SKOLNIK, RICHARD
PJB
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Richard A. Skolnik, 69; prominent labor lawyer

BARRINGTON — Richard A. Skolnik, 69, of Indigo Road, a well-known lawyer who specialized in labor issues, and a former labor-law college instructor, died Wednesday at Rhode Island Hospital, Providence.



He was currently the lawyer of record for the Cranston crossing guards, who were fired last year by Mayor Stephen P. Laffey and then rehired by an arbitrator's ruling.

During a dispute over school finances last year in Cranston when it appeared that school sports and extracurricular activities would be curtailed, Mr. Skolnik deftly preempted the discussions in Superior Court and ensured that his clients, the Cranston Teachers Alliance, would be spared layoffs with a promise from the judge that any decision he made "would not affect the teachers' contract."

For years, he had represented many teachers' unions, including those in Providence, Pawtucket, Cranston, Warwick, North Providence and Johnston, and labor unions, including the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Laborers' International Union, the Federation of Visiting Nurses and the Teamsters.

He brought suit against the Providence Parks Department in 1983, when former Parks Supt. James Diamond threatened to lay off workers and scale down the zoo's size. The Roger Williams Zoo is now the largest tourist attraction in the state.

In 1981, Mr. Skolnik filed suit on behalf of Providence sanitation workers who were fired, and whose department disbanded, by former Mayor Vincent A. Cianci Jr. Most of those employees were later hired by United Sanitation Inc., the company that later took over the city's trash collections.

Mr. Skolnik was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1961, and was also certified to argue cases in federal District Court, the federal Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

He was a member of the board of editors of the Boston University Law Review, a lecturer at the Rhode Island Institute for Labor Studies and Research, and an instructor of labor law at Rhode Island College, Providence.

He was a member of the panel of arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association, the Rhode Island Labor Advisory Council, and the Bristol County and Rhode Island bar associations.

Other memberships included the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, the Rhode Island Trial Lawyers Association, and the Rhode Island Bar Foundation.

Mr. Skolnik had been selected for inclusion in every edition of the Best Lawyers in America.

He graduated in 1956 from Washington & Lee University, and graduated cum laude in 1960 from Boston University School of Law.

He was the husband of Rhea D. (Goldstein) Skolnik. They had been married for 42 years. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., a son of the late Isidore and Frances (Wittson) Skolnik, he had been a resident of Barrington for over 40 years.

Mr. Skolnik also enjoyed gardening, and was devoted to his dog, Cricket.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Randall K. Skolnik of Boca Raton, Fla.; a daughter, Romi Beth Skoinik-Knott of Solana Beach, Calif.; and two sisters, Paula Krinsky of San Ramon, Calif., and Judith Rosenstein of Sarasota, Fla.

The funeral service will be held Monday at 10 a.m. in Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel, 458 Hope St., Providence. Burial will be in Forest Chapel Cemetery, Barrington.

SKOLNIK, Richard A. "Dick" Esq.

September 15, 2004. Beloved husband of Rhea D. (Goldstein) Skolnik. Residence: 2 Indigo Road, Barrington. Dear father of Randall K. Skolnik, Boca Raton, FL and Romi Beth Skolnik-Knott, Solana Beach, CA. Loving brother of Paula Krinsky, San Ramon, CA and Judith Rosenstein, Sarasota, FL. Funeral Service Monday 10:00 A.M. at SUGARMAN-SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 458 Hope Street, Providence. Relatives and friends are invited. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center - Research in Leukemia, 330 Brookline Avenue, Boston, MA 02115. Memorial observance at his last residence Tuesday 2-4 P.M.