

Bio-L Haswell Leask dies at 103

By **MAY WONG**
Sentinel staff writer

Haswell Thomson Leask, a partner of the former Samuel Leask & Sons department store, died Sunday at his home in Woodland. He was 103.

At his request, no services are planned.

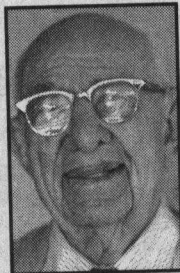
A native of Santa Cruz, Mr. Leask attended Santa Cruz schools and UC Berkeley.

For many years, he was a general partner of the independent store started by his father in the 1890s in Santa Cruz. The store became part of Gottschalks in 1989.

Mr. Leask served as first lieutenant in the field artillery in World War I. In 1920, he moved with his wife, Hazel Shepard Netherton, to Waterford in Stanislaus County. There, he developed Leask Ranch with his brother and continued farming there for 50 years.

In 1933, he and a few other farmers formed the Turlock Cooperative Growers and started a canning operation of fruits and vegetables that later became known as Tri-Valley Growers. He served as the director and president until he retired and returned to live in Santa Cruz.

Mr. Leask was a board member of the Waterford School District for 16



Leask

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years and served five years on the Appeals Board of Selective Service during World War II. He had a long-term affiliation with the Waterford Irrigation District and the Waterford Volunteer Fire Department. He was a life member of the Lions Club, a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity, the Elks Club, the Commonwealth Club and the Retired Business and Professional Men's Club. He spearheaded the construction of the Nora Ballard Branch of the Stanislaus Public Library in Waterford.

He traveled to many places in the world, making friends everywhere, relatives said. He was a spontaneous, natural ambassador of goodwill and on his 100th birthday, he earned a resolution from the state Legislature, commending his integrity, intelligence and common sense.

One of his daughters recalled that someone once said of him, "He entertained, impressed, irritated and charmed countless people for a hundred years." She said that description fit him well.

He is survived by his brother, Sherwood Leask of Waterford; a sister, Margaret Leask Franklin of Dover, Mass.; three daughters, Peggy Leask Epstein of Davis, Mary Leask Holmes of Woodland and Dorothy Leask Coles of Lindsay; two step-children, Margaret Gemmell Pelton of Auburn and John Gemmell of Walnut Creek; 14 grand- and step-grandchildren; 12 great- and step-great grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren.