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Donald Banner, 81; Led Patents and Trademarks Agency

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Donald W. Banner, 81, a lawyer and former U.S. commissioner of patents and trademarks, died Jan. 29 of pancreatic cancer at his home in Tucson, Ariz. A former resident of McLean and the District, he had lived in Tucson since 2001.

Mr. Banner was born in Chicago and was a P-47 fighter pilot in World War II. He survived being shot down and was a prisoner of war until he was liberated by Gen. George Patton's 14th Armored Division of the Third Army on April 29, 1945.

He received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Purdue University in 1948 and a law degree from the University of Detroit in 1953. Returning to Chicago, he practiced law from 1953 to 1979 as general patent counsel for Borg-Warner Corp. He also received a master of patent laws degree from the John Marshall Law School in 1955.

He was chairman of the American Bar Section of Intellectual Property Law, president of the American Intellectual Property Law Association, a founding member of the Association of Corporate Patent Counsel and a U.S. delegate to numerous international diplomatic conferences.

He was appointed U.S. commissioner of patents and trademarks by President Richard Nixon but asked that his name be withdrawn before he was confirmed. President Jimmy Carter also appointed him to the commission, and he served from 1978 to 1979.

He then began private practice in the District with the firm of Banner & Witcoff Ltd. During his time in Washington, he was



Donald Banner was a pilot in World War II.

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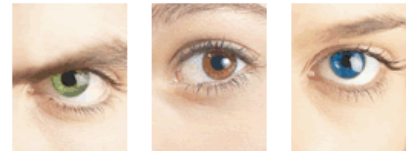
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chairman of the Foundation for a Creative America, co-founder and president of the Giles S. Rich American Inn of Court and head of the intellectual property program at George Washington University Law School. In 1990, he led the bicentennial celebration of U.S. patent and copyright law.

His first wife, Ruth Banner, died in 1985.

Survivors include his wife of 20 years, Jean Banner of Tucson; five children from his first marriage, Peggy Dau of Bartlesville, Okla., Pamela Banner Krupka of Los Angeles, Donald J. Banner of Pueblo, Colo., Brian E. Banner of Washington and Mark T. Banner of Warrenville, Ill.; three stepchildren, Nancy Phipps of Nashville, Tenn., Helen Smith of Atlanta and Louise Whitaker of Franklin, Tenn.; a sister; 17 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

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