

## Lee Banks 1929 - 2020



Lee was born to three generations of homesteading Kansas farmers and merchants in the Gypsum valley of Kansas. Growing up, Lee was an all-round farm hand, skilled in horse training, raising livestock, and enjoying the occasional jack rabbit foot races. Lee's first business venture was in high school doing custom combining. Lee assembled a set of machinery and crew who followed the summer harvest from Oklahoma into the Dakotas each year, helping pay for his education.

After graduating from Gypsum High School, Lee attended Bethany College and Kansas Wesleyan University. Through school, Lee shared his skills as a trombonist and author; His oratorical feats and "Kansas and Free Enterprise" speech won him the Kansas Oratorical Contest in 1951.

Lee married his middle school sweetheart Carlene in her family home in Gypsum, Kansas in 1952. Following this, Lee attended and received his law degree from Washburn University in Topeka, served in the military as a Sargent, and taught Constitutional Law at Fort Chaffee in Fort Scott, Arkansas. In 1956, Lee entered the petroleum industry and drilled his first oil prospect. He developed his skills

and became an Oil Landman in Liberal, KS. Lee later moved to Wichita and founded Banks Oil in 1960, exploring and drilling for oil and gas, mostly in Western Kansas. Success in the oil business fueled Lee's interest in land investments and he bought and sold land across the Ozarks, Great Plains and even went as far north as Winnipeg.

Mr. Banks served as Vice President of Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association for many years, as President of Wichita Landman's Association, and was a part of the Wichita Petroleum Club. He established the charitable organization Banks Family Foundation, Inc. with his daughter RoxAnn and son Todd.

Lee was a practical jokester and knew the power of laughter. "Not only was he an astute businessman, he was blessed with the combination of a fine sense of humor and the capacity to keep his feet on the ground at all times" notes a friend.

SOURCE: <https://kioga.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/lee-banks.pdf>