

# International law expert dies at 75

By Darren Meritz

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Richard Burges Perrenot, an El Paso lawyer widely esteemed for his accomplishments in international law, died at his home Saturday after a long battle with cancer. He was 75.

Perrenot graduated from El Paso High School and the University of Texas at El Paso and served in the Navy during World War II, Pacific Theater, before receiving a law degree.

"He had quite a career," said Ellis Mayfield, Perrenot's longtime partner in the law firm of Mayfield and Perrenot. "He was a fine lawyer."

Perrenot, whose mother

donated the family estate to the El Paso County Historical Society upon her death, was a descendant of one of the city's pioneering families and followed a family tradition of studying law.

He met his wife, Josephine, in Cuba while he was vice president for legal services for Texaco during Fidel Castro's Communist takeover.

"Burges was the last person representing Texaco in Cuba," Mayfield said. "He went along the gangplank fighting them up to the end."

Among his accomplishments as a lawyer was the establishment of many corporations in Mexico, namely *maquiladoras* in Juárez, Mayfield said.

He was active in the El Pa-

so County Historical Society, the El Paso and American bar associations, the American Society of International Law and the American Foreign Law Association.

Perrenot had been a member of the State Bar of Texas since 1952 and had been designated by Texas Lawyer magazine as one of the top five international lawyers in the state.

He is survived by his son, Preston, daughter-in-law, Sandra, and granddaughters, Sarah and Ariel.

Graveside funeral services will be at 12 p.m. Tuesday at Memory Gardens of the Valley in Santa Teresa.

**PERRENOT**

**RICHARD BURGES PERRENOT**, 75, one of El Paso's most distinguished and highly respected attorneys, passed away peacefully at his home on January 11, 2003 after a long battle with cancer. Preceded in death by his beloved wife Josephine, son Richard,

mother Jane Burges Perrenot, father Preston Rose Perrenot, and sisters Anne and Mary Austin. He is survived by his son Preston, daughter-in-law Sandra, and granddaughters Sarah and Ariel. Born April 11, 1927, Mr. Perrenot graduated from El Paso High School in 1944, served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He was a graduate of U.T.E.P., New York University, and Columbia University. He also graduated from the American Institute of Foreign Trade, B.F.T. and graduated from Southern Methodist University, LL.B., in 1952. As VP for Legal Services for Texaco in Cuba, he reluctantly turned the keys to that company's facilities over to the Castro government in 1959, leaving Cuba where he met his future wife, Josephine. Following a brief period in New York, he established what is now the law firm of Mayfield and Perrenot in El Paso. He served as the Director of the El Paso and American Bar Association from 1970 to 1971 and was Chairman of the International Law Section of the American Society of International Law.

He was also a member of the American Foreign Law Association and the British Institute of International and Comparative Law. A lifelong member of Los Viejos Club and member of the State Bar of Texas (1952-2002), his distinguished career led to his recently being designated by Texas Lawyer magazine as one of the top five international attorneys in the state. Mr. Perrenot was widely esteemed for his brilliant mind, strong principles, and sharp wit, and especially revered among many younger attorneys for whom he remains a role model for how to be a great lawyer. Graveside funeral services will be held at 12:00 PM Tuesday, Jan. 14th at Memory Gardens of the Valley, 4900 McNutt Rd., Santa Teresa, NM. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Hospice of VNA, El Paso or the Salvation Army. Funeral arrangements under direction of San Jose Funeral Home, El Paso, Texas, 915-532-1856.