

H.J. Ponsford dies; builder of Sun Bowl

By Betty Pierce
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Henry Jordan Ponsford was a builder in more than one respect.

His son, Henry Thomas Ponsford II, characterized him as a "pillar of the community."

"He was one of nine children in a close-knit family and had strong, lifelong associations with both family and community."

"In a very real sense, he helped to build this community. Everywhere you look, you see one of his buildings."

Mr. Ponsford died Tuesday at 92. He still lived in the home he built for his family in 1921.

Mr. Ponsford came to El Paso from Canada with his parents in 1897. He began attending Sunday School at Trinity Methodist when it was on Stanton and Texas streets, recalled Marbry Henning Ponsford, his wife of 68 years.

"He didn't have hobbies, but was very fond of his children and grandchildren and his great-grandson and enjoyed playing with him."

"He served the community in many ways, as a director on the boards of the YMCA, Radford School, Southwest Children's Home, for which he was treasurer. He was a life member of the board of the Salvation Army and served on the board of stewards of Trinity Methodist church for many years."

"He attended El Paso High School, when it stood on the Arizona Street location where the Nurses's Home is today, and was on the baseball, football and track teams. He was

graduated from Columbia University with degrees in architecture and civil engineering.

H.T. Ponsford and Sons, later Ponsford Brothers General Contractors, a firm founded by his father, is still in operation, and, according to his sister, Sara Wilson, "He never retired from the business."

He built the Sun Bowl; the Plaza Theater; all three buildings of Trinity-First United Methodist Church; First and Asbury United Methodist churches; the present buildings of Radford School; The Women's Club; various buildings at UT El Paso, White Sands and Holloman Air Force Base; the old Turney home, now El Paso Museum of Art; First Church of Christ, Scientist; the track at Holloman Air Force Base on which the high-speed tests were done, and other well-known edifices in El Paso and southern New Mexico.

Survivors are his wife, of El Paso, and son Henry Thomas Ponsford, Poway, Calif.; daughter, Marbry P. Edwards of Los Angeles; grandchildren, Allen P. Edwards, Palo Alto, Calif., Thomas E. Ponsford, Poway, Dr. Ann M.P. Laux, Richmond, Va., and Brenda Jeannette Ponsford Konrad, Blacksburg, Va.; great-grandson, Allen Charles Edwards; sisters, Dr. Pearl O. Ponsford, Sara Wilson and Lucile Tillman, and two brothers, Albert and George Ponsford, all of El Paso.

Services for Mr. Ponsford were scheduled at 2 p.m. today in Harding-Orr and McDaniel Montana Avenue Chapel, with burial in Evergreen Alameda Cemetery. The Rev. Lively Brown will officiate.