

ERNEST "ERNIE" PONCE.....BIOGRAPHY

BIRTHPLACE: Chihuahua, Chih., Mexico, July 25, 1913

DIED: March 15, 2002

FAMILY: Wife: Mary S. Ponce. Son: Wayne Ponce. Daughter: Maureen Surratt. Daughter-in-law, Terry Acosta Ponce. Son-in-law, Bobby Surratt. His only grandson, David Bryan Morris, preceded him in death in 1985.

SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY: Director of the Valley Bank of El Paso, Montwood National Bank, and the State National Bank. Member of the Downtown Rotary Club and served in many capacities for the club. El Paso Chamber of Commerce, West Texas-New Mexico Senior Golf Association. Inter-City Group. President of the El Paso County Club. President of the Defense Supply Association. Commissioner of the North Texas-Oklahoma Export Expansion Council. City councilman for 3 terms (1951-1957) under Fred Hervey and Tom Rogers, Mayors. Trustee with the City of El Paso Employees Pension Board, and the League of Texas Municipalities. Chairman of the Host Committee, International Committee and Paisano Golfers. Director of the YMCA, United Fund, Optimist Club, Selective Service Board, National Conference Christians and Jews, Our Lady's Youth Center, and the International Good Neighbor Council.

BUSINESS: Owner of R-F Macaroni Co, Inc. which he sold in 1978.

SPORTS: An avid sportsman, during Ernie's terms on the El Paso City Council, Ascarate Golf course was conceived and fully constructed and completed. At that time Valdespino Golf Course was turned over to Ft. Bliss and is now the Ft. Bliss Golf Course, creating a bond between the city of El Paso and Ft. Bliss.

Ernie was inducted into the Golf Hall of Fame in 1997, an honor he greatly cherished. Ernie's handicap was a 2.

Ernie was the El Paso YMCA Handball Champion from 1938 through 1951. Due to World War II the sport was inactive from 1942 through 1945. In 1946, he was the YMCA Singles Champion till 1951. Ernie remained unbeaten and held that

title for 14 straight consecutive years. He also became the Tri-State Handball Champion for Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona during that time.

In appreciation to the YMCA, for helping him in sports as a young boy, Ernie succeeded in raising funds to build the current "Y" on Montana Street.

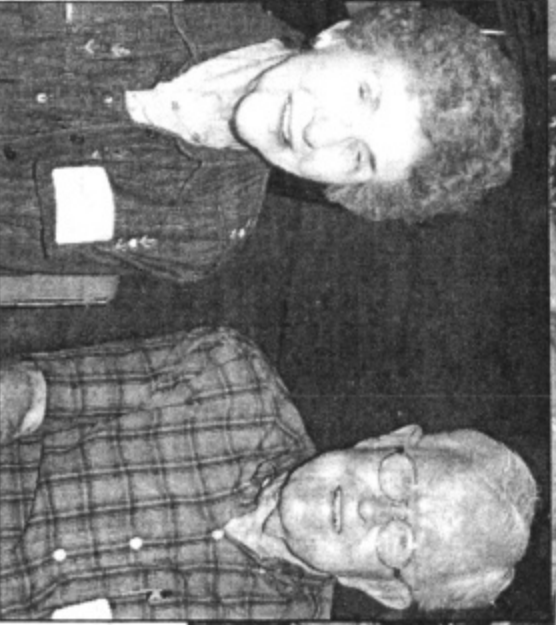
Ernie Ponce had played and promoted sports since he was a young boy and remained so until he died.

Champion Ernie Ponce honored with plaque at YMCA

The late Ernie Ponce, one of El Paso's most prominent sportsmen, was honored with a plaque which will hang in the handball court of the YMCA located at 701 Montana.

Ponce, a long-time sportsman, was one of the Southwest's most skilled handball champions, winning several handball championships.

Ponce's family was presented with the plaque at a reception attended by more than 100 people.



Wayne Ponce,
Maureen Surratt,
Mary Ponce & Tom
Benson

photos by
Christian Chapman

Maybelle & Al O'Leary - O'Leary was in charge of the handball team when Ponce played.

Gerry Fleaharty with Ray Sanchez

Virginia Palafox, along with Rene & Arnold Peinado, take a closer look at photos of Ernie Ponce and the handball team.

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN CHAPMAN