

William R. Goldberg, 90, former head of R.I. bar and state Family Court

GOLDBERG, William R.
Retired Chief Judge,
Family Court

May 14, 2001. Residence: 581 East Ave., Pawtucket. Beloved husband of the late Temperance C. (MacConnel) Goldberg. Devoted father of Robert D. Goldberg, former Senate Minority Leader and his wife Justice Maureen McKenna Goldberg of Matunuck; Lawrence L. Goldberg of Narragansett; Thomas D. Goldberg of Matunuck; and Julie A. Potter and her husband John of Beverly, Ma. Dear brother of the late Max, Hyman, Samuel and Harry Goldberg, Bessie Pomerans, Esther Gopen and Anna Kolodny. Funeral services Wednesday at 1 p.m. in TEMPLE BETH-EL, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. In lieu of flowers, contributions in his memory may be made to the Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket, 53 East Ave., Pawtucket, R.I., 02860 or Temple Beth-El. Shiva

will be observed at his late residence Wednesday 7-9 p.m. Arrangements by SHALOM MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 1100 New London Ave., Cranston.

PAWTUCKET — Former Chief Family Court Judge William R. Goldberg, 90, of 581 East Ave., a past president of the Rhode Island Bar Association, died Monday at South County Hospital, South Kingstown.



Goldberg had served as a judge on the state Family Court for 18 years before being appointed the court's chief judge in 1986, by then-Gov. Edward D. DiPrete, at the age of 74.

A 1932 graduate of Brown University and 1935 Harvard Law School, he had maintained a private law practice in Pawtucket for 33 years.

From 1954 to 1966, he served as the Pawtucket probate judge. Appointed to the state Family Court in 1968, he retired from the court as its chief judge in 1987.

After retiring, Judge Goldberg chaired the special commission — convened by Gov. DiPrete — that examined construction delays and cost overruns on the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge and presented its findings in a 1988 report.

He also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force for Judicial Reform, and was active in the American Law Institute, a national organization dedicated to the clarification and simplification of the law.

In 1992, he was called back to the state Family Court, as a part-time judge, to help clear its backlog of cases.

He was often described by his colleagues as a "no-nonsense" judge who displayed both patience and courtesy on the bench.

In a 1987 Providence Journal interview, Judge Goldberg said that he was skeptical of a then-current pro-

posal to create guidelines for judges hearing child-support cases. Judges already take many circumstances into account, he noted.

"If someone has an expensive car but claims lack of money to support his children, we tell 'em 'Sell the Mercedes,'" he told the Journal.

Judge Goldberg had served as chairman of the Interdisciplinary Professional Committee for Retarded and Abused Children.

A member and past president of the Rhode Island Bar Association, he was a fellow of the American Bar Association. He also had been a member of, and state delegate to, the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association.

He was a past president of the Harvard Law School Association of Rhode Island.

Judge Goldberg was the husband of the late Temperance C. (MacConnel) Goldberg. Born in Pawtucket, a son of late Jacob and Ida (Cohen) Goldberg, he was a lifelong resident of the city.

He leaves three sons, Robert D. Goldberg, a former Rhode Island Senate minority leader, and Thomas D. Goldberg, both of the Matunuck section of South Kingstown, and Lawrence L. Goldberg of Narragansett; and a daughter, Julie A. Potter of Beverly, Mass. He was the brother of the late Max, Hyman, Samuel and Harry Goldberg, Bessie Pomerans, Esther Gopen and Anna Kolodny.

A member of the board of the Pawtucket Boys Club for many years, he was a member of the T.K. Club, the Mount Tom Club, the Elks Club, the Kiwanis Club and the Matunuck Point Beach Club.

Judge Goldberg was a member of Temple Beth-El.

The funeral service will be held today at 1 p.m. in Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Burial will be in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence.