

Web Page Content Procopio—Cory 1999

Our History

Edward Schwartz and Alec Cory graduated from law school just before the beginning of World War II. After the war, with their military service completed, they were looking for a place in San Diego to "hang out their shingle." Though office space and money were scarce, they formed a partnership and opened a law practice in 1946. Their first office in the San Diego Trust and Savings Building at Sixth and Broadway consisted of 300 square feet, two cubicles separated by a partition, a few books, some furniture and a secretary. "The letterhead, and not much else, attested to the fact that we were a law firm," remembered Alec Cory.

Before the war, Edward Schwartz had discussed the possibility of starting a law practice with another San Diego lawyer named Sol Price. Price ended up staying home and building a law practice while Schwartz and Cory went off to war. As luck would have it, Cory & Schwartz's tiny office was next door to the busy law offices of Schwartz's would-be partner, Sol Price. Price & Nottbusch, as the more established firm was known, soon began sending work to its fledgling neighbor. A year later, the two firms merged to form Price, Nottbusch, Cory & Schwartz in 1947.

The Firm Grows Up – 1950-1975

A. T. "Tony" Procopio was nearly 15 years older than the partners at Price, Nottbusch, Cory & Schwartz but not quite ready to retire when he approached them about joining the partnership. Procopio, a sole practitioner, had built a successful practice and was looking for a firm that could handle his clients and give him more time to travel and play golf. The partners recognized a good opportunity for growth and agreed to allow Procopio to join the firm in 1950. He brought with him "a great deal of very fine law business" and the firm grew in both size and stature.

In 1951, Nottbusch left the firm to join his father's law practice. Sol Price co-founded the Fed-Mart Corporation in 1954 and left the firm in 1967 to devote full time to that business, which later evolved into Price Club. Ed Schwartz also left the firm in 1959 after he accepted a judicial appointment, which developed into a long and distinguished career on the bench. With the departure of these fine attorneys, new talent emerged and opened the door for Harry Hargreaves and Emmanuel "Manny" Savitch to join the firm.

Web Page Content Procopio—Cory 1999

The firm established itself as a force in the local real estate market by representing many of the landowners and developers that transformed Mission Valley from an agricultural area to its present incarnation as a retail, residential and entertainment center. Further confirmation of the firm's stature in the local real estate market occurred as the firm represented the land owners that developed Rancho Bernardo from a cattle ranch into one of California's first "master planned" communities.

A regular golf game at San Diego Country Club between Harry Hargreaves and the president of First National Bank nurtured a long-term relationship with a valued client of the firm. Despite several ownership and name changes, the bank, now Union Bank of California, continues to be one of the firm's most valued clients. Hargreaves and Savitch's names were added, and the present firm name, Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP, was established in 1967.

A Preeminent San Diego Law Firm

Under the stewardship of co-founder Alec Cory, Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch grew steadily in both size and reputation after Tony Procopio's death in 1974. The firm's place as a leader in real estate law was well established and the firm added talent to serve the diverse needs of San Diego's growing business community. The firm brought in most of its current management by effectively recruiting some of the brightest graduates from the country's top law schools. Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch is one of the few "full service" business law firms founded and based in San Diego. In the last half of the 20th Century, the firm grew from 2 partners in a 300 square foot office to its current complement of more than 110 professionals in downtown San Diego and Carlsbad. The firm currently serves clients from almost every industry, from start-up technology firms to large, publicly held corporations. Through its membership in Law Exchange International and Legal NetLink Alliance, Procopio's ability to assist clients reaches around the world.

By recruiting top legal talent, maintaining strategic and measured growth, and with a little bit of luck, Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch has truly become one of San Diego's preeminent law firms — still holding steadfast to its core values of quality legal work, outstanding client service, dedication to the community and exceptional value.