

OBITUARIES

'Bo' Bernstein dies; ad man, civic leader

PROVIDENCE — Joseph M. "Bo" Bernstein, 66, founder and retired chairman of the board of the downtown advertising agency which bore his name for 34 years, died yesterday in St. Luke's Hospital, Houston.

Mr. Bernstein founded the agency in a small office on Custom House Street in 1941 and expanded it until it was one of New England's largest, with 110 employees and billings of more than \$11 million annually.

The growth in the agency, which once had a Boston branch, closely followed the growth of discounting in retailing. Bernstein's three big accounts were Anderson-Little, Zayre's and Warwick Shoppers World.

Mr. Bernstein was also a civic leader, an art collector and amateur sculptor, and the donor of several pieces of major art to Rhode Island's colleges and universities.

He retired 13 months ago. The agency, much smaller now and relocated from the WPRO building downtown to Rumford, changed its name last month to LeBeau, Leicht & Santangini, Inc.

He was born March 10, 1910, in the Soviet Union, a son of Mrs. Lilly (Rubenstein) Bernstein of Providence, and the late Morris Bernstein. The family moved to Providence when he was two, and his father operated a Benefit Street tailor shop and was a Providence correspondent for the *Jewish Daily Forward*.

Mr. Bernstein attended Hope High School, where he played quarterback on the football



Bo Bernstein

team, gaining all-state honors. It was on the football field that he acquired the nickname "Bo."

After high school, he worked a short time for a brokerage house, attended Providence College for three weeks and did a short stint as a *Journal-Bulletin* reporter.

In 1935, he joined the late Frank Weston's agency and handled promotion for the old Rhode Island Auditorium.

In 1941, he went out on his own, with only one other employee. First-year billings were \$100,000.

Mr. Bernstein was named Rhode Island Advertising Man of the Year in 1967, in 1971 became chairman of the New England Council of the American Association of Advertising Agencies and was a member of Alpha Delta Sigma advertising fraternity.

His public service campaigns brought him many awards, particularly the Stop Measles and Stop Polio campaigns on behalf of the state Department of Health. He also received United Way and Meeting Street School awards.

Mr. Bernstein was married in 1936 to the former Alice Girard, who survives. His home was at 310 President Ave.

His interest in art came from his son, Geoffrey, an artist in Sausalito, Calif., and his daughter, Laurie, who is married to the sculptor, Richard Graham, and lives in Carrara, Italy.

Besides building his own extensive art collection, he presented to Providence College the sculpture by Gilbert A. Franklin, the Rhode Island School of Design professor, which stands in front of the Slavin Center. He also presented a bronze sculpture, "The Performers," to the University of Rhode Island and a work by Chaim Gross to Brown University's List Art Gallery.

In addition to his wife, mother, son and daughter, he is survived by his daughter, Laurie, who is married to the sculptor, Richard Graham, and lives in Carrara, Italy.

BERNSTEIN, "Bo"