

LEGENDS OF THE JUDICIARY



A Seven Video Retrospective on Arizona's Proud Judicial Tradition

A Tradition of *Progress*

DANIELS

Arizona's judicial history echoes the pioneering spirit of the first American settlers to break ground in her fertile soil. Though barely a century old, it is an epic story of individuals blazing a trail through seemingly insurmountable obstacles, all in the pursuit of one unifying goal...a better life not only for themselves, or their families, but for *all* Arizonans.

LOCKWOOD

TANG

Join us in a celebration of the lives of seven prominent members of Arizona's judiciary. Learn about the impact their careers have had on not only Arizona's government, but that of the entire nation. The Committee on Judicial Education and Training (COJET) and the Education Services Division offer a look into the lives of Hons. Hayzel B. Daniels, Lorna Lockwood, Thomas Tang, Valdemar Cordova, William Rehnquist, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Francis X. Gordon., in a compelling video series produced and directed by Hon. Wendy Morton.

CORDOVA

REHNQUIST

The series is available online in the Video Center of the Education Services Division's section of the [azcourts.gov](http://www.azcourts.gov) website. Simply go to www.azcourts.gov and enter the words "Video Center" in the search field in the upper right-hand corner. The link will take you to the Division's Video Center, where you'll find links to view these videos online.

O'CONNOR

GORDON

**A Tradition of Progress
A History of Excellence**

A History of *Excellence*

Arizona Legends of the Law: Valdemar Aguirre Cordova



Valdemar Aguirre Cordova was born December 6, 1922, in Phoenix, and passed away June 18, 1988. He served in the 8th Air Force in Ipswich, Pahrham Airdrome. He flew B-17 combat missions in Germany. On January 29, 1944, he was shot down over Frankfurt and was captured. He was interned at Stalag Luft 1 for one and a half years. After the war, Cordova got his education through the GI Bill. He attended Arizona State College, and then the University of Arizona Law School. Cordova was a member of Thunderbird American Legion Post 41, which helped to end discrimination in housing in Phoenix. He served on the Phoenix City Council from 1955-59.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter appointed Cordova as the first Mexican American Federal Judge in the U.S. District Court of Arizona.

In 1986 the Los Abogados Hispanic Bar Association established a scholarship to be given annually in Judge Cordova's name. The scholarships are given in partnership to the University of Arizona and Arizona State University law students in recognition of their commitment to community service and service to the Latino community.

Federal Judicial Service:

Judge, U. S. District Court, District of Arizona

Nominated by Jimmy Carter on April 30, 1979, to a new seat created by 92 Stat. 1629;

Confirmed by the Senate on June 19, 1979, and received commission on June 21, 1979.

Assumed senior status on April 20, 1984. Service terminated on June 18, 1988, due to death.

Education:

University of Arizona College of Law, J.D., 1950

Professional Career:

U.S. Army, 1940-1945

Private practice, Phoenix, 1950-1965

Superior Court Judge, Maricopa County, 1965-1967

Private practice, Phoenix, 1967-1976

Superior Court Judge, Maricopa County, 1976-1979

Cordova, Val A.
Ariz. Rep.
8/27/76

8-27-76
**Castro names
former judge
to court post**

Val A. Cordova was appointed Thursday as a judge of Division 22 of the Maricopa County Superior Court.

Cordova, 54, a former judge of the same court, was appointed by Gov. Raul



Castro to replace Judge Charles Roush when Roush's resignation takes effect Oct. 1.

Cordova was the first Mexican-American Superior Court judge. He was appointed in 1965 when the Board of Supervisors created two

Val Cordova new court divisions.

He was elected in 1966. He resigned the next year for personal reasons and returned to private practice.

Cordova is a graduate of the University of Arizona law school, where he served as president of the student body. He placed second in the examination for admission to the State Bar in 1950.

He served on the Phoenix City Council from 1955 to 1959.

He is a member of the Arizona State Bar Association and its ethics committee, the Maricopa County Bar Association and the American Bar Association.

