



ARNOLD PEINADO JR.

Work ethic helped take Peinado far in career

By Jenn Crawford
Special to the Times

EL PASO — Arnold Peinado Jr. had a strong work ethic from the time he was young.

Peinado and his five brothers worked at their family's gas station because their father believed hard work was the only way to get ahead in life.

"I can remember at the age of 6 years old, walking from the house on

Nevada across the tracks to go to the gas station after school, and working until 7 p.m.," Peinado said.

Peinado's parents came to El Paso from Mexico as children around the time of the Mexican Revolution. His paternal grandfather set up a wholesale grocery business when they arrived. Peinado's father decided not to go into the family business; instead, he and a brother went to Chicago to start a taxi company. Three years later, in 1928, they returned to El Pa-

so with \$8,000 in profits.

The brothers invested the money in a gas station on Texas Street right next to the railroad tracks. Because the gasoline could be delivered by railroad tank car, they saved a few pennies a gallon on delivery and charged a lower price than other stations in the area,

Please see **Peinado 2E**

► **Hispanic entrepreneurs** have always played an integral role in El Paso's business and economic growth. The Paso del Norte Entrepreneurship Oral History Project, a partnership between the University of Texas at El Paso's Institute of Oral History and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, a Kansas City-based

foundation devoted to entrepreneurship, identifies some of these prominent Hispanic business owners and tells their stories.

► **This is the 23rd** in a series of stories about 36 entrepreneurs.

► **Transcripts** and audio files of interviews are available online at heho.utep.edu or by calling 747-7052.

Peinado

Continued from **1E**



► **Hear the entire interview**

Peinado said.

As the Peinado boys grew up, the family moved from Nevada Avenue to a house on Mesa Street. Peinado's father wanted his boys to be close enough to walk to what is now the University of Texas at El Paso.

Ironically, none of them attended college in El Paso. Instead, Peinado went to Johns Hopkins University and earned a civil engineering degree.

Peinado graduated from Johns Hopkins in 1952 and finished his master's degree in structural engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1953.

He returned to El Paso to help with his father's construction business but was drafted into the Army for almost two years, living in Okinawa, Japan, and then California, where he stayed to work as a structural engineer for three years. When he returned to El Paso, he joined his father and his brother, Bob Peinado, build-

ing houses. But because the economy was in a recession at the time, new-homes sales were down.

Arnold Peinado began his career as an entrepreneur in 1967 by contacting architects to see whether they would give him contracts to do structural engineering. He and his brothers, Bob and Raul Peinado, began to get contracts. Their first job was to design one of the McDonald Observatory buildings near Fort Davis. Among their engineering projects were what is now the Judson F. Williams Convention Center, Bassett office building across from Bassett Place, Address High School, a building at Bowie High School, and several other elementary schools and office buildings.

At the time, they were the only consulting Hispanic structural engineers in the city, Arnold Peinado said.

"It took much effort to convince the El Paso archi-

tecs to hire us as knowledgeable and capable structural engineers," he said.

They called their company Peinado Brothers Consulting. Throughout his career, Peinado would own several engineering and land development companies with different names and different partners, usually his brothers. His most recent businesses are Wildwood Developers LLC and Franklin Self Storage LLC, which he co-owns with other associates.

Peinado has worked on everything from residential projects, such as the Casitas Coronado and Jardines Coronado subdivisions, to projects such as the building and remodeling of barracks at Fort Bliss and Holloman Air Force Base.

Work slowed down in the early 1980s, so Peinado and his partners contacted people they knew who were involved in the construction of *maquiladoras* in Juárez. They were able to find work designing wastewater treatment plants for these *maquiladoras* in northern Mexico, as well as designing the structure for new build-

In the early 2000s, he and Bob Peinado entered the wood products business, manufacturing wooden handles for brooms, mops and toys from rough sticks.

The business prospered until plastic and metal handles became common and cheaper, and they closed the plant.

In 2004, Arnold Peinado and several other associates began Wildwood Developers LLC to build Wildwood Park, a residential area of 73 lots in West El Paso, and Franklin Self Storage LLC. The West Side self-storage business contains 733 units on five acres.

Looking back on his successful business career, he said it is important for entrepreneurs to believe in what they do and to project costs as accurately as possible.

"You're trying to do something that you don't know for sure is going to work, and you have to analyze the risks," Peinado said. "You have to believe that it has possibilities, then pursue the idea with intensity."

Jenn Crawford is a senior writer for the University of Texas at El Paso.