STEPAK, SAMUEL

PJB 9-1-09

PROVIDENCE

STEPAK, SAMUEL J., 90, of 101 Highland Ave., Providence, passed away on Sunday, August 30, 2009. 'Sam' or 'Sammy', as his family and friends knew him, was born in Providence, a son of the late Lewis and Bessie (Cohen) Stepak.

He is survived by his dear wife of almost 65 years, Lynn (Faber) Stepak, children, Steve and Jane, and grandson, Gabriel, and many adoring nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by brothers, Morris and William, and sisters, Rose Feit, Ann Feit, and Lee Katz.

Sam was in the National Guard and helped protect Rhode Island during the hurricane of 1938. He served in the U.S. Navy for 4 years aboard the U.S.S. Philadelphia during WW II.

Sam took pride in doing well at each job he had, beginning with selling newspapers in front of the Loew's State Theater as a young boy and, as an adult, in positions at Leesona Corporation, the U.S. Postal Service, and as Executive Director of Temple Beth El. Sam's love of teaching and children was exemplified in his over 25 years as a Sunday school teacher at Temple Beth El and in his many years of tutoring boys individually for their Bar Mitzvahs. In his retirement, Sam was a leader of the evening minyan at Temple Beth El, worked part time at Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel, and was also a cameraman for the 'Senior Journal' television show. He was a member of Temple Beth El and the Touro Fraternal Association, a life member of the Rhode Island Jewish Historic Association, and a 32nd degree Mason and Shriner.

Sam had a heart of gold and was there to offer a helping hand whenever he could. Even as he approached the end of his life, his prayer as he was going to bed was to get a good night's sleep so that he could wake up the next morning to do good deeds. Sam's generous spirit and sense of humor will be deeply missed by all those who knew and loved him.

The funeral will be held Wednesday Sept. 2nd, 12:30PM at
SUGARMAN SINAI MEMORIAL

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

23rd Psalm

In Memory Of
Samuel Stepak

Date of Death
August 30, 2009

Funeral Services At
Sugarman- Sinai Memorial Chapel
Providence, Rhode Island

Officiating
Rabbi Leslie Gutterman
Cantor Judith Seplowin

Contributions
May be made to: Temple Beth El, 70 Orchard St., Providence, RI 02906 or your favorite charity

Shiva
Shiva will be observed. At his late residence: 101 Highland Ave. following the burial until 4 pm, Thurs 2-4 & 6:30 – 8 pm and Fri from 2-4 pm

Stepak remembered for community work

He was a fixture at Providence's Temple Beth El and was involved in the production of the cable-TV show *Senior Journal*.

BY RICHARD C. DUJARDIN
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Samuel J. Stepak, a Navy veteran who took part in seven invasions during World War II and played a prominent role at Temple Beth El on the city's East Side as a Sunday school teacher and as executive director, is being mourned by hundreds of friends and acquaintances who were moved by his passing.

PASSAGES

Stepak, who died Sunday at the age of 90, was known by many at the Reform Jewish temple for his quiet supervision of the minyan, a men's prayer group that has met each day except Friday since the 1950s.

Rabbi Leslie Gutterman says that while Stepak didn't start the group, he helped make it what it is today, "the longest continuing daily prayer service of any Reform congregation in the United States."

"He would greet and train newcomers and train people to be leaders," recounted the rabbi, who observed that Stepak became the temple's executive director in 1970, the same year that Gutterman arrived on the scene as an assistant rabbi.

The rabbi recalls the former executive director as a "lovely, caring" man. "He was a mensch, by which I mean a full human being. His utter decency, goodness, outstretched arm to do a good job, his benign presence while doing good works without fanfare, all made him beloved. It's no surprise there was such large outpouring at his funeral."

Along with his wife, Lynn, to whom he was married for nearly 65 years, and other senior citizens, Stepak became heavily involved during the last decade in the production of the cable-television show *Senior Journal*, a weekly half-hour program produced under the auspices of the state Department of Elderly Affairs.

Stepak, who would usually serve as one of the cameramen, said in an interview two years ago that he always looked forward to Thursdays. "When I hear it's television day, I can't wait to get to the studio.

A son of the late Lewis and Bessie (Cohen) Stepak, he sold newspapers as a boy in front of the Loew's State Theater in downtown Providence, and later worked for the Leesona Corp. and the U.S. Postal Service. He and his wife lived at Highland Court on Highland Avenue.

Besides his wife, he is survived by a son and daughter, Steve and Jane, and a grandson, Gabriel. His funeral was at the Sugarman-Sinai Funeral Home where he worked for many years and his burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery in Warwick.

rdujardi@projo.com / (401) 277-7384

9-4-09