Permian Basin, he put surface mapping parties to work here and was instrumental in a number of major discoveries. Marland Oil was one of the most aggressive developers of the fields near Wink, Texas. When Marland Oil merged with Continental Oil Company in the late 1920s, Marland lost his leadership of the combined enterprise. He changed careers, went into politics, served in Congress and was elected Governor of Oklahoma in 1934. He is recognized for two innovations that changed the U.S. oil business: adoption in 1921 of the seismic methods of exploration used in Germany — an interest shared with Gulf Oil — and for forming what may have been the first oil company research organization.