

James Cleo Thompson, Jr.

1930 - 2010

Inducted 2017

Highland Park High School (Dallas, Texas) football star James “Jimmy” Cleo Thompson had come to Southern Methodist University (ranked #1 in 1951) to play football and study engineering, geology and business. He had plans to go on to law school when, one summer, he went to Crane, Texas to “clean up” oil wells on three leases his father had purchased. Everything about the business fascinated him, and he was hooked. Soon, more leases were acquired and he and his father went into business together as Thompson Petroleum Company. Those early leases would ultimately expand to more than 8,000 wells. In a career spanning almost 60 years, he was always one of the first operators to use new technologies for the discovery, development, and production of fields in the Permian Basin. In the 1980s he began drilling gas wells in the Ozona area, making large discoveries and building new businesses for gas transport and processing. In the early 2000s, Jimmy started putting together significant acreage in the Delaware Basin. Two of those fields produced more than 40,000 barrels per day. During his career, Jimmy also provided support to a variety of educational institutions so that others could be given the same opportunities that he had enjoyed.

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