GOURSE, LESLIE

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Fall River native Leslie Gourse, 65; noted jazz author, critic, biographer

Leslie Gourse, 65, of Buthune Street, New York City, and formerly of Fall River, an award-winning author and music critic, and an aficionado of jazz, history and sociology, died Thursday at home.

Born in Fall River, a daughter of Zelda (Fisher) Gourse of Providence and the late Harry A. Gourse, she had resided in New York City for most of her life.

Ms. Gourse's first book, the 1961 romance, *With Gall and Honey: The Love Story of an American Girl in Israel*, won the Columbia-Doubleday award. It was soon followed by a book on contemporary jazz, and it was to jazz and jazz musicians that she was to become best known.

Her published works included biographies of jazz greats Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, Wynton Marsalis, Thelonious Monk, Joe Williams, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald, as well such other influential figures as gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, modern pop musician Gloria Estefan, puppeteer Jim Henson and even Pocahontas.

Ms. Gourse also was the author of articles in The New York Times Sunday Magazine and other New York publications, on topics including New York, social trends, Paris, and Native Americans; guides to her beloved New York City, for both tourists and students; and children's and young adults' books, including *The Congress*, and her biographies of Estefan, Henson and Pocahontas.

Ms. Gourse was a recipient of an ASCAP award, for a series of articles on female jazz musicians, and the Deems Taylor Award.

Her mother is her only survivor. She was the sister of the late Sidney Jane Gourse, and a granddaughter of the late Ida Zurier Fisher.

A graveside service will be held today at 2 p.m. in Temple Beth-El Cemetery, 4561 North Main St., Fall River.