



Ben C. Belt
1889 – 1962
Inducted 1969

Originally from Missouri, Ben C. Belt earned his degree in geology from the University of Oklahoma in 1910. During the next 15 years he would work for a number of Mexican and U.S. oil companies including Mexican-Gulf Co., even spending some time investigating petroleum resources in Cuba, Australia and New Zealand. In 1925, Belt returned to Gulf Oil Corporation as Chief Geologist in the Fort Worth District. However, he focused most of his work on West Texas. Based on his understanding of the area's geology, he believed the Permian Basin would be an important source of oil and gas. Belt developed major proposals for Gulf, resulting in the purchase of long-term leases on local ranches long before other companies recognized the Permian Basin's promise. Drilling operations revealed the Central Basin Platform to be a significant producer and the Yates, Goldsmith and McElroy fields were developed under Belt. This production played a major role in transforming Gulf Oil Company from a small producer to a giant international corporation.