



Elmer T. Lee

Elmer T. Lee was born in 1919 on a tobacco farm near Peaks Mill in Franklin County, Kentucky. Elmer's father, Ernest T., died of typhoid fever in 1931. His mother relocated Elmer and his brother, Harrison, to Frankfort, where she worked to support the family and educate the boys.

Elmer graduated from Frankfort High School in 1936 and worked for Jarman Shoe Company until December 1941. He then served with the U. S. Army Air Force during World War II as a radar bombardier on a B-29. After flying missions against Japan through 1945, Elmer was honorably discharged in January 1946. He returned home and studied engineering at the University of Kentucky, where he graduated with honors in 1949.

In September 1949 Elmer began working in the engineering department of the George T. Stagg Distillery in Frankfort. In 1966, Elmer was promoted to plant superintendent, responsible for all plant operations and reporting to the plant manager. In 1969, he became plant manager. Elmer retired in 1985 but continued to serve up until his passing as an ambassador for Buffalo Trace, educating the world on the unique qualities of Kentucky's bourbon whiskey.

It was in 1984 that Elmer introduced the single-barrel bourbon concept to the world with Blanton's Single Barrel Bourbon, named in honor of Col. Albert B. Blanton. Elmer was known throughout the industry for his expertise and knowledge of bourbon whiskey and received numerous awards and recognition. Among these was his induction into the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame in 2001, his receipt of the Lifetime Achievement Award from *Whisky Advocate Magazine* in 2002 and the Lifetime Achievement Award and Hall of Fame induction from *Whisky Magazine* in 2012.

Elmer passed away in 2013 just a few weeks shy of what would have been his 94th birthday, but his contributions to the bourbon industry live on through the millions of fans worldwide who enjoy his creations.