

ABRAMS, Justin
3-9-2016

NEW SHOREHAM



ABRAMS, JUSTIN

89, of Block Island, passed away peacefully at home on March 9, 2016. He was the loving husband of the late Joan (Dressler) Abrams, son of the late Etta (Goldman) and Sigmund Abrams, brother of Burton Abrams and his wife Joyce and devoted father of Rita Draper and her husband Steven of Block Island, RI; Mark Abrams and his wife Sonya of Sao Paulo, Brazil and the late Rick Abrams and his wife Susan Kenyon of Lexington, MA. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Kyle Draper and his wife Terin, Seth Draper, Ross Draper, Sam Abrams and his wife Holly, Philip Abrams, Archie Abrams, Stanley Abrams and Sydney Abrams as well as his great grandchildren: Carmyn and Gavin Draper, Oliver and Emmett Abrams. He is survived also by his companion, Debbi-Jo Horton of Riverside, RI.

Justin was born on May 2, 1926 in Providence, RI where he attended Hope High School and excelled on the cross country team becoming a member of the RI All-State team. Upon graduation, he attended King's Point Merchant Marine Academy and then joined the United States Merchant Marines as a mid-shipman and then later the United States Navy. Following his military service in WWII, he earned his bachelor's degree in agriculture at the University of Rhode Island.

On November 4, 1951 he married Joan Dressler and together they started on the first of their many business endeavors – a poultry farm in North Kingstown, RI. For nearly ten years, they raised over 50,000 chickens per year while Justin also worked at the Crompton Hatchery where he helped develop the Rock Cornish Game Hen. He later became a marine biologist for RI Fish and Game Service until 1960 when he joined the Dressler family business, Colfax Packing, one of the largest vegetable oil suppliers in the country. Over time he was promoted to Senior Vice President for Sales, a position he held until his retirement in 1999.

Justin and Joan began another chapter of their lives together on Block Island in 1969 when they purchased the Florida House and transformed it into The 1661 Inn and later they acquired the Hotel Manisses in 1974. As they renovated these properties, they also became personally involved in the Block Island business community; and their actions helped promote the Island. Justin took great pride in, and enjoyed working with, all of his children and many of his grandchildren in the business. As patriarch, he guided the family through a number of business expansions to include The Oar restaurant and most recently the management of the Narragansett Inn in 2015, making his company one of the largest employers on the Island. Most friends, family and visitors to Block Island will remember him in the setting of his greatest passion – his farm and garden. His farm is one of only two zoos licensed for exotic animals in the state of Rhode Island and he always took great pride and joy in sharing them with the public.

In 1988, Justin and Joan began traveling extensively through Mexico and Central America where they fell in love with Costa Rica. They settled in Mal Pais, a small town on the Pacific coast that became the perfect winter retreat for them. Justin enjoyed his many winters spent there with friends and family and became an active part of that community, even helping to bring electricity to the town.

Justin was an avid sailor, former member of the East Greenwich Yacht Club, founding member of Temple Sinai, long-time member of Temple Beth-El, member of the Sons & Daughters of Ruth, a director of the Block Island Conservancy and member of the American Legion Post #36.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances may go to the Block Island Conservancy and Block Island Health Services. Funeral services will be held on Sunday, March 13, 2016 at 1:00 pm in St. Andrew's Church, Chapel Street, Block Island. Interment will follow with military honors at the Block Island Cemetery. Shiva will be held at Kimberly's Restaurant following interment. Information and condolences please visit: www.henault-gallogly.com