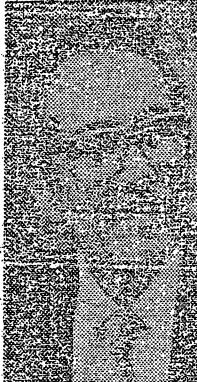
Cordova served as a member of the Phoenix Board of Adjustment and as the president of the Vesta Club.

April 25, 1979
**County judge
is nominated
for U.S. court**

By RANDY COLLIER

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Val Cordova was nominated Friday by President Carter to become a U.S. District Judge in Arizona.

Cordova now faces confirmation by the Senate Judiciary Committee, on which Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., serves.



Cordova, 56, said Friday he had not discussed the nomination with DeConcini and didn't know when he would be asked to appear before the Senate committee.

"I've heard the hearing will be imminent," he added.

Cordova If confirmed, Cordova will be Arizona's first federal judge of Mexican-American descent.

Phoenix attorney Nicholas Udall, whose name also was forwarded to Carter by DeConcini, has not yet been nominated.

Bob Maynes, press aide for DeConcini, said approval for Udall, 35, has been delayed because of Udall's age.

Sources say Udall's approval depends on whether Carter approves Archibald Cox, the former special prosecutor who has been suggested by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., for the circuit court. Cox is a few months older than Udall.

Three other DeConcini names also are under consideration. They are Mary Schroeder of Phoenix, for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, and Richard Bilby and Pima County Superior Court Judge John P. Collins, both of Tucson, for U.S. District Court seats.

If Cordova wins Senate approval, he will be cramped for space when he moves from Maricopa County Superior Court to the Federal Building.

His courtroom and chambers are under construction and are not scheduled for completion until the end of May.

Judge Cordova is dead; served on U.S. bench

By Art Thomason
The Arizona Republic

Former U.S. District Judge Valdemar A. Cordova, who rose from a barrio near Grant Park to become the first Mexican-American to assume a seat on a federal court bench, died Saturday. He was 65.

Judge Cordova's widow, Gloria, said he died at 8:30 p.m. at Barrow Neurological Institute of St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, where he had been a patient since June 4.

Judge Cordova, appointed to the federal bench on July 3, 1979, by President Carter, retired in June 1984 after a stroke.

The judge had credited Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., for working to promote a Mexican-American for a seat on the federal bench.

Friends and colleagues said Judge Cordova was known for his warmth and sensitivity to people on and off the bench.



Valdemar A. Cordova
The U.S. district judge retired in June 1984 after a stroke.

"He loved what he was doing and the law," said Lee Campbell, the judge's secretary while he was on the federal bench. "He had a great comical mind and wonderful sensitivity to people. He reached out with both hands, instead of one hand, to shake your hand."

Carl Muecke, senior U.S. district judge, said Judge Cordova "had a very gentle and sweet personality and

— See JUDGE, page B4

Judge Cordova dies in Phoenix

JUDGE, from page B1

had great compassion. And he also was proud of the fact that he had very humble beginnings."

The son of a Mexican laborer, Judge Cordova grew up in a poor family of eight children and dropped out of Phoenix Union High School to join the Army Air Forces during World War II.

"He loved what he was doing and the law. . . . He reached out with both hands, instead of one hand, to shake your hand."

— Lee Campbell,
former secretary

While flying a bombing mission as a pilot over Frankfurt, Germany, on Jan. 29, 1944, he was shot down and captured and spent approximately 1½ years as a prisoner of war in Stalag Luft I in Barth, Germany.

After his discharge in 1945, he returned to school, then went to Arizona State University and the University of Arizona where he received a law degree in 1950.

He was appointed a Superior Court judge on June 1, 1965, and a year later was elected to the same position. He resigned from the state court bench on Nov. 1, 1967, and returned to private practice until 1979, when he was appointed federal judge.

Paul Badalucco, one of the four law clerks who served under Judge Cordova, said "he was always conscientious."

"From a law clerk's point of view he was great," added Badalucco, who is assistant trial bureau chief for the Phoenix city attorney's office.

"He was committed for it to be an educational experience, and he took the time and trouble to make it that way."

Judge Cordova was born Dec. 6, 1922, in Phoenix.

