



Joe G. Roper
1928-2001
Inducted 2003

Joe Roper was born in Henrietta, Texas, in 1928. After a semester at Midwestern University in Wichita Falls and service in the U.S. Army during World War II, he headed into the oil fields as a roughneck. He was working as the morning tour driller on a rig in late 1953 when he met his future partner, oil field salesman Thomas Brown. Soon, Tom found backers to purchase a trailer-mounted drilling rig and he hired Joe as a daylight driller. This was the start of what would become the Tom Brown Drilling Company. Eventually, Joe took over supervision of the firm's operations and, in 1959, purchased half interest. Tom Brown Drilling Company became one of the first companies in the Permian Basin to be publicly traded. During the mid-70s, it extended its holdings to the Rocky Mountains with a discovery well in Wyoming. After the economic bust of the 1980s, the company underwent a restructuring, with drilling operations branching off to become TMBR/Sharp Drilling, Inc.