

Robert A. Bieberman

(1923–1998)



Robert A. Bieberman, Senior Petroleum Geologist Emeritus at the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, passed away after a short illness on December 23, 1998. He was affectionately known to his friends and colleagues as “Bieb.” Bieb was born on April 3, 1923, to Arthur and Louise Bieberman in Rock Island, Illinois. He served in the U.S. Army in the European Theatre in World War II. After the war, he graduated from Indiana University with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in geology. While immersed in his studies, he met his wife Doris, also a geology student at Indiana University.

In 1950, Bieb accepted the position of petroleum geologist at the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources. He quickly became a member of both the New Mexico Geological Society and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and played an active role in both organizations. Bieb served on many committees of the New Mexico Geological Society and was a key organizer in many field conferences and meetings put on by that organization. The Society recognized his contributions in 1976 by making him an Honorary Member. For many years, Bieb represented the Society on a national level as the representative to the House of Delegates of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists.

Bieb made many valuable contributions during his career at the Bureau and played a great role in the public service aspect of the Bureau. Under his stewardship, the New Mexico Library of Subsurface Data was transformed from a mere collection of loosely organized geologic data into a well-organized and very sizeable collection of subsurface data, such as well logs, drill cuttings, and sample descriptions, that was the envy of many state geological surveys. The Subsurface Library became an indispensable resource to the state and to geologists and petroleum explorationists in the

state. He was known as an especially decent and honorable man throughout his career.

Bieb had an active life outside of work. He was very proud and fond of his grandchildren, Clyfford, Lisa, and Corin. His hobbies included stamp collecting, gardening and collecting Native American pottery and rugs. He was well known for his collections of recordings from the Big Band era and western music. Sons of the Pioneers, Boxcar Willie, Dick Haymes, Bing Crosby, and the orchestras of Orrin Tucker, Jan Garber, Dick Jurgens, and Tiny Hill were among his favorite performers. In later years, Bieb developed an interest in genealogy and traced the family roots of both his family and his wife’s family back many generations into diverse places such as Germany and Scotland. At the time of his passing, he was organizing his extensive stamp collection for the benefit of his grandchildren. One of Bieb’s favorite subjects was the military history and the old forts of New Mexico. He was truly an expert on this subject and could discuss the subject for hours while pulling forth from dusty files old illustrations and photographs of block-houses and battlements that few had seen.

Upon his retirement in 1988, the Board of Regents of New Mexico Tech granted him emeritus status. His wife and closest friend, Doris F. Bieberman, passed away shortly after his retirement. Bieb is survived by his sister Janet L. Bieberman, by his son James F. Bieberman and wife Mary Lynn, by his daughter Betty B. Moore and husband Thomas, and by his three grandchildren. Bieb will be sorely missed by his family, by his friends in Socorro, and by his colleagues at the Bureau. His legacy and work live on through the Subsurface Library and the many technical publications he left behind.

—Ron Broadhead and Robert Eveleth