in the area who could not pay their debts. The family moved to St. Louis when Paul was 5 and to Montebello, California, because of his mother's severe asthma, when he was 10. They had a roof over their heads and barely enough to eat, but little else.

Paul's earliest jobs as a teenager were delivering newspapers and handbills, and cleaning oriental rugs. At 15, he graduated from East High School in Denver, Colorado, where he had come to live with his sister, Helen, and her husband, Jack Stoddard. He was only 16 when his mother died, and just 21 when his father died.

Motivated by Jack Stoddard, who himself engaged for many years in oil and gas exploration, Paul, working and paying his own way, graduated in 1934 from the University of California at Berkeley with a petroleum engineering degree. Shell Oil Company hired him as a roustabout at a salary of $125 per month.

Shortly after accepting employment with Shell, Paul's sister died destitute in Denver, just a year after Jack Stoddard had died. She left five children ranging in age from 10 to 4. So at the age of 20, Paul assumed custody of four Stoddard children; Helen, Bob, John, and Charles. Charles "Bus" Stoddard, an attorney in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, is the only one to survive Paul.

With financial and legal aid from longtime family friends Warwick and Richard Downing, Paul loaded the four Stoddard children and all their belongings in the family car and departed for Ventura, California, fitting in well enroute with all the others caught up in the depression of the early 1930s. Shell had a policy of transferring employees before any roots were established so, like gypsies, Paul and the children lived in many different areas of southern California—Long Beach, Bellflower, Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Ojai, and finally back to Ventura. This was a time of exciting exploration and development work in the Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Maria, and San Joaquin basins.

In 1937, Paul married Jane Mills Fraser and together they raised the Stoddard children and devoted daughters of their own, Ann, Jeannie, Carse, Sally, and Paula, and who have amongst them reared nine grandchildren. Both Paul and Jane instilled a lasting love for nature in all their children. Mountain camping and hiking trips were the entire family's idea of the best of times.

Helen Stoddard's estate had some mining claims staked by Jack Stoddard on the Big Sand draw anticline in the Wind River basin, Wyoming. While working for Shell, Paul used vacations to locate and validate the claims with the intent to sell them to benefit the Stoddard children. With the help of Warwick Downing, oil attorney in Denver and "Brer" Bretschneider of Midwest Oil Company, Fremont Oil Company was formed and the leases placed in the company. They became a part of the deep unit at Big Sand draw, where Sinclair Oil Company completed a Tensleep Sandstone pool discovery in 1944.

In 1949 Paul left Shell and moved his family to Denver to manage (working with Warwick Downing), Fremont Petroleum Company. Income from the success at Big Sand Draw set the financial base for Fremont.

Paul arrived in Denver at the start of the Denver basin oil boom and involved Fremont in successful exploration with Rut Volk's company, Plains Exploration, as well as other companies.

In 1955 Paul enlisted his nephew, John Stoddard, a geophysicist for Standard Oil of California, to work for Fremont. Although successful in many exploration ventures, the height of Paul's and John's careers was the major discovery of the Mississippiian pool at the Brandon oil field in southeastern Colorado. The two of them were recognized as the explorers of the year by the Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists in 1984. Paul had achieved the wealth and success for which he had worked long and hard.

A disappointment in Paul's life was when Inexco Oil Company took over Fremont in a proxy fight in 1968. Paul became a consultant and was later joined by John Stoddard to continue exploration in southeastern Colorado and New Mexico. John died of a heart attack in 1983.

Paul was working in his Spectrum Building office on another southeastern Colorado exploration venture up until the time of his death. His associates in the latest ventures were Bob Weimer, Will Robinson, and Brian Wert.

Paul was a member of the Denver Petroleum Club, the AAPG, the Society of Petroleum Engineers, the Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists, the Petroleum Pioneers, the Wyoming Geo-

PAUL S. PUSTMUELLER
(1913–1991)

By Robert J. Weimer
Golden, Colorado

The petroleum industry lost one of its stalwart pioneer leaders when Paul S. Pustmueller died of pancreatic cancer on January 24, 1991. Paul was a champion of wildcat exploration in the Rocky Mountains and was widely regarded as the father of successful oil exploration in southeastern Colorado.

Paul's boundless enthusiasm, optimism, and zest for life were contagious. He motivated and inspired us to persevere and strive to do the best we knew how with honor, truth, integrity, and square dealing. He taught us to tackle the things that couldn't be done and do them. He championed creativity and individualism through our free-enterprise system.

Paul was a warmhearted caring person who spent a lifetime generously helping others—not only his countless friends, but often total strangers who might have impressed him as being in need of help. His acts of kindness and generosity must have totalled many hundreds.

Paul was born in the German community of Belleville, Illinois, on December 15, 1913. He was the youngest of three children born to Otto and Sophie Pustmueller. Paul's dad operated a small grocery store that went bankrupt in 1918 because Otto had extended credit to the impoverished coal miners...
logical Association, and a geology study group. He made these organizations and their members a valued part of his life.

Paul and Jane were divorced in 1967. With his marriage to Helen Maxson in 1971 he acquired three devoted stepdaughters, Margie, Marilyn, and Patty, and two fine stepgrandsons. Paul and Helen had 20 years together, frequently traveling in their Gessna Centurion, and going on fly-yourself-safaris in South Africa, Botswana, Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii. These trips enhanced Paul’s keen interest in world history, anthropology, archeology, and the many cultures of the world. Over the years, scuba diving, skiing, and swimming occupied much of his recreational activities, which he shared with children, grandchildren, and friends. Grandson Randy wrote: “In your passing you have left a world of life and opportunity for those you leave behind. We have always been appreciative of your generosity, and our lives have been permanently enhanced because of your great efforts, planning, and accomplishments.”

As Paul wrote of his life in 1988, “My wonderful wife, large loving family, abundance of good friends and associates, material wealth, absence of serious problems, and many interests all make me realize that I am an extremely lucky fellow.” He was especially proud of his grandchildren.

With both thumbs up, his parting message to one of his daughters, and in a sense to all of us, was, “Be of good cheer.”

In a eulogy, Bus Stoddard shared these thoughts from a poem by Robert Orr.

“They are not dead who live in lives they leave behind; in those whom they have blessed, they live a life again, and shall live through the years, eternal life, and grow each day more beautiful as time declares their good, forgets the rest, and proves their immortality.”

Paul will live in many of our lives forever.

At the encouragement of Paul’s friends, a Petroleum Geology scholarship fund has been established. Contributions may be made to the Paul S. Pustmueller Fund, Colorado School of Mines Foundation, 16th and Illinois Street, Golden, Colorado 80401. Carse Pustmueller, Charles Stoddard, Randy O’Reilly, and Earl Griffith contributed to this memorial.