

Distinguished Alumni

Andrew credited with significant world oil finds

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Distinguished alumnus Sanford "Sam" Andrew (BS '57) had many opportunities to change jobs in the petroleum industry's heyday, but he chose to stay true to a company that sent him around the globe in search of significant oil and gas finds.

Andrew dedicated more than 35 years to that firm, Marathon Oil, which he called a "family-friendly" organization that looked after its employees. His career spanned the "absolute, best years" for petroleum exploration; and many would say he helped lead the way for much of that expansion.

Colleagues call Andrew a "world-class oil finder." That description seems especially fitting, since he led exploration teams to several significant oil and gas discoveries in such far-away places as Tunisia, Syria and the North Sea. His name is linked to major finds closer to home, too, including the Green River, Washakie and Great Divide basins of Wyoming.

A Good Choice

The University of Wyoming, and a geology major were both excellent choices for Andrew. The family ranch straddled the Wyoming/Colorado line, so he could have attended schools in either state. In fact, he had scholarships to both UW and Denver University. But his choice was clear.

"I felt more like a Wyomingite, and I felt more comfortable with a cowboy school," Andrew says. He also recognized UW's strong academic record.

"It had a good reputation, even back in 1950, and was well thought of in the educational arena," he says.

Andrew started out as a pre-med major, but he wasn't ready for the heavy dose of chemistry required for that degree.

"They shamed me pretty well," he says of his first attempt at a college education. He dropped out for a few years; and during that break, he discovered his true destiny.

Andrew loved the outdoors, and he loved earth science. Geology was a natural fit.

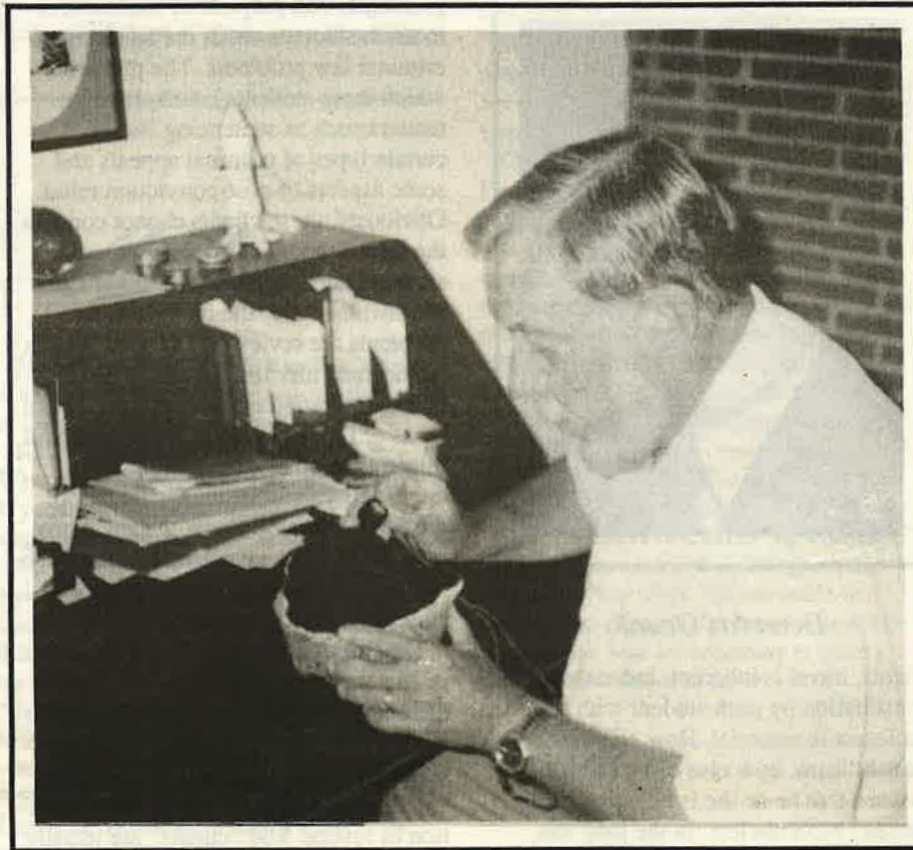
"It was a match made in heaven," he says.