He was a member of the Maricopa County, Arizona and American Bar associations, the Arizona State Association of Trial Judges and the American Trial Lawyers Association.

He is survived by his wife, Gloria, and three children, Kenneth Michael, Valera Ann and Lexia Lucille.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

JUNE 20

Judge's rites are scheduled

Funeral-home visitation and a rosary in memory of former U.S. District Judge Valdemar A. Cordova have been scheduled for today in Phoenix.

Judge Cordova, the first Mexican-American to assume a seat on the federal bench, died Saturday at Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. He was 65.

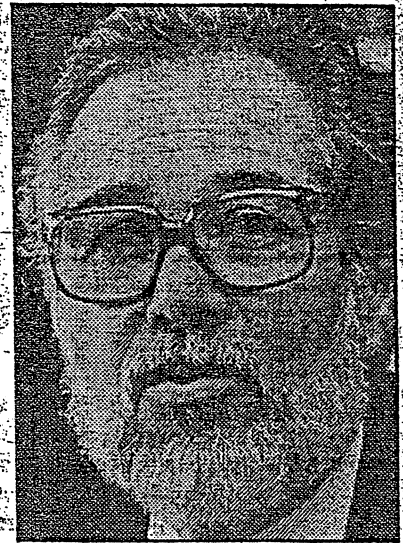
Friends may call today from 4 to 6 p.m. at Whitney & Murphy Arcadia Funeral Home, 4800 E. Indian School Road. The rosary will take place today at 7 p.m. at St. Theresa's Catholic Church, 5045 E. Thomas Road. A Mass is scheduled for Thursday at 10 a.m. at the church. Interment will take place at St. Francis Cemetery.

Judge Cordova, a Phoenix native, was appointed to the federal bench by then-President Carter in 1979 and retired in 1984 after a stroke.

Before serving on the federal bench, Judge Cordova had been appointed a Superior Court judge in 1965. He was elected to the same post a year later.

He resigned from the state court bench in 1967 and returned to private practice until his appointment to the federal bench.

The son of a Mexican laborer, Judge Cordova was born Dec. 6, 1922,



Valdemar A. Cordova

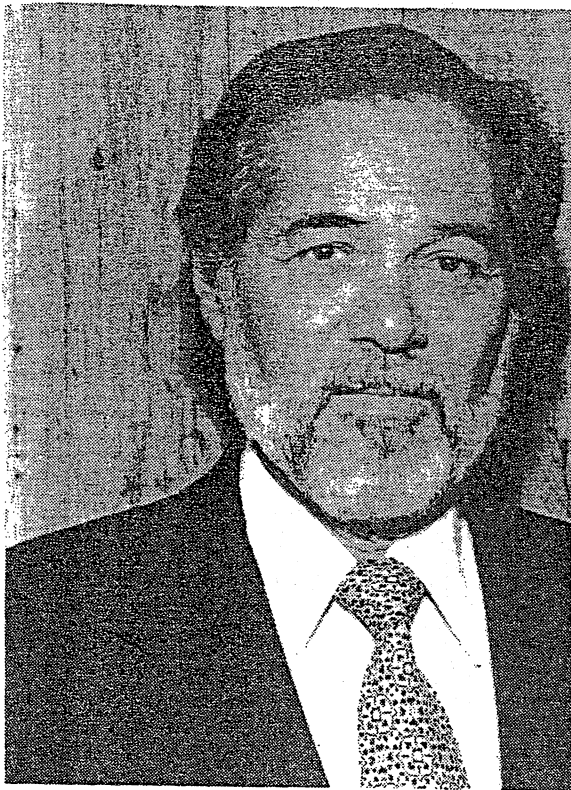
in Phoenix. He dropped out of high school to join the Army Air Forces during World War II.

He married Gloria Orduno on July 21, 1945, in Phoenix. She survives.

After his discharge, he returned to school, then went to Arizona State University and the University of Arizona, where he received a law degree in 1950.

In addition to his wife, Judge Cordova is survived by two daughters, Valerie Ann and Lexia Lucille; a son, Kenneth Mitchell; two sisters; and two brothers.

