

MEMORIALS



THOMAS L. WRIGHT
1930–2016

By Donald W. Lewis
Robert G. Lindblom

AAPG lost one of its most stalwart members and force in California geology on November 17, 2016, when Thomas Lawton Wright passed away at the age of 86. Tom received his bachelor and master of science degrees in geology at Stanford University and joined the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL) in 1952. He spent most of his 34 year career with SOCAL, now Chevron Corporation, working in California and Alaska.

Fresh out of Stanford, Tom did field geology in Salt Lake City, then Salinas, California and Yakima, Washington, followed by five years in Seattle. This was in the early days of SOCAL's Alaskan exploration program and included being Field Party Chief from 1958–60 on the North Slope. Those were the days of

summer rock collecting and mapping using helicopters or, in tight budget years, on foot with only fixed wing support. The remaining nine months of the year were spent in photogeology and map preparation working up the field traverses. This was almost a decade before the Prudhoe Bay discovery.

In 1961, Tom was transferred to Los Angeles where he became a true expert in the geology of the Los Angeles basin. He was a key participant in several discoveries in the basin. In a portent of things to come in his career, Tom did site investigations and provided testimony following the Baldwin Hills Dam collapse in 1963.

After moving to the Bay Area in 1971 and working for seven years on South American projects in the San Francisco office of Chevron Overseas Petroleum Inc., Tom moved into environmental and public affairs geology for Chevron, broadening into hydrogeology and environmental geology. He served as exploration liaison between the Western Oil and Gas Association and the Outer Continental Shelf Coastal Zone Management Committee of the API. He represented Chevron and the industry in numerous hearings and negotiations covering offshore and other joint industry programs. In these activities, Tom encountered many people ignorant of our profession and antagonistic to our industry. With his unfailing good humor and highly knowledgeable professional background, no one could have better represented the industry's side than Tom Wright.

After retirement from Chevron in 1986, Tom continued many outreach activities, including working with the Southern California Earthquake Center (SCEC), contributing his knowledge of the Los Angeles basin and arranging many industry seismic lines to be contributed to the SCEC. This work led to establishing the Center for Los Angeles Basin Subsurface Geology at California State University, Long Beach, commencing in 2001. Tom finally found time in his retirement years to write his 100-page paper, "Structural Geology and Tectonic Evolution of the Los Angeles Basin, California", which was published in 1991 in *AAPG Memoir 52* and which remains the definitive reference on Los Angeles basin structural geology. It has been referred to as the "bible" for geoscientists working on earthquake hazards and, importantly, on the application to and history of oil and gas exploration and development in the basin.

Tom was always active in all levels of our professional societies. He joined AAPG in 1952 and served on a number of committees including Visiting Petroleum Geologist, House of Delegates, Business, and was very active on the Environmental Geology Committee, serving as chair 1974–77, organizing six symposia, and was an important proponent in the creation of the AAPG Division of Environmental Geology (DEG). Tom served on the DEG Advisory Board and on the Publications, Membership, and Environmental Practices

Committees. He was a California Professional Geologist and served on the Technical Advisory Committee of the California State Board of Registration for Geologists and Geophysicists. For his dedication in these efforts, Tom was given AAPG's Distinguished Service Award in 1993, Certificate of Merit in 1996, DEG Honorary Membership in 1999 and in 2000 received AAPG's third-highest award, the Michael T. Halbouty Memorial Human Needs Award, given to honor the outstanding application of geology to the benefit of human needs and to recognize scientific excellence.

Tom was president of the Northern California Geological Society in 1974 and remained an active participant in NCGS activities and field trips right up to his passing. For the Pacific Section, he contributed for over three decades and did everything including editor, treasurer, Finance chair, field trip coordinator, Environmental chair, vice president and, in 1980–81, president. This outstanding service was recognized in 1989 with the Section's highest honor, the Honorary Life Membership Award.

Tom met his wife, Louise, in a chemistry lab at Stanford and they soon were married. They had five children and eight grandchildren and, so far, two great grandchildren. He remained very involved with his family and will be greatly missed by them and all who knew him. Tom leaves a big hole not only in the ranks of premier California geologists but in the remembrances of his hundreds of friends.



THOMAS A. QUEFFELEC

1954–2016

By Stefan Boettcher

Tom Queffelec, a 36-year employee with ExxonMobil Corporation and subsidiaries, died on September 4, 2016 at the age of 62. He is survived by his loving wife of 20 years, Nina, and two cherished daughters, Katya and Tatiana. He was a voice of reason to younger siblings Michele Brooks of Snyder, New York; Denise of Princeton, New Jersey; Renee Goodheart of Midland Park, New Jersey; Lise Elcock of Needham, Massachusetts and John of Algonquin, Illinois. Tom was the first born of the late Allan and Alice Queffelec of Paramus, New Jersey and doting son-in-law of Nina Gordienko of Moscow, Russia.

Tom is remembered as a regional- and prospect-scale geoscience integrator who excelled at opportunity generation. He embodied the characteristics of an oil finder. Tom demonstrated the ability to draw from multiple disciplines including geophysical applications, seismic interpretation, regional geology, structure, stratigraphy, salt tectonics, and assessment. His exemplary career is

a model for the next generation of geoscientists.

Tom graduated from Colgate University in 1976 with a bachelor's degree and worked with Western Geophysical and PGI in seismic processing until 1980. He joined Superior Oil in 1980, and conducted seismic processing, modeling, research, seismic acquisition (worldwide) and seismic interpretation in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1985, Tom joined Mobil Oil, as a geoscience interpreter (Gulf of Mexico, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan), seismic stratigrapher, modeler, and seismic acquisition advisor (worldwide).

