HASSENFELD, merrill

M. L. Hassenfeld, 61, Hasbro chief executive

Merrill L. Hassenfeld, 61, the vice chairman and chief executive officer of the Pawtucket-based Hasbro Industries Inc., one of the country's major toymakers, died yesterday at Miriam Hospital where he was taken after being stricken during a business meeting in Pawtucket.

Prominent in Jewish affairs nationally and internationally, he played a leading role in the founding of Brandeis University. He was a leader in the United Way of Southeastern New England.



Mr. Hassenfeld, the husband of the former Sylvia Kay, resided at 8 Strawberry Drive in Barrington.

He was born in Providence on Feb. 19, 1918, a son of the late Henry and Marion (Frank) Hassenfeld.

Immediately after he was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1938, Mr. Hassenfeld joined the firm that his father founded as a small family business in 1923.

He served as its president from 1943 to 1974, overseeing its growth into an industry giant — but still a family business — that currently employs 1,600 in Rhode Island and 2,500 in subsidiaries across the country. His son Stephen, of Bristol, succeeded him as president in 1974.

Mr. Hassenfeld served on the boards of several companies, including Narragansett Electric Co. In 1968 he served as campaign chairman of the United Way of Southeastern New England and remained active in a leadership capacity since.

Mr. Hassenfeld was a former president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, a position his father held before him, and a co-founder of the Jewish Community Center.

He was a former honorary national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal and was a life trustee of the United Israel Appeal. He was instrumental in restructuring the Jewish Agency in Israel.

He was a director of the Committee for the Economic Growth of Israel, and was a member of the Rhode Island Area Committee of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. He also served on the executive committee of the American Public Affairs Committee. He was made a fellow of Brandeis University in 1963.

He was a member of the executive committee of Temple Emanu-El in Providence, and an original incorporator of the Hillel Foundation of Brown University. He also served on the executive committee of the Jewish Home for the Aged, and on the executive board of the National Conference of Christians and Jews of Rhode Island.

Marvin S. Holland, president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, said in a statement that Mr. Hassenfeld, a close friend, "was not only generous as a contributor to charitable causes but was always available with his advice and guidance."

The Jewish community "grew and prospered with Merrill's help and he graciously used his boundless energy and talents in the support of an enormous number of humanitarian causes," Holland said.

Besides his wife and son Stephen, Mr. Hassenfeld leaves another son, Alan, of Bristol; a daughter, Mrs. Ellen Block of Chicago; a sister, Mrs. Leonard Engle of Providence; a brother, Harold, of Nashville, Tenn., and three grandchildren.

The funeral will be held tomorrow at noon at Temple Emanu-El.

OBITUARIES

In sympathy

HASSENFELD, Merrill L.

The Brandeis Community mourns the death of Merrill L. Hassenfeld, a valued member of the Board of Fellows and a generous benefactor of the University from its earliest days; whose family's deep commitment to our institution is reflected in Henry and Marion Hassenfeld House, a student residence, and the Merrill L. Hassenfeld Scholarship Endowment Fund. We will miss his wise counsel and devotion to our educational mission.

To his wife, Sylvia, his brother, Harold, and son, Stephen, Fellows of the University and the entire bereaved family we offer heartfelt condolences.

Marver H. Bernstein, Pres.
Robert S. Benjamin,
Chrm. Bd. of Trustees
Abram L. Sachar, Chanc.

HASSENFELD, Merrill L.

March 21, 1979. Beloved husband of Sylvia (Kay) Hassenfeld. Residence 8 Strawberry Drive, Barrington. Devoted father of Mrs. Ronald Block, Glenco, Ill., Alan G. and Stephen D. Hassenfeld, Bristol. Brother of Mrs. Leonard Engle, Providence, and Harold I. Hassenfeld, Nashville, Tenn. Grandfather of Laurie, Michael, and Susan Block. Funeral services at 12 noon Friday at Temple Emanu-El, Morris Ave. at Sessions St. Relatives and friends are invited. Memorial Week at his late residence. Arrangements by MOUNT SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.