MALDAVIR, Jerry

PJ 1-8-1999

OBITUARIES

'Jerry' Maldavir, 64; prime mover behind R.I. laws against smoking

WARWICK — Gerald S. "Jerry" Maldavir, 64, of 75 Gillooly Drive, Rhode Island's leading force behind anti-smoking legislation for more than a decade, and director of advocacy and government affairs for the New England Division of the American Cancer Society, died yesterday at Miriam Hospital, Providence. He was the husband of Faye E. (Kaplan) Maldavir.



Born in Providence, a son of the late Barney and Gertrude (Horvitz) Maldavir, he lived in Warwick for 34 years.

An Air Force veteran and graduate of Bryant College, Mr. Maldavir ran his own business for many years, according to Amy Coli, of the American Cancer Society, Rhode Island Division.

In the 1980s, following the deaths of his father, a heavy smoker, and his mother, a nonsmoker, of lung cancer, Mr. Maldavir became an impassioned anti-tobacco activist.

As a private citizen, he wrote and lobbied into law the 1986 Workplace Smoking Pollution Control Act, which imposed major restrictions on smoking in the workplace and resulted in many offices becoming smoke-free.

He served as executive director of GASP (Group Against Smoking Pollution) in Massachusetts and of its sister nonprofit unit, the Clean Indoor Air Educational Foundation.

In 1990, Mr. Maldavir joined the staff of the American Cancer Society, Rhode Island Division, as director of public education and government affairs. At the State House and throughout Rhode Island, he was known as a tireless advocate of tobacco controls and of laws to help cancer patients.

The laws he wrote and promoted include the 1992 Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act, which banned smoking on school property; the 1993 and 1994 amendments to tighten the Workplace Smoking Pollution Control Act; the 1994 Off-Label Use of Drugs health law requiring insurers to pay for off-label drugs used to treat cancer; and the 1996 Act to Stop the Illegal Sale of Tobacco Products to Children, which imposed fines on tobacco-sale license holders for the sale of tobacco products to minors.

Yesterday, Mr. Maldavir was remembered at the State House as a "relentless" public-health advocate. Sen. Thomas Izzo, D-Cranston, chairman of the Senate Health, Education and Welfare Committee, and his House counterpart, Rep. Nancy Benoit, D-Woonsocket, rose during the sessions in their respective chambers to pay tribute to him.

The Rhode Island office of the American Cancer Society closed early yesterday to memorialize Mr. Maldavir, and it will be open only until noon today.

"You can replace a worker and an employee, but somebody with Jerry's passion and dedication . . . I think it will be really hard," said Coli, the Cancer Society spokeswoman.

Mr. Maldavir was also a master Mason, third degree, at Redwood Lodge 35, AF&AM, and a member of Solomon's Lodge of Perfection, the Rhode Island Council of the Princes of Jerusalem, the Rhode Island Chapter of the Rose Croix and the Rhode Island Consistory.

He was a member of the Palestine Shrine Temple and had served for two terms as captain of the Palestine Shrine Motor Corps Unit. He was president of the Rhode Island Trowel Club and a member of the Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association board of directors.

A sailing enthusiast, Mr. Maldavir was a celestial navigation, piloting and seamanship instructor with the Narragansett Bay Power Squadron. He had taught DOS at the Boston Computer Society and the Brown University Learning Community.

Besides his wife, he leaves three sons, Stephen Maldavir of Providence, Robert Maldavir of Virginia and David Maldavir of Cranston; and a brother, Melvyn S. Maldavir, and a sister, Ruth Greenberg, both of Cranston.

The funeral will be held today at 1 p.m. from the Max Sugarman Memorial Chapel, 458 Hope St., Providence. Burial will be at Lincoln Park Cemetery, Post Road, Warwick.

MALDAVIR, Gerald S. "Jerry"

January 7, 1999. Residence, 75 Gillooly Drive, Warwick. Beloved Husband of Faye E. (Kaplan) Maldavir. Devoted Father of Stephen Maldavir, Providence; Rob Maldavir, Virginia and David Maldavir, Cranston. Dear Brother of Melvyn Maldavir, Cranston and Ruth Greenberg, Cranston. Funeral Services Friday at 1:00 PM at the MAX SUGARMAN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 458 Hope Street (Cor. of Doyle Ave.), Providence. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to American Cancer Society, 400 Main St., Pawtucket, RI 02860. Shiva will be observed at his late residence, Friday following funeral, Saturday 7-9 and Sunday through Wednesday 2-4 and 7-9 p.m.