The family suggests contributions to the Valdemar Cordova Scholarship Fund, in care of the University of Arizona College of Law, Tucson, Ariz. 85721.



VALDEMAR CORDOVA

Juez

Valdemar Córdova, un hombre de sencillez y dedicación al cumplimiento de Las Leyes de Estado Unidos de Norteamérica que tienen sus bases en la protección hacia el ciudadano. Valdemar Córdova, a pesar de haber nacido en los años de dura depresión y de haberle sido rehusado el servicio en lugares por el solo hecho de ser México-Americano, no sintió más que el deseo de superación y conocimiento hacia el progreso. Dentro de su carrera como estudiante de la escuela superior, Phoenix High, logró reconocimientos como un estudiante dedicado, pero sintiendo los deseos de servir mejor a su patria se enlistó como voluntario para servir en la Fuerza Aérea en el año de 1940 llegando a ser un piloto con reconocimientos honoríficos. Participó en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, recibiendo medallas honoríficas de gran heroísmo como el Corazón Morado "Purple Heart." Fué prisionero de guerra en Stalag Luft I, Berth en Alemania por espacio de un año y medio. Terminó su servicio militar con honores en el año de 1945.

Valdemar Córdova decidió conocer más las leyes de su país y pasó a formar parte de los estudiantes de Leyes de la Universidad de Arizona manteniendo durante todo su periodo educativo calificación de "A." Fué electo a ser presidente de los estudiantes

de la Escuela de Leyes de la universidad en el año de 1949, fechas en las cuales el Sr. Valdemar Córdova dobló sus estudios con el deseo de obtener rápidamente su título. Fué catalogado como el número dos en los exámenes de la Barra de Abogados en el año de 1950, llevando consigo reconocimientos especiales como ganador de "Moot Court Competition" de 1948.

Valdemar Cordova is a man given to simplicity and dedication in the fulfillment of the Laws of the United States of North America which are based on the protection of its Citizens. Valdemar Cordova, in spite of having been born during the years of the Great Depression and having been refused service in certain establishments just for the simple reason of being a Mexican-American, only felt the need to excel and to gain knowledge that would lead him to progress. During his years as a student at Phoenix Union High School he achieved recognition as a dedicated student, but feeling the desire to better serve his Country, he enlisted as a volunteer in the Air Force in the year 1940, becoming a pilot and being the recipient of recognitions of honor. He took part in the Second World War. He won medals of distinction for heroism, such as the Purple Heart, etc. He was taken prisoner and spent one and a half years as a Prisoner of War at Stalag Luft I Berth in Germany. In 1945, his military service ended with honors.

Valdemar Cordova decided that he would like to understand his Country's laws better so he became a student in the College of Law of the University of Arizona, maintaining an "A" average during his law studies. He was elected Student Body President with the College of Law in the year 1949. During his law student days at the University, he often doubled up on his courses in order to more rapidly earn his degree. In 1950, when his class took the State Bar Examination, he came out second, being the recipient of several honors, such as winner of the "Moot Court" Competition.

Judge Valdemar Cordova belongs to tens of service organizations and activities. He has been the object of several special recognitions and his services as Judge of the Superior Court of Maricopa County left a record of honesty and integrity. Thus, in the year 1978 by means of the Retention Ballot, he was asked to serve additional terms. It was in the year of 1979 that Senator Dennis De Concini recommended him for Judge of the Federal District Court. His nomination was approved by the U. S. Senate the same year. Federal Judge Valdemar Cordova, who together with his wife Gloria and children Kenneth, Valerie and Lexia, is an example of the desire for progress that is accomplished through great sacrifice but that in the end the reward is a great feeling of success and the knowledge of having served.

VALDEMAR A. CORDOVA

U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

230 NORTH FIRST AVENUE

TELEPHONE 261-3509

PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85025



Sean Brady/Republic

Although U.S. District Judge Valdemar A. Cordova's ruling in favor of a plan that may lead to demolition of his alma

mater, Phoenix Union High School, he says, "My personal preference is beside the point — the law is the law."

