BJB 3-13-12 ODESSA, ELAINE

PAWTUCKET

ODESSA, ELAINE, 79, a long-time resident of Pawtucket, died Monday, March 12, 2012. She was the wife of the late Benton Odessa. Born in New York, NY, she was the daughter of the late Louis and Grace (Fortgang) Schoenfeld.

A graduate of Hope High School, Elaine was a chairman emeritus of General Fabrics Company. Elaine spent her adult life actively involved in many Jewish community organizations. She was an active member of Temple Emanu-El, a president of the Roger Williams chapter of B'nai Brith, honorary vice president of Temple Emanu-El, a president of the Women's division of the JFRI, as well as an honorary board member of the JFRI. She was also an honorary vice president of the Alperin Schechter Day School, president of the sisterhood of Temple Emanu-El, a board member of the Jewish Seniors Agency, board member and founding member of Tamarisk, and a member of the board of governors at the Miriam Hospital. Elaine was honored by the Jewish Theological Seminary, awarded the NCJW Community Service Award along with her daughter, Susan Froehlich, and awarded with the National Jewish Federation Lion of Judah Award.

Elaine most enjoyed spending time with her family, her time at Temple Emanu-El, and her many summers in Narragansett with her family.

She is survived by her devoted children, Edward Odessa and his wife Susan, Susan Froehlich and husband John, and David Odessa and his wife Tina; and her loving grandchildren, Brooke, Benton, Benjamin, Allie, and Zach. She was the loving aunt of Howard and Philip Schoenfeld, and Rana Smadja; and sister of the late Ira Schoenfeld.

Her funeral service will be held **TODAY**, March 13th at 1 pm at Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence with burial in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her memory to the Benton and Elaine Odessa Cantorial Fund at Temple Emanu-El. Shiva will be observed at the home of Susan and John Froehlich, Tues. 7-9 pm, and Wed., Thurs., and Sun. 2-4 & 7-9 pm. For information and condolences visit, www.SugarmanSinai.com.

JVH 3-15-12

OBITUARIES

Remembering Elaine Odessa

With a zest for life, community leader leaves a remarkable legacy of tikkun olam

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PROVIDENCE – Elaine Odessa was "married to the community," said **Ed Feldstein** who, with his wife Barbara, had a deep and abiding friendship of more than 40 years with her. In fact, they considered Elaine a member of their family.

When they were invited for Shabbat dinners, Feldstein said, "We always knew we'd be well-served and well-fed at her home. She was a wonderful cook, I can vouch for that... her recipes are in Temple Emanu-El's cookbook, The Miriam Hospital cookbook...."

As former fellow vice presidents at Temple Emanu-El, they were so close that when Feldstein became president of The Miriam Hospital, Elaine volunteered to serve there however she was needed.

She was very well respected and so credible that when she asked someone to do something, they did it. "When Elaine spoke, you listened," he said.

Her zest for life and her love of family and friends was so strong that in late November 2011, she remained at the bar mitzvah party for her youngest grandson, Zachary Odessa, until it "closed down," Feldstein said, noting that some younger people left before all the festivities ended. [Given her serious medical diagnosis], "we didn't think she'd make it [to the celebration, but] – she was a wonderful fighter," he said.



ELAINE ODESSA

Estelle Klemer spoke, too, of Elaine's legacy to the community, calling it "generous beyond belief and quiet, without fanfare." The Odessas are a wonderful family, she said.

As two of the founders of Tamarisk, Klemer and Elaine traveled together throughout New England to visit places to decide how best to structure the facility.

"We established a fund at Tamarisk so residents could have a party each year," she said, noting that Elaine's philanthropy was "very quietly done – that's how she and her [late] husband Benton did so many things."

Cheryl Greenfeld Teverow also has a long-standing relationship with Elaine; as children, Teverow's mother and Elaine lived in the same building.

"Elaine was a dear family friend, [and we had a] long family history and many ties," she said. "I worked with her in the Federation, the Alliance, Temple Emanu-El and lots of [other] organizations.

"She was devoted to her family, very strong-willed and devoted to her community and Jewish causes."

The 60-year friendship between **Lila Winograd** and Elaine was always close, always supportive. She was a wonderful mother – her children were her life – and her parents never had to worry about a thing, as she was always there for them, Winograd recalled. "I never had a dinner party without including her mother and father, and when my father was living, she included him."

Inseparable for years, the two women met through Benton who was the dear friend of Jerry Winograd, Lila's husband (now deceased).

Noting that her sister Dena and Dena's husband Paul Litwin were also part of the close-knit group of three couples, Winograd said, "The children all grew up together.

"As a friend, she was there for me whenever the chips were down. Fifty-eight years ago, when Eddie [Odessa] was born, my mother died suddenly and Elaine came to visit every day when we sat shiva. That showed me what kind of friend she was."

They managed the Golden Age luncheons at Temple Emanu-El for 25 years, and were both active in Emanu-El's Sisterhood leadership.

She was a wonderful daughter, a wonderful mother and a wonderful friend, said Winograd. "She's been with me for 60 years; it's hard to remember everything."