Horvitz, Eleanor
(Feldman)

died 11-17-05

PSJ 11-20-05

PROVIDENCE

HORVITZ, ELEANOR (FELDMAN), 86, of Providence, died November 16, 2005 at Epoch on Blackstone Blvd. She was the wife of Dr. Abraham Horvitz. Born in Providence, a daughter of the late Louis and Ada (Zinn) Feldman, she was a lifelong resident of Providence.

Mrs. Horvitz attended Pembroke College for 3 years and graduated from Washington University in St. Louis. She later received a MS Degree in Education from Brown University. She was an archivist and historian at the RI Jewish Historical Association for 31 years, retiring in 2002. Upon her retirement the Association named its annual scholarship program the Eleanor Horvitz Scholarship. She wrote many articles documenting the history of Jews in RI. Mrs. Horvitz was a member of Temple Beth El and its Sisterhood, and was a member of the Miriam Hospital Women's Association.

Besides her husband, she leaves one son, Leslie Alan Horvitz of New York City, and one sister, Frieda Goodman of Canton, MA.

A funeral service will be held Monday, November 21st at 11:00 a.m. at Temple Beth El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence, with burial in Temple Beth El Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the RI Jewish Historical Association, 130 Sessions St., Providence, RI 02906. Shiva will be private. Arrangements by SUGARMAN-SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

Obituaries

Remembering Eleanor Horvitz

By Geraldine Foster

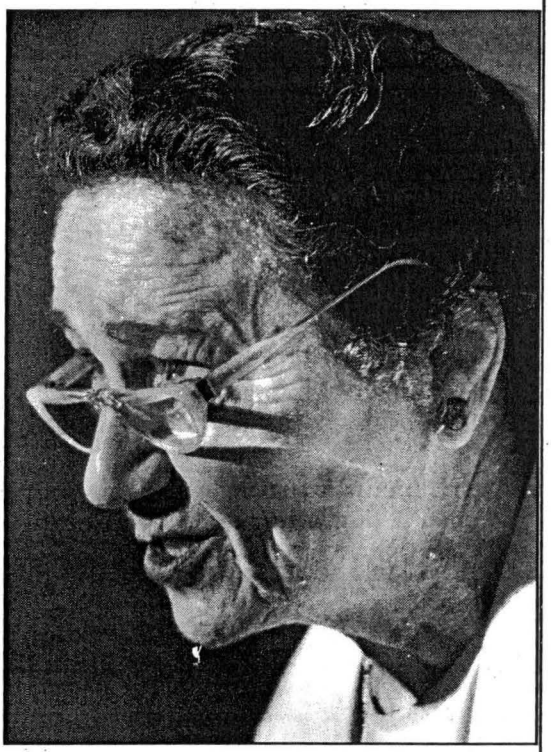
Eleanor F. Horvitz began her career at Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association in 1974 when she became our librarian. What followed was 27 years of devotion, respect, and yes — love, a bond and identity between the Association and Eleanor.

That year, 1974, also marked Eleanor's debut as a contributor to "RIJH Notes." "The Outlet Company Story" was the first of her annual articles covering a wide range of topics to illuminate the history and experience of Jews in Rhode Island in the first half of the 20th century. Her style was distinctive, the tone gracious, like Eleanor .

Eleanor loved research. In ferreting out information from multiple sources she would say that she felt like a detective solving mysteries. She sought out people to interview, people whose memories and experience had a bearing on her subject of interest. In this way she brought a human dimension to the facts of history. For good reason she has been cited in scholarly publications.

But writing for "Notes" or columns for "The Jewish Voice" and the "R.I. Jewish Herald" was her avocation. Eleanor was the librarian, then librarian/archivist, of RIJHA, a part-time position during her entire tenure. During a set number of hours she was the gatekeeper of the office. She responded to requests for information, assisted researchers, gave tours of the premises, reviewed newspapers, culled donations of materials, wrote thank you letters, and kept a record of our holdings.

Anne Sherman, office manager at RIJHA, worked closely with Eleanor for 12 years. In her mind's eye, she will always see Eleanor seated at her desk, answering a question about the history of the Jews in Rhode Island, usually without having to look up the answer. Eleanor's knowledge, about the people and the organizations throughout the state, was encyclopedic and all encompassing.



Eleanor F. Horvitz

Uncounted, however, were the hours spent in mounting and staffing exhibits for our meetings and for community celebrations. Or talks given to groups as diverse as the Warwick Historical Association or the National Council of Jewish Women or by special request to Sunday school classes. Not included, as well, were the hours searching for possible additions to our archives in out-of-the-way places. Often fruitless, but sometimes, because she took the time to have a cup of tea with a lonely person, we were rewarded with a rare cache of materials. All those hours Eleanor gave willingly and without stint.

Intellectually curious herself and a lifelong student, Eleanor enjoyed assisting young people in their research. It is most fitting, therefore, that the Association instituted in her name an annual award for a scholarly work by a college student on a facet of the history of the Jews in Rhode Island.

As Stephen M. Brown, president of the Association, said, "Eleanor provided the strength, leadership, and dedication that helped our organization grow. Her memory will be deeply engraved in the history of our organization."

We will miss her lovely smile, her gentle manner, her dedication and love.

Geraldine Foster is a past president and member of the R.I. Jewish Historical Association.