

Dr. John A. Allan: Founder of the CSPG

C. Willem Langenberg
Alberta Geological Survey/EUB, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 2X3
Willem.Langenberg@gov.ab.ca

The founders of the Alberta Society of Petroleum Geologists (later to become the CSPG) came from many different sectors. Dr. John Allan, who was Professor and Head of the Department of Geology at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, was the representative from academia. At the time of the founding, Dr. Allan was also Director of the Geological Survey Division of the Research Council of Alberta (and founder of the Alberta Geological Survey) and as such also the representative of the Alberta Government in the ASPG.

Dr. Allan contributed much time and energy to the formation of the Society and the search for petroleum in western Canada. He served as the Society's first Vice-President beside President Stan Slipper. Dr. Allan's geological hammer is passed from one president of the Society to the next, symbolizing the authority and responsibility of the office.

John Allan was born in Aubrey, Quebec and educated at McGill University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. John Allan was professor of the University of Alberta for nearly forty years, thirty-seven of those as head of the Geology Department. Thus he became the first provincial geologist living and working in Alberta. He was highly ethical and was always wary of any conflict of interest, where knowledge about natural resources of the province could result in financial gains for civil servants. John Allan considered himself Professor of the University, not just of geology. As such he was concerned about the overall well being of his students. He wanted to give them a whole education, which included English and Ethics. Dr. Allan was instrumental in the education of many of Alberta's petroleum finders.