



GEORGE ALFRED PONSFORD

passed away on Monday, March 20, 2000. He was the ninth and youngest child of Kate and Henry T. Ponsford who came to El Paso in 1897. George was born here on November 3, 1911. He attended El Paso High School and the University of Arizona where he majored in civil engineering and later became a Fellow and life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. At the University of Arizona he was a member of Delta Chi social fraternity and Theta Tau professional engineering fraternity. Throughout his high school and college years he was active in various sports including baseball and basketball. He was recently honored for having lettered in basketball at the University of Arizona in 1932, 1933 and 1934. It was also while he was a student at the University of Arizona that George met fellow student Mary Elizabeth (Libby) Cowell. They married on September 27, 1936, in Tucson. George Ponsford was a lifetime member of Trinity Methodist Church (now Trinity-First United Methodist Church) where he served as Chairman of the Official Board for two years. He also served on the Board of Trustees as well as many committees. George Ponsford served during World War II for four years in the Army Corps of Engineers obtaining the rank of Major. He served in the European Theater and Rhineland campaigns. He was Battalion Commander of the 220th Armored Engineer Battalion in the 20th Armored Division. He graduated from the Command and General Staff School in 1944. After the war, George rejoined his brothers in Ponsford Brothers Construction Company and became active in many community activities. He was president of the El Paso Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America and was president of the Board of Directors of the Tri-State Credit Association. He served on the Board of Directors of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce as well as the Board of the El Paso Boys Club. George was a founding director of the El Paso Better Business Bureau. He was a member of Paso Del Norte Post 58 of the American Legion. He was also a member of Jim's Lunch Club and a daily coffee group, both of which meant so much to him. George, his four brothers and his father were all members of Fraternity Lodge #1111 of the Scottish Rite Bodies. George was a 32 degree member of the Scottish Rite Bodies of which he was a member for over 50 years. He also belonged to the El Maida Shrine Temple. George Ponsford, his father and brothers built many local landmarks including the Sun Bowl Stadium, the Plaza Theatre and the W.W. Turney residence, which later became the El Paso Museum of Art on Montana, and is today the International Museum of Art. They also built the original headquarters building in El Paso for the Standard Oil Company of Texas, buildings for Phelps-Dodge Refinery as well as those for Southwest Irrigated Cotton Growers. They also built many local schools and churches including all three buildings of Trinity-First UMC and the First Presbyterian Church. The Ponsfords also built a High-Speed Rocket sled Test Track at Holloman Air Force Base which was 5/8 mile long and had to be accurate within the thickness of a cigarette paper. George Ponsford was preceded in death by his wife of 35 years, Mary Elizabeth (Libby) Cowell Ponsford. He was also preceded in death by his brothers Harry, Walter, Mame and Albert Ponsford and by his sisters Dr. Pearl Ponsford, Ruby Tapper and Lucile Tillman. He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law Mary Jo and Everett Melby of El Paso; his grandson, Kinn Melby of Los Angeles; his granddaughters Kathy and Vicki Melby of Austin; his sister Sara Wilson; and many nieces and nephews. Visitation will be Thursday from 8:30 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. at Harding-Orr & McDaniel Funeral Home. Services will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday, March 23, at Trinity-First United Methodist Church. Drs. Will Cotton, Brodaco Elkins and Eduardo Rivera will officiate. Interment will be at Evergreen Cemetery on Alameda. If desired, memorials may be given in memory of George A. Ponsford to Trinity-First United Methodist Church.

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