Boston Herald
7-28-95

KORFF, Rabbi Baruck

Rabbi Baruck Korff, 'Nixon's rabbi,' at 81

Rabbi Baruch Korff, dubbed "Nixon's rabbi" for playing confidant and rallying support for the president during Watergate, died at his home in Providence, R.I., Wednesday at 81.

Rabbi Korff died after a long bout with pancreatic cancer.

He met Nixon while Nixon was campaigning for president in 1967 and they became friends. Rabbi Korff's influence grew throughout Nixon's presidency and he remained a devoted supporter even after Nixon's resignation.

He founded the National Citizens Committee for Fairness to the Presidency in 1974.

In "The President and I," published this year, Rabbi Korff wrote that he worked so tirelessly for Nixon mostly because of Nixon's backing of Israel and the president's work to allow Jews to leave the Soviet Union.

But in the book, Rabbi Korff also called Nixon a "chameleon," inept at human relations.

He was dubbed "Nixon's rabbi" in March 1974, when reporters overheard the president introduce him to Chicago Mayor Richard Daley by saying, "Meet my rabbi."

Among those who mourned the rabbi was Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who had visited Rabbi Korff during his illness.

"I had the privilege of his friendship and insights for many years," Hatch said. "We will all miss the wise counsel he shared with us forthrightly."

Last month, Rabbi Korff claimed that Diane Sawyer, then in the White House press office, was Deep Throat, the source who helped The Washington Post uncover the Watergate scandal, saying, "At my deathbed I can afford to speak the truth." The TV journalist called the claim laughable.

Born in the Ukraine, Rabbi Korff was sent to Poland at age 5 after seeing his mother shot to death in 1919 during a night of violence against Jews. His father, serving a double position as zvhiller rebbe in the Ukraine and grand rabbi in Boston, was away at the time.



RABBI BARUCH KORFF

Rabbi Korff lived in Poland for seven years before moving to the United States. Eventually, he went to work for the State Department, negotiating with Nazi Germany's Heinrich Himmler to buy freedom for Jews.

When World War II ended, Rabbi Korff joined the Jewish underground to push for creation of a Jewish state. In 1947, after he and seven others were arrested in Paris on charges of conspiring to bomb the British seacoast to call attention to England's inertia in creating a Jewish state in Palestine, he went on a 17-day hunger strike that put him in a coma.

From 1954 until his retirement in 1974, Rabbi Korff was rabbi of Congregation Agudath Achim in Taunton. He lived for many years in Rehoboth.

Rabbi Korff moved to Providence in 1983 to work with Brown University, which is the repository for his papers.

Survivors include three daughters, Zamira of Boston and Joy Weber and Marilyn Marsden, both of New York; three brothers, Rabbi Nathan of Milton, Max of Miami and Martin of Salem; two sisters, Betty Berkowitz of Stratford, Conn., and Molly Hixson of Revere; and one grandson.

A funeral service will be held today at 10 a.m. in the Rabbi Baruch Korff Learning Center at Providence Hebrew Day School.

Burial will be in Grand Rabbi Jacob I. Korff Cemetery, Everett. —AP

RABBI BORUCH KORFF

PROVIDENCE — Rabbi Boruch Korff, of 133 Brown St., died July 26.

He is survived by three daughters, Zamira Korff of Boston, Mass., and Gittelle Weber and Marilyn Marsden of New York; three brothers, Rabbi Nathan Korff of Milton, Mass., Max Korff of North Miami Beach, Fl., and Martin Korff of Salem, Mass.; two sisters, Mollie Korff Hixon, Revere, Mass., and Betty Korff Berkowitz, Stratford, Conn.; and a grandson, Robert. He was the brother of the late Adele Korff Gass, Pauline Korff Kerber and Rabbi Samuel I. Korff.

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The funeral service was held July 28 at the Rabbi Boruch Korff Learning Center at the Providence Hebrew Day School, 450 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Interment was at Grand Rabbi Jacob I. Korff Family Cemetery, Everett, Mass. Arrangements were by Mount Sinai Memorial Chapel, 825 Hope St., Providence. *(See article on Rabbi Korff on page 1.)*