

Roth: McClendon and Jobs ... iGeniuses

Pixar. Apple. iPhone. All legacies of the innovation of one of America's most creative CEOs.

In 1996, after being away from his company for a decade, Steve Jobs returned to the company he helped found, leading the company to absolutely change the way we and the world interact with technology. Philosophical differences pushed Jobs out and Apple languished for years without a leader that understood its unique corporate DNA and creative genius. The advancements that Jobs brought upon his return – the iMac, iTunes, iPod, iPhone, iPad and the revolutionary software that emerged – fundamentally changed the technology game and history.

This year, another one of America's game changers will retire from a company he started – one that has fundamentally changed how America fuels itself. Natural gas, a fuel Aubrey McClendon has chased and championed, has helped redefine the way all of us interact with energy.

Cars. Heating. Power plants. All resources, that when utilizing natural gas, help America significantly reduce its emissions profile while leaning on our country's own home-grown, native resource. Cleaner, abundant and affordable – the unique trifecta that Aubrey and Chesapeake have given to America.

In 1989, Aubrey McClendon co-founded Chesapeake Energy Corp. with a \$50,000 investment on top of a lot of smarts and guts. Years later, through blood, sweat, toil and tears, what emerged is America's most active driller and its second-largest producer of natural gas.

McClendon has led Chesapeake to create some of the most profound technological innovations in oil and gas production.

These advancements helped America unlock its vast energy potential, thousands of feet below ground within geology once thought void of recoverable resources.

An unapologetic advocate, McClendon has demonstrated to the world that natural gas, as a fossil fuel, is an abundant resource that can help the U.S. end its addiction to foreign imports while also helping clean up the air we breathe, all while saving consumers money and creating jobs here at home.

This type of magic doesn't occur often, but when it does, we should take note. Aubrey McClendon has built a great company, and he's also given a great America a stronger belief in itself.

And an amazing legacy here at home. Perhaps one of McClendon's greatest triumphs is not just in how he morphed a small startup company into an industry-leading corporation of epic proportions, but instead it will be the risk he took on Oklahoma City, the state, and on us as people. His belief in Oklahoma helped infuse life, culture, art, energy and entertainment in ways many leaders once thought impossible. We are no longer a fly-over state, but instead a destination. I feel lucky to know a visionary such as he and even more so to call him friend.

So while sitting at Republic Gastrob in the unique Classen Curve, I'm watching the OKC Thunder dominate their NBA division in a game here at home in our own Chesapeake Arena, I'm thankful for all that Aubrey McClendon has given of himself and I'm hopeful his genius is hard at work focused on his tomorrow. Because we need giants like him to make the world a better place for all of us.