Santiago 'Sonny' Porcella III

PENNINGTON - Santiago Sonny Porcella III, 97, of Pennington died in the University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro on Saturday, Jan. 19, 2013.

Born in Cranford, NJ, he was the first of nine children of Santiago Porcella Jr. and Meta Weldon Porcella. He had been a resident of Pennington for 47 years.

He graduated from Cranford High School in 1934, the third generation to graduate from Cranford Public Schools. He was a graduate of Louisiana State University with a B.S. in forestry in 1942. He did post-graduate work at the Inter-American Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Turrialba, Costa Rica, in 1948.

He spent eight years in Cacaoa, Liberia as assistant vice president of the Liberia Co., working on the Firestone Rubber Plantation, and on cocoa plantation development.

The Firestone Rubber Plantation produced the rubber used by the United States while engaged in World War II. It had 975 employees working three shifts around the clock.

Mr. Porcella returned to the U.S. and joined the New Jersey Forestry Service retiring in 1977 as chief of the of the Bureau of Forest Management, Department of Environmental Protection, Trenton. He also served as manager of the C & ED Credit Union in Trenton.

He was a member of St. James Catholic Church of Pennington and served as chairman of the St. James Council. He was a member and past president of the Pennington Lion's Club, former member and past president of the N.J. Society of American Foresters, a member and past president of the N.J. Soil Conservation Society, and past chairman of the New Jersey Tree Farm System, a member of the New Jersey Forestry Association, and various Historical Societies in New Jersey. He was past chairman of the Pennington Shade Tree Commission and grand marshal of the Memorial Day Parade in Pennington.

In 2002, the New Jersey Forest Service, New Jersey Foundation and the New Jersey Forest Community Council presented Mr. Porcella with the Green Community Achievement Award for his work with the Pennington Shade Tree Commission. He was also honored for his work with the Tree City USA Program, spanning more than 20 years in Pennington.

He was author of Historic Trees of New Jersey, The New Jersey Big Tree List, and collaborator on the book Penn's Woods.

He enjoyed working in his yard and listening to big band music and opera, especially Verdi. He was an avid fan of both Phillies baseball and Giants football and all of the L.S.U. sports. He was a member of the Timberline Bridge Club.

Husband of the late Ruth Evans Porcella, he married Susan LeJambre on July 25, 1967. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

Private Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Bordentown, and burial in St Mary's Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to School of Renewable Natural Resources-Forestry, Louisiana State University Agriculture Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-6200, or Lambda Chi Alpha Educational Foundation, 8741 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268-1389, or any animal welfare group.

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