



Robert Taylor

## The Conoco Oil Pioneers of Oklahoma Plaza

The rich cache of Oklahoma fossils that makes the SNOMNH a treasure for visitors and researchers alike also is responsible for much of the state's wealth and history. The story of Oklahoma's oil and gas industry and its founders is told through the Conoco Oil Pioneers of Oklahoma Plaza, which was formally dedicated in a public ceremony May 5, 2001. The plaza, which was provided through a \$300,000 Conoco Inc. gift, educates visitors with a series of bronze, bas-relief plaques in a garden setting. Each of the 60 pioneers is featured on a separate plaque, containing a brief story of his life and accomplishments and a portrait, created by sculptor Jim Franklin of Perry.

The exhibit was conceived by oilmen James K. Anderson, Robert S. Kerr Jr., Pete Klentos, and James Gibbs, who believed it was important to preserve the stories of the early Oklahomans whose foresight and hard work shaped the modern petroleum industry. The tributes were composed by Rufus Fears, holder of OU's G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty, in consultation with the oil pioneers' families.

The 60 men who built an industry and helped build a state are honored by the Conoco Oil Pioneers of Oklahoma Plaza, located just west of the museum's entrance.

## Friends of the Museum

The Friends of the Museum is a support group whose annual membership dues benefit the public programming, research activities, and other needs of the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. Formed in 1991 by a small group of concerned citizens who saw the need to jump-start the campaign for a new museum, the Friends circulated petitions for a successful \$5 million Norman bond issue toward the new facility. The Friends have continued to raise funds, awareness, and support for the museum statewide.

Levels of membership include \$20 Senior, \$30 Individual, \$45 Family, \$100 Associate, \$250 Supporter, \$500 Patron, and \$1,000 Benefactor. Standard benefits for all levels include free museum admission, a newsletter subscription, 20 percent museum store discount, notification of public education programs, and an invitation to "members only" special events. Additional benefits increase with the membership levels, to include added free admissions, public education program discount, complimentary Holiday Gala tickets, and complimentary guided group tours.

More information is available from Melanie Davidson, SNOMNH, 2401 Chautauqua Avenue, Norman, OK 73072-7029; 405/325-5093.