



Joseph I. O'Neill, Jr.
1914 - 1991
Inducted 1997

The oldest of nine brothers, Joseph O'Neill grew up in Philadelphia. He attended Notre Dame University, graduating in 1937, and went on to study law at Notre Dame and Temple University. He took clerking jobs in New York and Atlanta, then joined the FBI as a special agent. Four years later he was off to Los Angeles to be a sales manager for a department store. But hearing rumors about oil in West Texas, O'Neill and his Notre Dame classmate, William Castleman, made several trips to Scurry County to investigate. They found inexpensive oil leases in 1948, around the time Standard Oil Co. of Texas was planning to drill the well that would launch the Scurry County boom. O'Neill and Castleman invested in leases and had sold a portion of them when the first hint of the boom surfaced. They wound up with an interest in 800 wells with good prospects. In 1950, the partnership was dissolved and O'Neill became an independent operator. By the mid-70s he had drilled over 750 wells with exploration activities in 23 Texas and four New Mexico counties. He also developed oil and gas interests in California, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Canada.