



Paul L. Morris
1941 - 2026

Paul L. Morris grew up in West Virginia where energy deposits have been identified since the late 1700's. Paul attended school in Charleston where, following high school graduation, he was offered a Hope Natural Gas Company scholarship to study engineering at the University of Cincinnati. As part of Hope's cooperative engineering initiative, the company employed Morris throughout college from 1960 – 1964. After graduation, he moved to Columbus, Ohio and went to work for Columbia Gas System Service Corporation. In 1970, Columbia moved Paul to Wilmington, Delaware where he worked at the corporation's headquarters.

In 1973, Morris became manager of Energy Supply for Columbia LNG Corporation. At a time when natural gas was in short supply, Columbia began acquiring foreign and domestic coal and petroleum supplies to fuel major new projects involving LNG, SNG, and coal gasification. After the 1973 oil crisis, companies turned to increasing oil and gas discoveries to meet market demand and Columbia named Morris Vice President of Exploration and Production in 1976 and moved him to Houston. Paul arrived in Midland during the boom of 1981 when he became President and CEO of Banner Energy, Inc. He was responsible for directing exploration and production staff in Denver and Houston. During his time at Banner, three major discoveries were made in Louisiana, Wyoming, and North Dakota. In 1988, Morris became Manager of Oil and Gas at Wagner and Brown, Ltd. and then CEO in 1994, overseeing 200 employees in domestic and international exploration and production, natural gas gathering and marketing, crude oil purchasing and reselling, gas pipeline development and a compressed natural gas refueling business. Under his leadership, Wagner and Brown completed nearly 600 wells across Oklahoma, Texas and the UK and Australia.

In 2013, Paul launched Elk River Resources with partner Ed Jones, successfully drilling 25 horizontal wells in the Spraberry and Wolfcamp formations. He was part-owner, Chairman and CEO until 2019, when he stepped down to become a Senior Advisor to the Board.