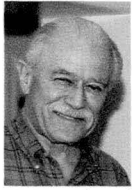


Fain, Barnett

Barnet Fain, 86



Posted Friday, June 22, 2018 5:48 pm

BARRINGTON, RI – Providence businessman, artist and community leader Barnett “Bunny” Fain died peacefully on May 4 at his home in Barrington.

Born in Providence, the son of Irving I. Fain and Miriam Grossman, Bunny Fain spent most of his life in Rhode Island. He graduated from Classical High School and received a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Colby College in Maine. While at Colby, he met his wife of 54 years, Jean Segal, an art major at Bennington. Jean passed away in 2010, after sharing with her husband an impassioned lifetime of gallery going, art collecting and printmaking.

Upon graduation from college, Bunny served in the Army, running a YMCA and children’s theater group in Germany after the end of the Korean War.

When his tour of duty was up in 1956, he returned to Providence and joined the well-known family business, Fain’s Floorcovering, at its original iconic Art Deco storefront, opened in 1927 by his father and uncle, on North Main Street.

Over the next 38 years Bunny, his cousin, Barry Fain, and his son, Ken, grew the business together. When the company was acquired in 1994 by New York Carpet World, it had grown to a position of industry prominence with 14 stores in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut. Bunny was a director of the National Retail Floorcovering Institute and a founder of the National Floorcovering Alliance. In 1983, he was honored on the cover of Flooring Magazine, receiving its award for merchandising achievement.

Service to the communities he loved was a way of life. Bunny was the founding president of the Barrington Jewish Center at a time when the Jewish community in that town numbered just a few families. The “BJC” went on to become Temple Habonim. Most recently he was instrumental in establishing an art gallery at the synagogue. Last year, the gallery was named in his honor.

The arts community also received his energy, enthusiasm and talent for problem solving and bringing people and ideas together. Largely inspired by his wife Jean’s lifelong activity as an accomplished visual artist, Bunny became an early and leading advocate of the arts in Rhode Island. In the 1960s he was a founder of the Rhode Island Arts Festival held on Kennedy Plaza, and many aspiring RISD artists found affordable studio space upstairs in the Fains’ building.

Bunny was the first chairman of the Rhode Island State Council of the Arts, chairman of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and a panelist on the National Endowment for the

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When his tour of duty was up in 1956, he returned to Providence and joined the well-known family business, Fain's Floorcovering, at its original iconic Art Deco storefront opened by his father and uncle on North Main Street in 1927. Over the next 38 years Bunny, his cousin, Barry Fain, and his son Ken grew the business together. When the company was acquired in 1994 by New York Carpet World, it had grown to a position of industry prominence with 14 stores in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Bunny was a director of the National Retail Floorcovering Institute and a founder of the National Floorcovering Alliance. In 1983, he was honored on the cover of Flooring Magazine, receiving its award for merchandising achievement. Service to the communities he loved was a way of life. Bunny was the founding president of the Barrington Jewish Center at a time when the Jewish community in that town numbered just a few families. The "BJC" went on to become Temple Habonim, a vibrant congregation to this day. Most recently he was instrumental in establishing an art gallery at the synagogue. The gallery is open to the public and last year was named in his honor.

The arts community also received his energy, enthusiasm, and talent for problem solving and bringing people and ideas together. Largely inspired by his wife Jean's lifelong activity as an accomplished visual artist, Bunny became an early and leading advocate of the arts in Rhode Island. In the 1960s he was a founder of the Rhode Island Arts Festival held on Kennedy Plaza, and many aspiring RISD artists found affordable studio space upstairs in the Fain's building. Bunny was the first chairman of the Rhode Island State Council of the Arts, chairman of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and a panelist on the National Endowment for the Arts. Over the years he was an early trustee of Trinity Rep and the RI Philharmonic, and a member of the RI Film Commission. In recognition of his pioneering efforts at the forefront of the public arts funding movement in America, he was the first recipient of the RI Governor's Arts Award in 1973.

Hand-in-hand with service to art and artists, came service to museums. Bunny was a chairman of the Brown Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology as well as a director on the boards of the Newport Art Museum, the Colby College Art Museum, the Art League of Rhode Island, and his beloved Rhode Island School of Design Museum. His longtime commitment to RISD and its Museum culminated in a term of service as chairman of RISD's board. He was the recipient of RISD's President's Medal.

Although connected with the arts throughout his adult life, in his later years Bunny also devoted himself to two additional communities: health care and education. In the former he served as chairman of The Miriam Hospital, chairman of Lifespan, and as a member of the Coastal Medical Advisory Committee. In the latter, he became co-president of what began as the Brown Community for Learning in Retirement, now known as Lifelong Learning Collaborative of RI. As an advocate of this program, Bunny took and taught many classes over a wide range of subjects. Bunny believed that the "mind is a muscle" that must be continually exercised to remain vital -- a credo he modeled his whole life.

Bunny was most proud of the career he began late in life as prolific artist, first as a way of sharing a mutual passion for drawing with his wife Jean, later developing sophistication and skill as a printmaker. He was a member of the Goddard Partridge Studio in Pawtucket, and an artist member of the Providence Art Club. His work has been shown at the Providence Art Club, the Spring Bull Gallery, and the Newport Art Museum. Bunny took and taught drawing classes until the end of his life, and for many years, even at board meetings, was seldom seen without a sketchbook and pencil in his hand.

Though seriously ill over the last three years of his life, Bunny was cheerful and deliberate about using his time to the fullest. With the help of a friend, he produced a line of silk scarves based on his artwork. With another, he produced a beautiful book depicting his and Jean's lives as artists and collectors. He taught drawing to small classes of novice students. And he reveled in hosting his annual summer Plein-Air art program, bringing together Lifelong Learning students to paint the flowers, trees, and fields around his home.

Bunny Fain is survived by his son, Kenneth (Lisa Gim), his daughter, Jill Fain Lehman (Philip Lehman), his three grandchildren, Alexander Gim-Fain, Charles Fain Lehman, and Sarah Lehman, and his sister Judi Kanter (Buz Kanter). A private ceremony is being held for family at his home. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Bunny and Jean Fain Art of Nursing Program at The Miriam Hospital, c/o Dr. Fred Schiffman, 164 Summit Ave, Providence, RI 02906.

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