PJB-E 5-10-80

Benton Odessa, 55, dies; active in Jewish affairs

PAWTUCKET — Benton A. Odessa, 55, of 27 Dryden Ave., a Providence textile manufacturer who participated in Jewish community activities for many years, died early yesterday at Miriam Hospital after being stricken Thursday night at Temple Emanu-El, Providence, where he and his wife were being honored at a dinner.



Mr. Odessa and his wife, Elaine (Schoenfeld) Odessa, were honored Thursday night by the Rhode Island Israel Bond Committee for their work for the Israel Bond drive. They received the Shalom Award for service to the temple, the community and Israel.

Mr. Odessa collapsed while greeting guests after his acceptance speech.

Mr. Odessa was president of of General Fabrics Co. in Pawtucket for 30 years, and he founded and was president for eight years of Highland Textile Printers Co.

He had been vice president of Temple Emanu-El since 1977, and was a former vice president of Temple Beth David-Anshei Kovno, Providence. He had been the treasurer of Congregation Beth Jacob in Narragansett since 1965, and was vice president of the Jewish Home for the Aged from 1970 to 1979.

ODESSA, BENTON

For many years, he was active in Israel bond campaigns. He and his wife traveled to Israel in 1970 and 1979.

During a 1967 clothing drive sponsored by the Jewish Community Center, Mr. Odessa crated and shipped, without cost to the center, clothing sent to Israel.

He was a member of the board of directors of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, and was a member of Temple Emanu-El's Men's Club, B'nai B'rith, the Hebrew Free Loan Association, the Rhode Island Industrial Building Authority, Roosevelt Lodge 42, F&AM, and the Palestine Temple of Shriners.

Born in Providence, Mr. Odessa was a son of the late David and Gussie (Goldman) Odessa. He lived in Providence until he moved to Pawtucket 15 years ago. Mr. Odessa was a 1947 graduate of Providence College.

Besides his wife, he is survived by two sons, Edward P. Odessa of Providence and David G. Odessa, at home, and a daughter, Susan I. Odessa of Pawtucket.

The funeral service was held yesterday at Temple Emanu-El. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.