In early 1994, Tom was seconded into the Kazakhstan CaspiShelf Consortium (KCS), which was formed for the purpose of exploring the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea for oil and gas deposits. He was part of a group of approximately 50 expatriates (from various large international companies) who arrived in Kazakhstan a few years after the fall of the Soviet Union and who were charged, along with a group of Kazakh geoscientist colleagues, with managing and running an extremely challenging international exploration project. This huge project consisted of acquiring the most extensive two-dimensional seismic program ever done in the world (more than 28,000 km of two-dimensional seismic lines) and with implementing both a state-of-the-art processing seismic center and establishing a modern seismic and geological data interpretation center in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan at that time.

Tom and his Kazakh colleagues in the geophysical interpretation team were the first ones to realize that the newly acquired data had the

appearance of a potentially huge oil discovery. These initial thoughts were proven to be correct when the first successful well was drilled in 2000 discovering the huge Kashagan oil field. According to the press, it was the largest international oil discovery in the past 20 years. The Kazakh geophysical colleagues who worked with Tom at KCS have said that working alongside him has helped them to become better geophysicists.

Recently, Baltabek Kuandykov, the president of the Consortium said, "Tom contributed a lot to the successful implementation of this project. He was greatly appreciated by all his colleagues and friends for his kindness, enthusiasm and for his high technical competences." On

behalf of the KCS Consortium team, he extended his sincere condolences to Tom's family, his wife, Nina, and their cherished daughters.

After returning from Kazakhstan in 1997, Tom conducted seismic interpretation and geophysical applications in deep water Gulf of Mexico for Mobil and ExxonMobil until 2004. From 2004–08, Tom was a catalyst for opportunity generation on the Regional Studies and New Opportunity Prioritization teams for an European Atlantic Margin Study and an Asia Pacific Opportunity Capture Study. He conducted regional interpretation, mapping, synthesis and assessment focused on multiple North Atlantic rift basins

offshore the UK, Norway and Greenland and offshore Eastern Indonesia. He completed regional resource assessments of the South China Sea and Indian sub-continent along with team members. From 2011–16, Tom was part of a Gulf of Mexico Regional integration team, responsible for regional interpretation, mapping, synthesis and assessment of deep water Gulf of Mexico plays.

Tom was truly a man devoted to work and family and was deeply passionate about both. He had a unique sense of humor, infectious genuine laugh, and a kind spirit. We miss him dearly but take solace in the inspiration he leaves us to be inquisitive, follow our dreams, and give back to others.

BOOK RELEASES & REVIEW

NEW RELEASES

Bootstrap Geologist: My Life in Science, by Gene Shinn (2014).

298 p. Published by University Press of Florida, 15 NW 15th St., Gainesville, Florida 32611-2079. Price \$26.95.

Oil Strike North Sea: A first-hand story of North Sea oil, Mike Shepherd (2015). 187 p. Published by Luath Press Ltd., Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Price \$40.00.

Published by Luath Press Ltd., Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Price \$40.00.

Benthic Foraminifera of the Gulf of Mexico: Distribution, Ecology, Paleocology, C. Wylie Poag (2015). 239 p. Published by Texas A & M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354. Price \$75.00.

Published by Texas A & M University Press, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354. Price \$75.00.

SALT Tectonics Principles and Practice, Martin P. A. Jackson and Michael R. Hudec (2017). 498 p. Published by Cambridge University Press, University Printing House, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom. Price \$99.99.

Published by Cambridge University Press, University Printing House, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom. Price \$99.99.

BOOK REVIEW

Anomalies: Pioneering Women in Petroleum Geology 1917 to 2017 by Robbie Rice Gries, 2017, 405 p. Published by Jewel Publishing LLC.

Published by Jewel Publishing LLC.

Hardback price: \$50. Available at store/aapg.org

Review by Marlan W. Downey

Robbie Gries and her contributors have created a remarkable account of early women in petroleum geology. The book represents a “deep dive” into the lives, accomplishments, triumphs, and, even, terrors, of early women professionals. It displays impressive scholarship, and reflects four years’ efforts to source histories of these largely forgotten women professionals.

The book should be read by every petroleum geologist, geophysicist, and petroleum engineer; partly for the pleasure of the sprightly told adventures, partly for a sense of history, and, significantly, because it engenders a proper respect towards all women professionals, forging their unique way in a “mans world.”

A delightful, hopeful, sense of progress is conveyed by the book, as the intense survival stories of early women geologists give way to a prideful modern acknowledgement of the importance of women petroleum geoscientists in our modern petroleum industry. These stories of challenges, setbacks, achievements, and successes will lift your heart, and, maybe, wet an eye.

Buy this book! It will renew your pride in being a petroleum geologist, and it will enlighten you on the struggles of our wonderful women associates as they followed their professional dreams.

An astounding network of women professionals, formed by need, strengthened by time, constituting an amazing support system. Robbie has done an amazing, multi-year research effort in uncovering hundreds of early petroleum geologists, active in many countries, whose early efforts are now recorded for our belated appreciation.

A large wave of women professionals burst into the petroleum industry in the 70s, as the US EEOC put teeth into their reviews of corporate hiring practices for women and minorities. This modern generation of women petroleum professionals provide terse and delightful stories, full of humor, appreciation for mentors, and showing a fierce dedication to learning and success. They came; they saw; they conquered.

We men have a lot to learn, still; and this review of the accomplishments of our women associates is a good place to continue learning. As my wife reminds me; “Marlan; you’re STILL a work-in-progress!”