PJ - B 3-5-1996

ROBINSON, Selma Pilavin

OBITUARIES

Selma Pilavin Robinson dies; international philanthropist

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Selma Pilavin Robinson, 87, of 601 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, and Palm Beach, a past honorary chairman of the national women's division of the United Jewish Appeal, and a prominent fund-raiser for local and international philanthropies, died yesterday at the Good Samaritan Hospital. She was the widow of Murry Robinson. She was the widow of Albert Pilavin.

Born in Providence, she was a daughter of the late Alfred and Elizabeth (Stoneman) Fain. Mrs. Robinson was a member of Temple Beth-El and its Sisterhood, Hadassah and the women's associations of Miriam Hospital and the Jewish Home for the Aged. She was a member of the National Conference of Jewish Women and the Brandeis University Women's Association.

Together with other family members, she contributed toward the construction of three pre-kindergarten schools in Israel in 1972. In 1967, she was part of a group that spent three weeks surveying welfare and immigrant aid projects in Marseilles and Aix en Provence, France, and in Tehran, and Isfahan, Iran, as well as in Israel. She had also been the chairman of the women's division of the United Jewish Appeal in Providence.

She received an honorary degree from the Rhode Island School of Design, where she was a former trustee and headed its fund drive in 1975. She was the founder of the Albert Pilavin Collection of 20th Century American Art, which was donated to the school museum of art as a memorial to her late husband, Albert Pilavin, a founder of the Apex Tire & Rubber Co. In 1966, she presented to Brown University 3,000 books, journals, dictionaries, monographs and other writings on Hebrew religious and historical subjects, a gift that enhanced the university's Judaica collections.

She was a former member of the Board of the World Affairs Council. She was honored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and had been a co-chairman of the Southern New England Conference of Christians and Jews.

Mrs. Robinson was a leader of the women's division of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island in 1948 and 1949. In 1953, she became chairman of the National Women's Division of the United Jewish Appeal. As such, she was a featured speaker at the eighth post-war field directors conference of the American Joint Distribution Committee, a major American agency aiding refugee Jews overseas.

She also attended the Jerusalem Economic Conference to promote financial support for the new nation, and was active in the sale of State of Israel bonds.

During Providence Mayor Dennis J. Roberts' tenure she was a member of the board of the city Recreation Department.

Rabbi Leslie Gutterman of Temple Beth-El said that Mrs. Robinson was "one of the grand women in the Jewish community and one of the first to set an example of being able to give selflessly to causes that enriched the Jewish people as well as her own community."

She leaves two daughters, Barbara Joslin in Florida and Helene Gates of Providence; a brother, Norman Fain of Providence; six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

The funeral will be held tomorrow at 2 p.m. at Temple Beth-El, Orchard Avenue. Burial will be in Temple Beth-El Cemetery. ✓

PILAVIN ROBINSON, Selma (Fain)

March 4, 1996. Beloved wife of the late Albert Pilavin and Murry Robinson. Residence: 601 Elmgrove Ave., Providence; and Palm Beach, Fla. Dear mother of Barbara Joslin, Fla.; and Helene Gates, Providence. Dear sister of Norman Fain, Providence; and the late Janet Waldman, and Irving J. and Edgar Fain. Devoted grandmother of David Mayer, Ellen Fleischner, Lisa Bigney, Allison Tierney, Andrew and Eric Gates. Devoted great-grandmother of Anna, Shane, Sam, Nellie, Albert, Zachary and Austin. Funeral service 2 p.m. Wednesday at TEMPLE BETH-EL, Orchard at Butler Aves. Relatives and friends are invited. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Israel Education Fund-United Jewish Appeal, 99 Park Ave., Suite 300, N.Y.C., 10016, or to your favorite charity. Memorial observance at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Gates, 200 Lorimer Ave., Wednesday 7-9 p.m., and Thursday 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. Arrangements by MOUNT SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.