

Kenneth Stanley “Boots” Adams 1899 - 1975

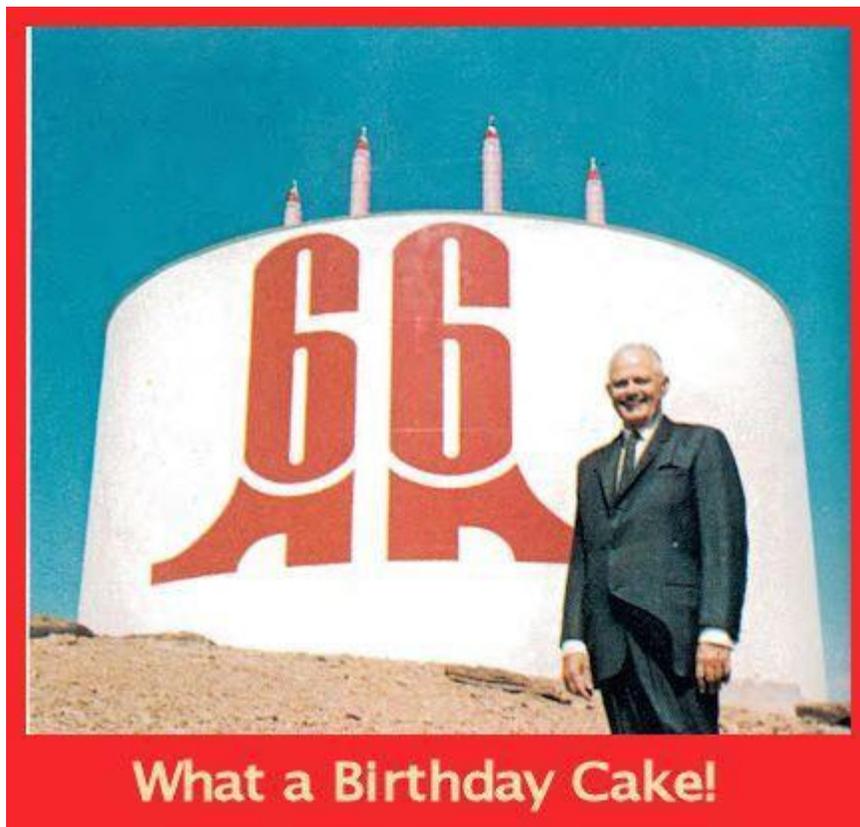


Mr. Adams was born on August 31st, 1899 in Horton, Kansas. He graduated from Wyandotte High School in 1917 and enrolled at the University of Kansas in the Fall of the same year. He played football, basketball and baseball in college. Mr. Adams left the University of Kansas before graduation to accept a job with Phillips Petroleum Company. He worked for the Phillips Petroleum Company in 1920 as a clerk in the warehouse department. In twelve years, he worked his way to the top and was the hand-picked successor to founder and president, Frank Phillips. He was elected president of Phillips Petroleum at age 38, one of the youngest corporation heads in the nation, and served as president from 1939-1964. During his time as president, he upgraded and diversified the company's interests in natural gas, aviation gasoline, and synthetic rubber operations – all pivotal during World War II. In 1951, the company invented polyethylene plastic and the first all-season motor oil. He was quoted as saying "I can see in my mind the plan for things."

From the book "With Honor: Melvin Laird in War, Peace, and Politics":

On Adam's sixty-sixth birthday in 1965, schools closed in the Phillips company town of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, so families could attend a parade. The guest of honor was Adams's golfing buddy, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Also in the parade was an important Republican House leader, Melvin Laird.

For this celebration, a water tank was decorated like a birthday cake with the Phillips 66 to resemble boots.



Picture from Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise, "Lost Bartlesville: The day a president came to town and the love of a lifetime...."

After he retired, he continued as a Board Chairman for Phillips until 1968, then served as a board member until 1970. Mr. Adams is credited with realizing the potential of cheap natural gas in the Oklahoma Panhandle, buying up leases that made Phillips one of the largest natural gas producers in the world.

The nickname “Boots” was given to him at the young age of three years old. He received a pair of black leather boots with red tops that he adored so much he wouldn’t take them off for bed.

Mr. Adams is in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, the Helms Foundation Amateur Basketball Hall of Fame. The Adams Alumni Center at the University of Kansas is dedicated to Mr. Adams, as he is recognized as one of the most influential Jayhawks.

Sources:

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