PJ 10-17-91

Alfred Joslin, retired justice, dead at 77

He headed commission overseeing Capital Center

By TRACY BRETON
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

Alfred H. Joslin, 77, an associate justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court from 1963 to 1979 and a vigorous leader of several community organizations, died yesterday at his home, in Bristol. For several years he had suffered from Parkinson's disease and, more recently, pancreatic cancer.



JOSLIN

Widely respected as a legal scholar, he worked after his retirement from the bench as counsel to the Providence law firm of Edwards & Angell. He stopped working at the law firm after a serious car accident in the spring of 1988.

Since 1981, he was chairman of the Capital Center Commission, which oversees redevelopment of the area between the State House and downtown Providence.

Judge Joslin played a key role in the revitalization of Butler Health Center — now Butler Hospital — serving several terms as Butler's president. He served on the boards of Miriam Hospital, Rhode Island Hospital, Roger Williams Hospital, the Providence District Nursing Association, Children's Friend and Service, Jewish Family Service, and the former Lying-In Hospital (now Women & Infants Hospital).

He was a trustee of his alma mater, Brown University.

A stubborn, private man of fierce pride, Judge Joslin was a perfectionist. His competitive nature displayed itself even on the golf course, said Barney Kay, a friend of more than 40 years.

Judge Joslin said he always made it a point to tell his acquaintances "the things they like to hear." But with people he considered his closest friends, he could be demanding and critical. He would clip articles from the newspaper and send them to the reporter who wrote them, with comments in the margins and circles around sentences he considered too long.

A stickler for etiquette, he groused for years about the fact that his former son-in-law refused to wear a tuxedo to the rehearsal dinner for his daughter's wedding.

"I'm a very complicated man," Judge Joslin would often say of himself. But despite adversity — his only son, Andrew, a Providence lawyer, died at the age of 31; his wife, Roberta, died about 18 months after he retired from the bench — he was a man who marveled at the little things life has to offer: the sunsets that he watched from the patio of his waterfront home; the roses he grew in his garden; and artwork his wife created in the studio adjacent to their home.

And once he decided he liked you, you could count on him to be a loyal friend.

After Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph A. Bevilacqua stepped down from the bench in the midst of an impeachment inquiry, Judge Joslin was the only former colleague to continue to lunch with him.

And when his longtime friend Democrat Bruce Sundlun launched his 1986 campaign for governor against Republican incumbent Edward D. DiPrete, Joslin, a Republi-

JOSLIN, Hon. Alfred H.

October 16, 1991. Beloved husband of the late Roberta (Grant) Joslin. Residence; 4 Mulberry Rd., Bristol. Dear father of Susan Leader, NYC; Betsy Poirier, Warwick and the late Andrew J. Joslin. Dear brother of Joyce Salinger, Cincinnati, OH and Robert Joslin, Boca Raton, FL. Devoted grandfather of Jessica, Amanda, Courtney, Stacy, Michael, Matthew and Jonathan. Funeral Services 12 noon Friday at TEMPLE BETH-EL, Orchard at Butler Aves. Relatives and friends are invited. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to Brown University, Temple Beth-El or your favorite charity. Memorial observance at his late residence Friday 2-4 p.m. and Saturday 7-9 p.m. Arrangments by MOUNT SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

JOSLIN, ALFRED

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THE AMERICAN ISRAELITE
CINCINNATI, OHIO

10-24-91

Obituaries

Alfred H. Joslin

Former Justice Alfred H. Joslin, who served on the Rhode Island Supreme Court for 16 years, died on Oct. 16, in his home in Bristol, R.I. He was 77.

Justice Joslin was a graduate of Brown University and Harvard Law School. He specialized in corporate law before being appointed to the bench.

He was a former board member and vice chancellor at Brown and he served on the boards of several hospitals and social organizations.

Justice Joslin is survived by two daughters, Susan Leader of Manhattan and Elizabeth Poirier of Warwick, R. I.; a brother, Robert Joslin of Boca Baton, Fla.; and a sister, Joyce Salinger of Cincinnati.

JOSLIN, alfred

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL-BULLETIN MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1991

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Editorial

Justice Alfred Joslin

Anyone who followed the course of Rhode Island's public life for the past generation was likely to have known and admired Alfred Joslin, who died last week at the age of 77. For 16 years his business card read Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, accurately enough, but his life encompassed a great deal more: He gave unstintingly of himself to an impressive array of Rhode Island civic causes — among them hospitals, Brown University (his alma mater) and the Capital Center project — and in so doing set an enviable standard for public service and social commitment.

His professional colleagues of the bench and bar admired Justice Joslin's sparkling legal mind and felicity of language, expressed in more than 600 opinions he wrote during his tenure on the Supreme Court from 1963 to 1979. More recent associates knew him as a tough and dedicated chairman of the Capital Center Commission, a key agency in leading the landmark revamping of central Providence.

It might be added, in a season when some public officials are in trouble, and when public service itself is not enjoying the highest repute, that Al Joslin aspired to (and met) a gratifyingly high standard of ethics and probity. He saw, correctly, that the law is the ultimate safeguard for, and mirror to, our civil society.

Alfred Joslin was one of those who made a difference, and his death at the age of 77 has closed out the distinguished life of a Rhode Islander of real consequence.