



George Elliott Atwood (1918-2002)

1983 Inductee into American Mining Hall of Fame

George Atwood was born in Savannah, Georgia, on July 21, 1918. His interest in rocks and minerals led him to the New Mexico School of Mines, from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Metallurgical Engineering in 1939 and a Masters in the same field in 1945. He later completed the advanced management program at Harvard's Business School in 1965. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in engineering in 1968 by the New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology.

Atwood began his career in 1939 working in the potash industry at Carlsbad, NM. In 1950, he joined Duval Corporation, where he served as chief engineer in the design and construction of Duval's potash mining and refining plant. He remained in Carlsbad as Refinery Superintendent and Assistant Resident Manager until 1957, when he and his family relocated to Tucson, Arizona, as the Resident Manager of Duval's new Copper Division.

Under Atwood's leadership, the copper division became a major success, despite taking on properties considered marginal by others in the field. To save on up-front costs, stripping and mining was done by a contractor, rather than making the capital investment initially. The higher than usual value of molybdenum also figured prominently in the profitability. Following the success with the initial property (Esperanza), Duval successfully developed and operated other copper/moly properties, such as Sierrita adjoining Esperanza, Mineral Park near Kingman, AZ, and Battle Mountain, NV, which ultimately became a significant gold producer.

Atwood served as Chairman of the Board of Duval until his retirement in 1983. He held twelve patents, authored numerous publications in the fields of extractive metallurgy and solution chemistry. Under his leadership, Duval initiated the use of in-pit crushers, and did major research on metallurgical processes to bypass smelting. He received the Ankh Award from the Copper Club, the James Douglas medal from AIME, and a Distinguished Service Award from the American Mining Congress, among other honors capping his distinguished career.

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