Harold Hamm

Philanthropy Pledge
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We live in an amazing country. Because of our capitalistic society and free enterprise system, I was able to work my way out of poverty. This process began in high school when I discovered a passion for the oil and gas industry. My success in this industry has given me opportunities to help others discover and pursue their passions in life.

When I was a teenager, John Frank of Frankoma Pottery came to speak at my high school. He talked about his love of the arts. That was his passion. He spoke to everybody, but I thought he was speaking directly to me. He talked about finding something in our lives that we could be passionate about and encouraged us to follow that dream, and said each one of us would be better at doing things that we love and care about.

That caught my attention. I thought, “What could I be passionate about? I’m going to high school, and I’m working at a truck stop.” But I looked at the oil and gas development occurring all around Enid, Oklahoma, and that captured my imagination as a young man. I wanted to be like those charismatic, energetic individuals I met within the petroleum industry and who had shown so much generosity to others in Oklahoma.

In short, I eventually had the opportunity to start my own service company and then Continental Resources. And from that meager beginning as a one-man, one-pump truck operation in 1967, Continental is today credited as a key discoverer and early developer of the Bakken Play—the world’s largest oil discovery in more than 40 years and a key factor in making American energy independence a reality.

I tell this story only to demonstrate how sparking young minds can change the world. And that’s exactly the intent of my efforts to improve health care and educational opportunities for people in the U.S. and across the globe.

Through the Harold Hamm Diabetes Center, my mission is to inspire young, bright scientists to find the cure for a disease that has been identified as the largest health crisis of the next generation. Through the Harold Hamm School of Geology and Geological Engineering at the University of North Dakota, my mission is to inspire the next generation of oil and gas leaders to continue the American Energy Renaissance and all of its benefits, including the creation of millions of American jobs, lower consumer prices, billions in tax revenue, wealth generation, and energy independence for America.
The Giving Pledge was a natural fit. One of the reasons I became interested in oil and gas in the first place is because I saw the generosity of oil industry leaders. Frank and Jane Phillips gave away every dime of their huge oil and gas fortune. Waite Phillips, Sam Noble, the Skellys—the list goes on and on of oilmen and women who gave their wealth away to make their communities and the world a better place. In Oklahoma, most of the oil people I have ever known fit that same mold. By joining the Giving Pledge, I hope to continue the legacy of encouraging others to commit their time and resources to worthy causes that will enable people with ambition and tenacity to achieve their goals.