

# Ford's closes Holman's deal

An agreement has been reached by which Ford's Department Stores will purchase Holman's department store in Pacific Grove for an amount which has been described as a "conservative seven figures."

The agreement was signed last night by Ford's president George Menasco and Hugh Steven, president of Holman's.

Ford's senior vice president Harold Hyde said the agreement to buy was the culmination of negotiations which began last summer, and includes the purchase of the land, buildings and merchandise of the Pacific Grove store.

Ford's will take over operation of Holman's on Jan. 21. Thus, two of California's oldest retail operations will be united under the Ford banner. Ford's, which has stores in Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Salinas, Hollister and Gilroy, was founded in Watsonville in 1852 by Charles Ford, and the company headquarters has remained here since. Holman's was founded in 1891 by R. L. Holman. It is housed in a five-story building of approximately 100,000 square feet, slightly

smaller than the Ford's store in Watsonville.

Hyde said that Holman's "has obviously done a good job over there," and that Ford's will carry on many of the traditions it had established in Pacific Grove. "We don't intend to superimpose a lot of things on them," he said, adding that most of the changes to be made will be in "operational types of things, such as electronic cash registers and other internal procedures." Hyde said that he "hopes many of their (Holman's) employees will join with us."

According to a story Friday in the Monterey Peninsula Herald, Holman's had been experiencing "poor financial returns" to the 40 Holman family members who own all the stock in the store.

"We had disappointing results for some time in the store," Steven was quoted as saying, adding that the situation had not been improved by the holiday shopping season. Steven was quoted as saying "it's been a rough Christmas for us ..."

Holman's had received two purchase offers earlier last

year, but began seriously considering a sale when it received a "serious" offer, that being from Ford's. That sale was concluded last night.

In talking to the Peninsula Herald, Steven said that the store had gained a reputation for being "an old lady's store," and acknowledged "there was a basis in fact" for the impression.

The store had attempted to alter that image with new fashion lines and a new marketing strategy. Because of the financial problems, the Peninsula Herald reported, the store's board of directors hired a consultant to discuss the alternatives open to them — to sell, to close the store or to carry on as is.

In announcing the purchase of Holman's, Hyde said he would not comment on that store's financial picture or what plans Ford's had to alter it.

Charles Page, the attorney for the Pacific Grove store, said that Holman's officials were "were extremely pleased that Ford's was the purchaser." The sale was "a good deal for both parties," he said. "They feel that Ford's is a responsible operation and that they will have the best interests of this community at heart.

"It would be disappointing to have any other type of operation than Ford's come in here," he said.