



Sidney E. Scisson

Sidney Eugene Scisson

1917-1990

By Clarence E. Larson

SIDNEY E. SCISSON, who pioneered development of underground storage of petroleum products and gas in the United States and throughout the world, died November 24, 1990, following a long illness. He reached the top in an exciting field into which few others had ventured. His innovative methods in attacking difficult engineering problems, particularly in construction of underground facilities, made it possible to complete difficult projects in a timely fashion.

Scisson, born February 4, 1917, in Danville, Arkansas, received his B.S. in general engineering from Oklahoma State University. He then went to work for the U.S. Corps of Engineers in Tulsa. During World War II he served in the U.S. Naval Reserve as an engineering officer on the aircraft carrier *Intrepid* and an instructor in the engineering department of the U.S. Naval Academy. Then after working for Pate Engineering Company in Tulsa for three years, Scisson was cofounder in 1948 of Fenix and Scisson, Inc., where he became president when the firm was incorporated in 1951. Fenix and Scisson was responsible for the execution of many engineering and construction projects located in twenty-three states and eleven foreign countries when Scisson retired as chairman of the board in 1987.

He designed and supervised construction of the first mined liquefied-petroleum (LP) gas storage cavern. Under his direction the firm designed and constructed more than 90 percent of

all mined underground storage for LP-gas projects in the United States, including the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

In 1963 the firm expanded its services to include solution mining of salt cavities for storage of petroleum products. Fenix and Scisson also acted as architect-engineer for the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) for underground facilities in the nuclear testing program at the Nevada Test Site. Also for the AEC, for a nuclear test on Amchitka Island in connection with the Spartan Missile Program, the company developed new drilling and mining techniques that made possible the drilling a 96 inch diameter hole 6,108 feet deep, and the mining of a cavity more than 50 feet in diameter at the bottom of the hole. The company and the AEC were issued more than ten patents in connection with this work.

Scisson was elected to membership in the National Academy of Engineering in 1977. He was a member of the American and Oklahoma Societies of Civil Engineers; the National and Oklahoma Societies of Professional Engineers; the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers; and the Moles. He held an individual membership in the American Gas Association and was company representative in the National Gas Processors Association, the Associated General Contractors of America, and the Beavers. Scisson held a number of patents on underground storage methods.

He was a registered professional engineer in Oklahoma, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Rhode Island. In 1978 he was inducted into the Oklahoma State University Engineering Hall of Fame and in 1979 received that university's Distinguished Alumnus Award. He was inducted into the Hall of Distinction of Arkansas State University and received Arkansas Tech University's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1979.

Scisson was a member of the Atlas Life Insurance Company board of directors and a past director of the Bank of Oklahoma. Active in civic and community affairs, Scisson served on the board of directors of Children's Medical Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the Tulsa Civic Ballet, Inc., where he also served terms as president and treasurer. He served on the board of governors of the Development Foundation of Oklahoma State

University in Stillwater and was an honorary member of the board of directors of Tulsa Opera, Inc.

He was chairman of the board of Missouri Steel Castings Company, a steel foundry, and Strescon, Inc., a prestressed concrete manufacturing plant, both wholly owned subsidiaries of Fenix and Scisson. In 1965 he became a partner in Bledsoe and Scisson Ranches in Oklahoma and Kansas, a more than 6,000-acre ranch with 1,000 to 1,500 head of cattle.

Scisson is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Ray D. (Jane) Grimshaw of Tulsa and Mrs. Jack (Judith) Ferreri of Verona, Wisconsin, and three granddaughters.

It was my good fortune to view one of his projects being carried out near the Arctic Circle, a project requiring meeting "impossible" deadlines involving high-priority defense considerations. I still treasure a gift of a granite core sample from the deep drilling operation. His operations always typified his dedication to best engineering practices. Many of his contributions to underground engineering methods are today in evidence in projects throughout the world.