

FAIN,
NORMAN
MYRON

Apex chief, philanthropist Norman Fain dies at 89

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Norman M. Fain, 89, of Blackstone Boulevard, Providence, longtime head of the former Apex department stores and Teknor Apex, but perhaps better known for his extensive public service and philanthropy, died yesterday at Miriam Hospital, where he had once served as president.

"He was one of God's own gentlemen," said Leslie Gutterman, Mr. Fain's rabbi and a close friend. "He had every reason to be bloated with pride, but that wasn't the case. We'll never know all the seeds of good that he sowed in his lifetime."

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Fain

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Mr. Fain was born in Providence in 1914, a son of Alfred A. Fain and Elizabeth (Stoneman) Fain. He knew early on in life that he'd go into business, following in the footsteps of his father, who started the Apex companies in 1923, when Norman was 9. After graduating from the University of Rhode Island, Mr. Fain joined his father in the tire-manufacturing arm of the business, Apex Tire and Rubber.

As technology changed, Apex Tire (now Teknor Apex) shifted its focus from rubber tires to plastics and chemicals and the younger Fain took over as chairman in 1968. He also assumed leadership of his family's other company, Apex Inc., the former discount department-store chain based in Pawtucket, and served as a principal at the former Tower Iron Works in Providence.

Even as his health declined throughout the last decade, Mr. Fain never formally retired from his post at Teknor Apex. Until just six weeks ago, he continued to go into the office on almost a daily basis.

wanted to keep his work low key, Baxt said.

Those organizations that benefited from his work disagreed. In 1978, Brown University honored Mr. Fain with its Award for Distinguished Service to Medical Education for his work as Miriam Hospital president from 1971 to 1975, where he was credited with helping in the organization's transition to a teaching hospital affiliated with Brown University. He was also honored with a Miriam health center named for him and his wife of 56 years, Rosalie.

In addition, Mr. Fain was awarded an honorary doctorate in business from URI in 1967 and RISD's President's Fellows Award in 1981 for his leadership and dedication to the arts.

A deeply religious man, Mr. Fain found time to stay involved with Temple Beth El. He chaired the building committee and was credited for much of the fundraising for the Orchard Avenue temple, which recently marked its 50th anniversary.

In that quiet way of his, he was also a mentor to a young rabbi who trusted Mr. Fain's moral compass like no other. "For many years, I would not make major decisions without discussing them with him, but not because he tried