

# GHK COMPANIES

Robert A. Hefner III, founder and owner of GHK Companies, an Oklahoma City-based natural gas and oil exploration and production firm, is a third-generation Oklahoma energy man, as well as a third-generation politically active businessman.

Hefner was born in 1935 in Washington, D.C. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1957 and in 1959 formed the Glover-Hefner-Kennedy Company, which became known as The GHK Company and has focused the majority of its now fifty-plus-year history on the development of natural gas rather than oil.

Hefner, who is a geologist and geophysicist and was a founder in the 1980s of the University of Oklahoma Energy Center, has often been referred to as the “Father of Deep Natural Gas” and has been considered one of the world’s premier natural gas wildcatters. In the 1950s and 1960s most experts thought there could be no commercial natural gas in the deep sector of the Anadarko Basin in western Oklahoma. Hefner defied that conventional wisdom and GHK’s #1 Green well, completed in 1969 in Beckham County, Oklahoma, became the first well to establish the prolific

gas-producing capability of the Deep Anadarko Basin, thereby opening the province to billions of dollars of subsequent deep gas development. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, Hefner drilled many of the world’s deepest and highest pressure natural gas wells and achieved major advancements in natural gas drilling, completion, and production technology. In 1980, Hefner and GHK entered into the then largest on-shore domestic joint venture in the history of the industry with Mobil Oil Corp., resulting in GHK/Mobil interests in over 224 deep wells in Oklahoma’s Anadarko Basin and a total expenditure by all participants in excess of several billion in today’s dollars.

In the 1990s, Hefner and GHK’s technical team discovered the Potato Hills field in southeastern Oklahoma. GHK was the sole developer of the field which, at the time, was one of the larger onshore natural gas discoveries in North America in recent decades. Historically, GHK operated about ten percent of Oklahoma’s best producing natural gas wells. Today, Hefner and GHK remain active in the Anadarko Basin and have interests in two large, rapidly developing horizontal drilling projects in Roger Mills County in western Oklahoma.



*Robert A. Hefner III at a GHK well site in western Oklahoma, 2007.*



With the onset of the nation's energy crisis in the early 1970s, Hefner became a leading spokesman for the role of natural gas in America's energy policy and testified eighteen times before Congressional committees in the 1970s and 1980s. He was one of the most influential individuals in the country in changing Federal policy relating to natural gas pricing and deregulation. He was chairman of the Oklahoma Energy Advisory Council, founder and chairman of the Independent Gas Producers Committee, and served as an ambassador-at-large for the State of Oklahoma. He recently accepted an invitation to become a "creativity ambassador" for Oklahoma.

Hefner has been an avid collector of items he feels representative of both the beauty and spirit of freedom and enterprise in mankind's nature. As the Berlin Wall was coming down in 1989, which he believed was an historic symbol of the power of personal freedom, he was able to purchase sixteen feet, which today is on display at Bedok Reservoir in Singapore. Additionally, in the mid-1980s Hefner began collecting contemporary Chinese oil paintings and today he and his wife MeiLi own and continue to develop The Hefner Collection, the single most important private collection representing art of the historic and artistically explosive period following China's Cultural Revolution. The Hefners have also established the Robert and MeiLi Hefner Foundation, supporting the "Hefner Initiative" program, which funds trips to China and Singapore for outstanding students from selected high schools.

Hefner was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2010, having been preceded

by his father, Robert A. Hefner, Jr., (inducted in 1973) and his grandfather, Judge Robert A. Hefner (inducted in 1949). Hefner continues his active management role at GHK and serves on the International Council at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and Singapore's International Advisory Panel on Energy, is a director of the American Clean Skies Foundation, a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in London, a fellow national in The Explorers Club, and founding director and president of the Bradshaw Foundation ([www.bradshawfoundation.com](http://www.bradshawfoundation.com)), which fosters exploration and preservation of ancient rock and cave paintings around the world and research on the early human migrations and population of the earth. Hefner has previously served on many additional boards and councils, was a former Advisory Board member of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, and is chairman emeritus of Ballet Oklahoma, having won, in 1981, the *Forbes* "Business in the Arts" award for long-term commitment and contributions to Ballet Oklahoma.

Hefner's ground-breaking book *The Grand Energy Transition* ([www.The-GET.com](http://www.The-GET.com)) was published in 2009 by John Wiley & Sons. The book describes civilization's ongoing energy transition into the Age of Energy Gases and shows how the expanded use of gaseous fuels can revive economic prosperity, create jobs and enhance national security. A documentary DVD *The Grand Energy Transition* was released in 2012.

Hefner has three children—Robert IV, Catherine, and Charles—seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, all Oklahomans!



MeiLi and Robert A. Hefner III at a GHK well site in western Oklahoma, 2004.