



W. E. Connell
1858 – 1936
Inducted 2025

Born in Bell County, TX in 1858, W.E. Connell was a pioneering figure in both banking and the early development of the Permian Basin's petroleum industry. After establishing himself as a successful cattleman and property owner, Connell recognized the need for financial infrastructure in West Texas and in 1888 he co-founded what would become the First National Bank of Midland. His efforts later expanded to Fort Worth, where he led the First National Bank of Fort Worth through critical periods, including the Great Depression. Connell's keen judgment and financial acumen supported many early oil ventures, including the first well drilled in Ector County in 1926. Dubbed the "Father of West Texas," Connell's legacy was marked by over 93,000 acres of undivided mineral ownership passed to his heirs, further supporting the region's petroleum industry development.