This time, Andrew excelled under the expert tutelage of such recognizable faculty names as Sam Knight, Don Blackstone, Brainerd Mears, Paul McGrew, Horace Thomas, Bob Houston and Don Boyd.

"The teaching cadre was superb," he says.

Andrew began his Marathon career shortly after graduation, as an exploration geologist in southern Wyoming. Like other "rookies," he spent much of his early career in the field, watching wells, monitoring drilling, taking samples and searching for oil and gas.

Andrew's first major assignment was in the southwest corner of Wyoming; the Wamsutter Gas Field had just been discovered, and Marathon was particularly active in



that area. He survived some wild winters — and wild winter roads — during the early days, but the Baggs, Wyo., native knew enough from his youth to stay prepared for unpredictable conditions.

Marathon kept Andrew busy with assignments around the West (including Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Nebraska, North and South Dakota) until 1977, when he accepted his first international assignment.

In October 1977, the company named Andrew chief exploration geologist for Marathon Petroleum Ltd., based in Great Britain. His duties covered the entire hemisphere, including the North Sea, Europe, Africa and the Mideast, looking for data and prospective sites. Among the countries where Marathon has operations are Libya, Tunisia, Nigeria, Kenya and the Sudan. He supervised work in the giant Brae area in the North Sea. The Brae site was a huge producer, at least 18 miles long, with several large accumulations. He also directed a project in the Persian Gulf, though from a distance (Andrew was in London when the Iranians took over the U.S. embassy).

International travel was part of the job, and Andrew became adept at negotiating in unfamiliar cultures. The secret, he says, is acknowledging one's place as a visitor.

"A lot of it depends on how you approach it," Andrew says. "If you act like a guest, which you are, they treat you very kindly." He and his wife, Nanci (BA '55), have never had trouble getting along in other countries, despite reports of anti-U.S. sentiments in that hemisphere.

"A lot of that part of the world, in general, is more pro-American than our own newspapers would lead us to believe," according to Andrew.

Not that he hasn't had a close call. One such incident occurred in Nigeria, when he and some colleagues were stopped by a late-night robber. The man pointed his gun at Andrew, who leaned forward and said, "Howdy, pardner." The gunman was so flustered, he pulled his gun and ran off.

Andrew's second international assignment was in Canada (1980-82), as vice president of Marathon Petroleum Canada Ltd. and exploration manager for Marathon and Pan Ocean Oil Ltd. There, he supervised an exploration group that covered all of Canada. In the nearly two years Andrew worked in that office, the Marathon team made two significant discoveries.

He returned to America in 1982 to manage the regional exploration department at Marathon's Denver Research Center. Andrew also held positions as associate director of exploration research and applied technology and associate director of the center itself. He retired from the latter position in 1992.

The Denver Research Center is a high-tech laboratory facility that brings together "the cream of the crop" — about 300 scientists who perform the entire spectrum of research in geophysics, geochemistry and seismology.

Service to Others

The petroleum industry isn't the only area where Sam Andrew's name is well-known.



Sam Andrew

He has also distinguished himself as a dedicated volunteer who's put in years of service to community organizations.

Andrew started his voluntary work as president of the local PTA. He rose through that organization's ranks, eventually assuming a spot on the Wyoming PTA board.

It was through a PTA seminar on volunteers in the juvenile courts that Andrew developed the idea for a similar program in Wyoming. He helped organize a pilot juvenile probation counselor program in Casper, initially staffing it with friends from Marathon. The project's goal was to provide role models for young people and show them alternatives to crime.

As an outgrowth of that work, Andrew joined the Municipal Court Juvenile Advisory Committee; he even served two terms as its chairperson. That group helped update the state's juvenile code.

Andrew has also volunteered time as a Big Brother, as a lay member of the Natrona County School District Curriculum Coordinating Committee and as a member of the Wyoming Church Coalition Board.

A Family of Alums

Andrew's ties to UW run especially deep, as three generations of his family are Wyoming graduates. His mother, Anna M. Andrew, earned her bachelor's degree in 1963, after teaching for many years on a two-year certificate. His wife, Nanci Applegate Andrew, earned her BA in English in 1955 and was an honor book winner. All three of his children also hold degrees from UW. Allison and Sandy both have bachelor's degrees (Allison in special education, Sandy in petroleum engineering), and Michael holds a PhD in statistics.