

# JOHN LONG

## HONORARY MEMBER The South Texas Geological Society

June 2020



**The Membership of the South Texas Geological Society has elected John Long as an Honorary Member in recognition of his outstanding leadership and long-term service to the geological profession and to the STGS as Officer, Director, and chair of numerous committees.**

John Long was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. When asked what early experiences might have sparked his interest in geology, he replies, “My first memory of a geology-related event was when I found a few crinoid disks and a mucrospirifer shell while digging holes for my mom’s plants in our front yard. I looked them up in my handy *Fossils* book from our collection of \$1 Golden Nature Guide books. I remember considering that the individual crinoid disks might make good landing gear wheels for what, in retrospect, would have been a ‘Flintstone-esque’ glider. I was satisfied that I knew enough about geology to move on to more important things, like playing grade school baseball and making model airplanes.

“Come high school, I liked science but did not join the ‘Grotto Club’, the closest thing to geology that was available at the time besides watching ‘The Treasure of the Sierra Madre’ many times on Humphrey Bogart Theater. However, geology found me during my sophomore year when a 5.4 magnitude New Madrid earthquake struck our football field on November 9, 1968. A distinct memory of the quake was that its disturbance started on the south end of the chain link fence and propagated perfectly up the entire 200-yard length to the fence’s north end. New Madrid was south of St. Louis, and the shock wave radiated due north. Again, I was satisfied I knew enough about seismology and moved on to more important things, like learning to drive a car and trying to get a date with Monica.

“Then came that fateful August 1971 day when freshman classes at the University of Missouri – Columbia had to be selected. I enrolled as a journalism major, and the freshman student adviser, Mrs. Gaddis, helped me pick the typical classes of a Liberal Arts major. When we got to language, we selected Spanish. The last class to be determined was introductory science and the options were Astronomy or Geology. I told her, ‘Well, I can say ‘rock’ in Spanish, but I can’t remember the word for ‘star’, so I’ll take Geology.’ The next thing I knew, Dr. Stanley N. Davis showed me and the rest of the class of 200 kids a whole new world that was interesting, logical, and covered more important things than anything else I could think of doing.” With no further deliberation necessary, John switched majors and earned his B.S. degree in Geology in May 1974.

Upon graduation, John was hired by Texaco and assigned as a geophysicist in its Houston and New Orleans offices to interpret and process Gulf Coast seismic data. In 1976, he decided to further his education, and having been awarded a Texaco Scholarship, enrolled in graduate school at The University of Texas at Austin, where he earned his M.A. degree in Geology in 1978. John conducted his thesis research on “Seismic Stratigraphy of Campeche Escarpment, Southern Gulf of Mexico”, and was supervised by Ralph Kehle, Milo Backus, and Dick Buffler.

John was then Immediately hired by Gulf Oil Company in Houston as a Senior Geologist. His duties involved seismic interpretation of offshore Gulf of Mexico data, with a concentration on mapping salt structures. In February of 1980, John left Gulf and Houston to take a job with Placid Oil Company in its San Antonio district office. Over the next six years, he was promoted through a series of positions from Geologist up to District Exploration Manager. His responsibilities included lease evaluation and development, prospect screening, and supervision of exploration staff. His primary areas of interest were the South Texas Lobo Trend, AWP field, South Texas Smackover, and East Texas Jurassic Trend.

When Placid Oil’s assets were sold and its San Antonio operations ceased in 1986, John began a 15-year period working as a consulting geologist and independent operator in San Antonio. He consulted for the Robert S. Spiller Company from May 1986 to February 1987, generating and developing prospects in South Texas. He then continued his South Texas prospect generation work as an independent geologist for a year, and also did some short-term geological and geophysical consulting. From February 1988 to July 1991, John consulted for Christico Petroleum Company, generating and screening prospects in South Texas, with a focus on seismic prediction of fracture targets in horizontal wells in the Austin Chalk in Pearsall field. He followed this work with another year as an independent operator and consulting geologist. In August 1992, Dale Resources, Inc. engaged John as a consultant to interpret 3-D seismic data covering Wilcox targets in Lavaca County and to interpret over 1,000 km of 2-D seismic data for exploration in Tunisia, North Africa. He spent the period from 1994 to 2001 again as an independent on various South Texas projects, focusing on the Carrizo, Olmos, and Edwards formations.

