SMITH, JOSEPH

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Joseph

The Evening Bulletin, Monday, June 3, 1974

Joseph Smith Dies; Civic Leader Was 91

Joseph Smith, 91, a leader of Rhode Island's Jewish community, a former member of the Providence City Council and the General Assembly and a practicing attorney in the state for more than 60 years, died yesterday at Hallworth House after an illness of several months. He was the husband of the late Sarah (Finkle) Smith.

Mr. Smith also was a member of the Rhode Island Racing Commission for many years after first being appointed in 1937 by Governor Robert E. Quinn.

He first became active in politics in 1921 and served on the Providence City Council from that time until 1928. He served as a Republican from what was then the Third Ward and was instrumental, as a member of the city lighting commission, in bringing about installation of the then - most - modern street lights in the city.

After leaving the council, he ran for the House of Representatives in the city's Seventh District. As a Republican member of the General Assembly he was largely responsible for passage of the Kosher Bill, as it was known, which restricted sale of kosher meats to butchers who agreed to sell kosher meats only. The bill also outlawed sale of kosher meats on Saturdays.

Mr. Smith served only one term in the General Assembly. His son, Morton Smith, president of Morton Smith Inc., insurance agents, said last night that his father was "invited not to run a second time" because he voted frequently with Democrats.



Joseph Smith

Throughout his career as a lawyer, Mr. Smith was active in a number of community and philanthropic organizations. High on his list was activity in support of efforts to legally create a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine.

His father moved the family to Palestine when Mr. Smith was a boy of eight. Six years later, the family moved to Providence.

Mr. Smith was born in Quebec, Canada, May 18, 1883, a son of the late Solomon and Bella Smith.

He graduated from Hope High School and Brown University, class of 1906, and received his law degree from Boston University, where he was a founder of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity chapter.

Mr. Smith was a member of the Brown University reservation advisory board and it was his class which in 1931 purchased the reservation land, a 110-acre parcel in Smithfield, and presented it to Brown.

He was a trustee of The Miriam Hospital for 40 years and then was elected a life trustee. As a trustee he had served many years as a member of the executive committee and was chairman of the legal committee for 30 years. His late wife was one of the founders of the hospital.

Mr. Smith was a past president of the Touro Fraternal Association, the Zionist Organization of Providence; and was president of the American Zionist Congress for eight years.

He was a member of the Roosevelt Lodge of Masons, the Hebrew Free Loan Association, Jewish Home for the Aged, Temple Emanu-El and the Boston University Alumni Association.

He is survived by a brother, Louis of St. Petersburg, Fla., his son, Morton; a daughter, Mrs. Leona Sherman of Providence; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were to be held today at 2 p.m., at Temple Emanu-El. Burial will be in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

SMITH, Joseph

June 2, 1974. Husband of the late Sarah (Finkle) Smith. Beloved father of Morton Smith and Mrs. Leona Sherman. Both of Providence. Dear brother of Louis Smith of St. Petersburg, Fla. Loving grandfather of 2 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Funeral services to which relatives and friends are invited will be held Monday at 2 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the Miriam Hospital for Cancer Research. Memorial observance will be held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Morton Smith, 65 Hazard