Fund raiser, civic leader Joseph W. Ress at 86

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PROVIDENCE — Joseph W. Ress, 86, of 486 Cole Ave., a lifelong Providence resident honored a number of times for his public service to several of educational, religious and charitable institutions, died today at Roger Williams General Hospital. He was the husband of Anne (Gordon) Ress.



Mr. Ress, son of the late Morris and Bessie (Flint) Ress, was especially active at Brown University, from which he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1926; the United Way of Southeastern New England, which he served as president and campaign chairman, and the state's Jewish community.

Born in 1904 in Providence's south end, he attended Technical High School while helping his parents run a delicatessen on North Main Street.

Mr. Ress began his career as a lawyer, graduating from Harvard Law School in 1929 and practicing for five years before going into business. He became president of the former E.A. Adams & Son Inc. jewelry manufacturers in 1949 and remained at its helm until he sold the business in 1981.

He was a trustee of Brown University for 16 years and treasurer during the 1970s. He received an honorary degree from Brown and the Brown Bear Award, the highest alumni honor. He was chairman of the fund-raising campaign to start a medical program at Brown.

In 1988, the United Way awarded him the Alexis De Toqueville Award, the organization's highest honor. He was campaign chairman in 1964 and chairman in 1965.

Mr. Ress was one of the founders of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and president from 1960 to 1964. He was a trustee of Temple Emanu-El, the Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Home for the Aged.

A past president of the Miriam Hospital, Mr. Ress established the cardio-pulmonary laboratory and launched the first open-heart surgery program in the state.

Mr. Ress was chairman of the Providence College President's Council and served on the state's Board of Governors for Higher Education. He served on the boards of the Rhode Island School of Design and Lincoln School in Providence, and was named 1980 man of the year by the University Club of Rhode Island. He was on the executive committee of the Urban Coalition.

Mr. Ress received the national Herbert Lehman Israel Award in 1974 for outstanding service to Israel and the National Community Service Award of the New England Friends of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1976. The National Conference of Christians and Jews gave him the Brotherhood Award and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce gave Mr. Ress the Roger Williams award in 1972.

Besides his wife, he leaves two daughters, Joan R. Reeves of Providence and Besty R. Jacobson of Larchmont, N.Y.; and four grandchildren. He was the brother of the late Samuel Ress.

The funeral service will be tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El, Morris Avenue at Sessions Street. Burial will be in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

RESS, Joseph

February 4, 1991. Beloved husband of Anne (Gordon) Ress. Residence 486 Cole Ave. Dear father of Joan R. Reeves, Providence, and Betsy R. Jacobson, Larchmont, NY. Devoted grandfather of Ellen, Caroline, Pamela, and Michael. Dear brother of the late Samuel Ress. Funeral services 1:30 p.m. Tuesday at TEMPLE EMANU-EL, Morris Ave. at Sessions St. Relatives and friends are invited. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to your favorite charity. Memorial Observance at his late residence Tuesday 7-9 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday, 2-4, 7-9 p.m., Saturday 7-9 p.m. and Sunday 2-4, 7-9 p.m. Arrangements by MOUNT SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

RESS, Joseph