8-2-13

LEV, YEHUDA

Yehuda Lev, 86

PROVIDENCE – Yehuda Lev, whose life was filled with commitment and devotion to the Jewish people, died Aug. 3.



Born John Lewis Low on Jan. 2, 1927 in New York City to Sol Low and Rosamund Trilling Low Greenhill, he changed his name to Yehuda Lev when he fought in Israel's War of Independence.

During his final 15 years in retirement, before he became ill, he never appeared in public without his multicolored Bukharan kippah, which, combined with his full white beard gave him the distinguished appearance of a learned Sephardic rabbi.

He was not a rabbi and had little regard for organized religion; he preferred to learn the truth about the hereafter himself, rather than relying on second-hand reports.

The Guinness Book of Records denied his request to list him as the only person ever to fail statistics courses at three of the nation's finest academic entities – Cornell and Stanford universities and the University of Chicago. He earned a master's degree in Arabic studies from the University of Chicago and a master's degree in communication arts from Stanford University, and jokingly claimed they trumped his wife's doctorate in history.

He leaves four children, three of whom – Daniel Low, David Low and Dafna Low – were born to his first wife, Idell, a violin teacher with whom he remained on good terms, and the fourth, Ariela Lev Gragg, by his second wife, Dr. Rosemarie Pegueros-Lev, an associate professor of Latin American History and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Rhode Island; and his grandchildren, Hannah Low, Asher Low, Dahlia Low, Tanner Smith and Issadora Gragg.

Other than family, his main passion in life was Israel, in whose creation he played a small role, first in Europe with the Aliyah-Bet, the "illegal" pre-state immigration to Palestine, then in the Israeli army during the War of Independence and, after a period of kibbutz life, as a journalist and head of English-language broadcasting with Israel State Radio. In 1963, he was nominated for a Grammy for his documentary recording, "Six Million Accuse," about the Eichmann trial.



His column, "A Majority of One," which he wrote for 25 years in Los Angeles and Providence, including in this paper, challenged religious and political extremists.

In a rare moment of introspection, he suggested to his second wife an epitaph to this obituary, which he wrote himself.

When he was needed, he was there. Mostly.

Donations may be made to The Jewish Voice, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, RI 02906.

Editor's Note: *The family is collecting remembrances of Yehuda Lev. If you have any reminiscences of or stories about Lev that you would like to share with the family, please send them to yehudastory@gmail.com.*

Yehuda was a former columnist for The Jewish Voice & Herald as well as a former member of its editorial board.

LEV, YEHUDA 86 died Aug. 2, 2013. Burial: Friday, Aug. 9, 1pm promptly at the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery, Exeter. Service and reception: 2:30-5:30 Jewish Community Center, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. www.sugarmansinai.com

LUND, HELEN M.