Joel M. Karten, 52; head of jewelry firm

DARTMOUTH, Mass. — Joel M. Karten, 52, of 307 Smithneck Rd., president of Karten's Jewelers of New England, died Tuesday in Bangkok, Thailand. He was the husband of Carol (Smira) Karten.

Born in Springfield, a son of Sara (Bresler) Portnoy of Cranston, and the late Louis F. Karten, he lived in South Dartmouth for many years.

Mr. Karten was a member of the Tifereth Israel Synagogue, New Bedford, where he was a past vice president. He attended Boston University and was a past president of the Jewish Federation, a past president of the Downtown Action Committee of New Bedford and a member of the Wamsutta Masonic Lodge. He received the Morris B. Zale Award and the American Jewish Committee Jewelers Award.

He was a finalist for the National Jewelers Hall of Fame, a member of the DeBeers Carat Club, and a past president of the management discussion group of the jewelry business.

Besides his wife and mother he leaves his stepfather, Dr. Bernard Portnoy of Cranston; two sons, Louis Karten of North Dartmouth and Bruce Karten of South Dartmouth; a daughter, Susan Karten of Newton; a sister, Barbara Dennis of South Dartmouth; a stepson, John Sofro, and a stepdaughter, Jill Sofro, both of South Dartmouth.

The funeral service will be held tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. at Tefereth Israel Synagogue, Brownell Avenue. Burial will be in Tefereth Israel Cemetery.

KARTEN, JOEL