



JOHN E. KIRKPATRICK

FEBRUARY 13, 1908–OCTOBER 3, 2006

John Elson Kirkpatrick was born February 13, 1908. His parents were Dr. Elmer Ellsworth and Claudia Spencer Kirkpatrick. His maternal grandfather, Lewis M. Spencer and great uncle, A. N. Spencer, founded Yukon, Oklahoma. Both of John's grandfathers served in the Civil War, one on the Union side and the other on the Confederate side. He was educated in Oklahoma City Public Schools and was a 1925 graduate of Oklahoma High School. John attended the Marion Institute in Alabama. In the tradition of his brothers Lewis Spencer Kirkpatrick and Elmer Ellsworth Kirkpatrick, Jr., he attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, as did his brother-in-law John Dean Moorman who was married to his sister Mary. In 1927 he was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy and graduated in 1931 and until his death was the 7th oldest Academy graduate. His younger brother Claude Siceluff Kirkpatrick also attended the Academy. John attended Harvard Business School after he completed his first tour of duty in the Navy.

In 1932 John and Mary Eleanor Blake were married. He served as an officer in the U. S. Navy until 1935 and remained in the U. S. Navy Reserve. He and two partners formed Allied Steel Products Company in Tulsa. John and Eleanor lived in Tulsa until 1941 when he was called back into the Navy. His longest tour of duty during World War II was on the USS North Carolina. He also served on the USS Alaska and the USS Oklahoma City, holding the rank of Commander at the conclusion of the war. He received two Bronze Stars. He continued his Naval career in the U. S. Navy Reserve retiring as a Rear Admiral in 1956.

In 1946, John began his long career in the oil and gas business with the assistance of Eleanor's father, Mack Barkley Blake. Kirkpatrick Oil Company was organized in 1950 and additional, related companies, including Kirkpatrick Supply, Kirkpatrick Well Servicing, Jennings Engine Supply and Kirkpatrick Oil & Gas, were formed over the years.

During the 1950s, John and Eleanor began their many years as philanthropists with the establishment of the Kirkpatrick Foundation. Their first significant gift was the contribution to build a new building for the Oklahoma Art Center. Another building was built on the Fairgrounds for planetarium, science and arts programs. It now houses City Arts Center. Kirkpatrick Center opened in 1976 for Omniplex, which included a large planetarium, expanded areas for science, arts and space programming. Omniplex is Oklahoma's largest science museum. Other important contributions over the years include the Kirkpatrick Fine Arts Building at Oklahoma City University; Oklahoma City Zoological Society; Lyric Theatre; National Cowboy Hall & Western Heritage Museum, and the John E. Kirkpatrick Horticulture Center at Oklahoma State University/Oklahoma City.

After researching the growing community foundation movement, John started the Oklahoma City Community Foundation in 1969. Over the years, John and Eleanor were substantial contributors to the Community Foundation. The Kirkpatrick legacy to the metropolitan Oklahoma City area will be particularly remembered by over two hundred nonprofit organizations with growing endowment funds sup-

ported by John and Eleanor Kirkpatrick. In 1989 they funded the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, an Affiliated Fund in the Community Foundation that focuses on grants for central Oklahoma charities.

John E. Kirkpatrick has been a major participant in Oklahoma City banking. Eleanor's father, M. B. Blake was a founder of Liberty National Bank and John served on Liberty's board of directors for fifty years. In 1988, he helped organize the effort to save the bank and maintain its Oklahoma ownership, making a very significant financial contribution to this effort.

John was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1962. He has received numerous awards including Outstanding Oklahoma Oil Man, Governor's Arts Award, Oklahoma Humanitarian of the Year from the National Association of Christians and Jews, Oklahoma Commerce and Industry Hall of Fame, Oklahoma City Public Schools Wall of Fame, and the American Association of Museums' Medal for Distinguished Philanthropy. He has served on and chaired many boards of nonprofit organizations. His most recent board positions were Founding Trustee, Oklahoma City Community Foundation; Chairman, Kirkpatrick Family Fund; Honorary Chairman, Kirkpatrick Foundation; Omniplex; Oklahoma Zoological Society; Allied Arts; Lyric Theatre; and State Fair of Oklahoma.

John is survived by his daughter, Joan Kirkpatrick; his grandson, Christian K. Keese; and his great grandson, Blake C.K. Keese.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, 415 Couch Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73102 or other charities of the donor's choice. Services will be held at First Presbyterian Church, 1001 Northwest 25th Street on Saturday, October 14 at 1:00 p.m. The Interment will be private