In July 2001, John was hired as Geologist by Osborn Heirs Company in San Antonio, for whom he worked through December 2014. He generated and reviewed prospects in West Texas, South Texas, Kansas, and Wyoming. His geophysical work primarily involved 3-D seismic data interpretation, but also included oversight of essentially all aspects of 3-D data acquisition, processing, and evaluation.

Finally, in January 2015, John once again returned to, and continues in, his role as an independent operator and consultant, with work focused on the Austin, Eagle Ford, Buda, Georgetown, and Glen Rose formations in South Texas, and the Bone Spring and Wolfcamp formations in West Texas.

As John spent most of his career in San Antonio, the South Texas Geological Society has been a huge beneficiary of his enthusiastic and tireless service to our Society. John became an active member of the STGS soon after his hiring by Placid, and then took on a series of very important leadership roles with the Society. He served as Chair of the Arrangements Committee (1983-84), Secretary & Director (1984-85), Vice President & Director (1985-86), President & Director (1986-87), and Co-Chair of the Scholarship Fund Committee (1987-88).

In 1986, John also contributed two technical papers to STGS publications. He authored the paper “The Eocene Lobo Gravity Slide, Webb and Zapata Counties, Texas”, which was published in the STGS Special Publication *Contributions to the Geology of South Texas*. Also, he co-authored the paper “The Birth of an Industry; Dullnig Field, 1886”, published in the STGS *Bulletin*. In 1991, John gave a talk for the STGS Austin Chalk Exploration Symposium titled “Old Geology, New Technology; Horizontal Drilling in Pearsall Field”, which was also printed in the special publication associated with that meeting.

John was elected to a Board position again for the 2002-03 and 2004-05 terms, serving as an Executive Committee member and Director. He took on the job of Chief Editor of the 2010 volume of the STGS Special Publication *Contributions to the Geology of South Texas*. From 2007 up to the present, John has been serving the STGS perennially as the Chair of the Nominating Committee, twisting many arms over that period and convincing numerous souls of the high value of professional society service. This

past term, 2019-20, John also served as Chair of the Field Trip Committee. In addition to his officer and chair positions in the STGS, John served as a member of innumerable committees over the decades. So, he has been both a leader and a real workhorse for the Society.

Our local geological society has not been the only professional organization to benefit from John's service. Each year when the STGS hosted the Annual Convention of the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies, he volunteered to chair a convention committee: Tobin Theater Committee in 1987 and 1996, Icebreaker Committee in 2004, Field Trip Committee in 2010, and Judging Committee and Luncheons & Breakfasts Committee in 2017. In recognition of John's service to both the GCAGS and the STGS, he was honored with the GCAGS Distinguished Service Award in 2017. John likewise served on Annual Convention committees for the American Association of Petroleum Geologists in the years when the meeting was held in San Antonio. He served as a member of the Poster Committee in 1989; as a member of the Technical Program Committee in 1999; as Co-Chair of the AAPG Awards Committee in 2008; and as Co-Chair of the AAPG Judging Committee in 2019. John also was General Chairman of the 2007 Annual Convention of the Society of Exploration Geophysicists and has served as President of the San Antonio Geophysical Society.

John describes the importance of his involvement in the professional geological community, especially the STGS, in this way: "For me, practicing geology is not so much a living as a way of life, sort of like true religion. I met some of my 'congregation' of geologists back in college (even my wife Jamie was a geology department librarian), and also some through working at companies, but mostly they are fellow STGS members. Encouragement from these folks has compelled me to write papers and proceed with prospects. In fact, most of my oil & gas prospects have been inspired by papers that were published in STGS publications, and sometimes I had direct, personal help from the paper's author. If these prospects resulted in dry holes, it was commiserating Society friends who comforted me and helped me persevere. From a less spiritual but more practical perspective, recommendations by Society friends have led to consulting work and helped sell wildcat wells. Society cohorts familiar with my experience have guided me to clients who have allowed me to keep the pot boiling. On a social basis, Jamie and I spend a lot of time with Society members and their spouses who have become our very best friends. All things considered, the South Texas Geological Society has helped make my life full and prosperous. I cannot imagine life without it."

In a similar light, it would be difficult for us, John's fellow STGS members, to imagine the Society functioning as smoothly and collegially as it does without the likes of his outstanding, dedicated service and unwavering comradeship.