SHERMAN, SEYMOUR

JULY 20, 2003 BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE

Obituaries

Seymour A. Sherman, 84, library trustee

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Seymour Arnold Sherman died the way he lived: surrounded by people he loved and who loved him, even if they had just met him the day before.

Mr. Sherman, 84, of Lexington, died Thursday at Massachusetts General Hospital, three days after being admitted for congestive heart failure. He spent those three days well. He lasted long enough for one of his four daughters to arrive from Africa, long enough to ensure that his eldest daughter had put his house in order, and long enough to befriend his caretakers.

"He had this remarkable ability to make connections with people wherever he was and to form relationships," said his daughter, Rosslyn Shamash of Lexington. "Even in the hospital, he made connections with the orderlies and the doctors and the people who brought him his food. He knew their problems. He knew their family members' names."

Born in Providence, Mr. Sherman graduated from Providence College with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and from Bryant College with a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance. He also studied for a master's degree in Russian history at Salem State College.

He later worked as a purchasing agent for Olin Corp. of Stamford, Conn., and the Thompson Chemical Co. of Pawtucket, R.I. In 1969, he moved his family to Lynn, where he worked for his father-in-law in the real estate business. He retired early, living off his investments.

He put that financial sense to use for his children. Shamash said that when she went to live back home for a while after graduating from college, her father charged her a modest rent. It seemed out of character, but she didn't ask why. Years later, when she married, he presented her with an IRA account worth thousands of dollars — the product of the rent money, which he had invested for her, because he knew she wouldn't do it for herself.

Mr. Sherman served as a trustee and vice chairman of the Lynn Public Library over two decades and was active in town politics.

Shamash said her father insisted on giving more than he took.

"He was the forerunner of Costco 50 years ago," she said. "He would buy cartons of vegetables and eggs and put them at the top of our driveway, and the neighbors would come and share."

They were always generous in return, she said, because her father inspired that in people.

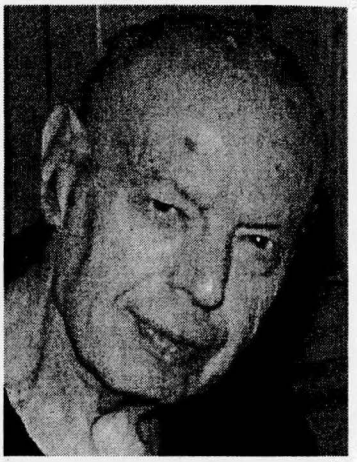
Another facet of his generosity: Mr. Sherman was constantly welcoming exchange students into the house and inviting people over for dinner. "When we were kids, we never knew who we would find in our home," she said.

Mr. Sherman was also conscious about health and exercise. He was a weight lifter, lifting free weights while lying on a picnic bench, and a strong swimmer who loved dips in the ocean. He ate well, forcing his children to skip high-fat, sugary foods in favor of fruits and vegetables.

"He ate okra and Brussels sprouts," Shamash said "He brought home mango and white chocolate and all these exotic things."

Mr. Sherman had a great intellect, his children said, and he encouraged them to aim achieve high — "reminding us that an A- was not an A," his son said — and use their imaginations. "We never passed a large house that wasn't a fairy castle," Shamash said.

He was an amateur poet, too, writing verses for every family occasion from birthdays to his children's medical and law school graduations.



SEYMOUR A. SHERMAN

At his funeral today, his children will read one of his poems, titled "The Stone." The poem reads, in part: "No future tide, nor other place may storm or current take me. Eternity cannot erase those loving days of memory,"

In addition to his daughter, Mr. Sherman is survived by his wife, Laura (Levine); a son, Matthew L. of Newton; three other daughters, Hanna of Lexington, Judith of Harare, Zimbabwe, and Ruth of Minneapolis; his sister, Charlotte Fisher of Beverly Hills, Calif.; and 12 grandchildren.

The funeral service will be held at 1:30 today at Temple Isaiah in Lexington, with burial to follow at the Pride of Lynn Cemetery in Lynn.