PJ-B 8-1-1993

KOFFLER, Sol

Sol Koffler; philanthropist, founded American Tourister

PALM BEACH, Fla. — Sol Koffler, 86, of Palm Beach, a philanthropist and founder of American Tourister Luggage of Warren, R.I., died yesterday at the Manor Care Nursing Home, Boynton Beach, Fla. He was the husband of Lillian (Ritter) Koffler.



Born in Zborow, Poland, a son of the late Zisie and Eva (Merzand) Koffler, he immigrated to this country in 1920. He lived in Providence, R.I., until his retirement in the early 1980s.

Mr. Koffler had only a grammar school education. In his earlier years he earned money by working two or three jobs simultaneously and by fighting in the ring professionally. He had about 15 professional matches to his credit.

He founded the American Luggage Works, which became American Tourister, in 1932. The company was the first to manufacture molded luggage, and American Tourister became an internationally recognized brand.

During his business career, he was granted several patents for products and processes.

From the time he reached adulthood he was a philanthropist, giving to schools, colleges, hospitals and other worthy causes.

He donated buildings to Brown University, Providence College, Bryant College, Miriam Hospital, Providence Hebrew Day School and the Rhode Island Jewish Home for the Aged. He was a major contributor to the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, Fla., and Rhode Island.

Among the many honors bestowed on him, he had received honorary doctorate of science degrees in business administration from Bryant College, Providence College, and Roger Williams College, now Roger Williams University.

He was a member of the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

Mr. Koffler also was a member of the President's Council at Providence College and the Board of Trustees at Bryant College, the Board of Associates at Bennington College, the Advisory Board of the former Industrial National Bank, and the Bishop's Council of St. Joseph Hospital, Miriam Hospital, the Jewish Federation, Temple Emanu-El, and the Rhode Island Jewish Home for the Aged.

He was a director of the former Columbus National Bank, and a past member of the Rhode Island Commodores. He was a member of Temple Beth-El in Florida and Temple Emanu-El in Providence, and a member of High Ridge Country Club in Palm Beach and Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Mass.

Besides his wife, he leaves three daughters, Paula Granoff of Palm Beach and Providence, Sandra Bornstein of Palm Beach and Providence, and Phyllis Braddock of Bonita Springs, Fla., and Warren; five grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. He was the brother of the late Esther, Irving and Charles Koffler.

The funeral service will be tomorrow at 1 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El, Morris Avenue, Providence. Burial will be in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

KOFFLER, Sol

July 31, 1993. Beloved husband of Lillian (Ritter) Koffler. Residence: 3100 South Ocean Blvd., Palm Beach, FL; formerly of Providence. Dear father of Paula Granoff and Sandra Bornstein, Palm Beach, FL and Providence and Phyllis Braddock, Bonita Springs, FL and Warren, RI. Devoted grandfather of 5 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Dear brother of the late Esther, Irving and Charles Koffler. Funeral service 1 p.m. Monday at TEMPLE EMANU-EL, Morris Ave. at Sessions St. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to your favorite charity. Memorial Observance at the summer residence of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bornstein, 12 Barbour Dr., Providence Monday 7-9 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday 2-4, 7-9 p.m. Arrangements by MOUNT SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.