

Howard Winn Parker
1925 - 2016
Inducted 2015

Born in Blackwell, Oklahoma, Howard Parker began his college studies at the University of Texas but had those efforts interrupted by World War II. He joined the U.S. Army Air Corps and served in England as a navigator on a B-17 bomber. After the war, he returned to UT Austin and graduated in 1949 with a B.S. in petroleum engineering. The next year he joined Gulf Oil in Midland, serving as a geologist until 1960. A friend of Howard's from church, Joe Parsley, asked Howard to join him in working for a Houston-based independent oil man. They found oil for him, but he got into financial difficulties anyway. Out of work, Joe and Howard decided to become partners. They started assembling acreage blocks and identifying drilling locations to sell to large independents. Although the industry is known for booms and busts, Parker and Parsley managed to remain stable. Their conservative approach, focused on the Spraberry here in the Permian Basin, paid dividends time and again. When the company merged with Mesa, Inc. in 1997, to create Pioneer Natural Resources, it created one of the largest independent oil and gas companies in the U.S.

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