Old school ties

Judge Cordova OK'd sale of his alma mater

By Deborah Shanahan
Republic Staff

U.S. District Judge Valdemar A. Cordova knew when he ruled in favor of the Phoenix Union High School District last week that he was clearing the way for the possible demolition of the city's oldest high school — his alma mater.

"That's my school," Cordova said a day after declaring "legal and constitutional" the district's plans, which include the eventual sale of Phoenix Union High School, 512 E. Van Buren.

"I pass by there every day coming to work and, for me, it has many pleasant memories," Cordova said. "Practically speaking, it's a viable, historical facility that could have been used."

"But the board — indeed, the voters — have

decided it should be sold. My personal preference is beside the point — the law is the law."

• • •

Cordova's office on the sixth floor of the federal building is about a mile from the Grant Park barrio where he grew up.

Cordova, 59, likes to joke that it took him 56 years to travel that mile.

The son of a boilermaker for the Southern Pacific Railroad, Cordova is one of eight children — a large family "short on everything but counseling," he said.

"My father very strongly believed in education," Cordova said over the strains of classical music that he says help him relax. "I expected to get a degree just as I expected to get up the next day to have breakfast."

— Cordova, B2



As a teen-ager, Cordova played with the PUHS Phoenix Pups.



Roy Cosway/Republic

Cordova

Continued from B1

But there were some detours.

The outbreak of World War II lured the 17-year-old Cordova into the military when he was two courses shy of high school graduation. He didn't finish those until five years later, then proceeded to complete his undergraduate and law studies in four years at Arizona universities.

Cordova, married 37 years to the woman he started dating when he was 17, has three children.

He served twice as a Maricopa County Superior Court judge and spent time in private practice before being appointed to the federal bench by President Carter.

He was the first Mexican-American to win the lifetime appointment.

While in the military, Cordova flew bombing missions until he was shot down over Germany. He spent 1½ years in a prisoner-of-war camp.

"The school board, in closing Phoenix Union after it had closed other central-city schools, discriminated against the minorities by causing undue hardship on them," Cordova said in his ruling on the lawsuit brought by 14 parents protesting the closure of the school.

"There was no negative treatment

intended, but certainly a negative impact resulted," he said.

Acknowledging the district's financial problems, Cordova gave district officials choices in correcting the negative impact: reopen Phoenix Union or find an alternative plan for providing equal and quality education for inner-city students.

District officials, wanting to sell Phoenix Union, the most valuable of its vacant-school properties, drew a plan that calls for the reopening of North High School next fall and the phasing out of the open-enrollment policy.

Cordova acknowledged that the district's plan is unpopular with some parents — minority and non-minority.

"It's true that some minorities still will have to go some distance to school," he said. "But it's also true some non-minority students will have to go like distances."

And, he said, it's true the school board now is free to dispose of the 87-year-old Phoenix Union High School as it wishes.

"It's not for me to say I like or do not like what the school board has proposed," Cordova said. "It is for me to say if it meets the constitutional or legal requirements of this country."

"A federal judge has to do his job notwithstanding the consequences. That's not to say we don't have feelings."

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en mas Eve. For more information, call 974-5496.

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Phoenix Memorial President Re-
ginald M. Ballantyne III said last
week that the "advocacy for the
withdrawal" came from the staff of
the hospital and its subsidiaries.

Under orders given by the hos-
pital's board of trustees, each employee
was contacted and surveyed about the
change, Ballantyne said.

The results were 97 percent of them
advocated having the hospital with-
draw from the system.

"I think we proved to employees it's
a benefit," said the hospital's person-
nel director, John Coyle.

Under the hospital's alternative
plan, the lump-sum death benefit is
\$5,000, compared with \$255 given by
Social Security.

The hospital will continue to pay
the same amount into the new
program as it did under Social
Security, but employees will not have
to contribute unless they want addi-
tional benefits.

St. Joseph's officials are following
closely what the other hospitals are



PROSTATE - IMPOTENCY & BLADDER DISORDERS

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- PAIN (Groin, Back, Hip, Bladder, Rectal, Headache)
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Dr. JOHN D. ELDRIDGE
N.M.D.

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