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TEMKIN, TAMARA B. (BACKMAN)

TEMKIN, TAMARA B. (BACKMAN), of Providence, a retired Classical High School math teacher, died December 22, 2005 at the Philip Hulitar Inpatient Hospice Center. She was the wife of the late Jacob S. Temkin, Providence lawyer and former U.S. Attorney for the District of Rhode Island under President Eisenhower.

Born in Providence, the daughter of the late Charles A. and Rosalie (Gordon) Backman, she lived in Providence all her life. She graduated from Classical High School and Brown University, where she majored in mathematics and was elected to both Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Psi, and where she later did graduate work in mathematics under a National Science Foundation grant.

During World War II, she had a weekly radio program on behalf of the US Civil Service Commission, for which she was a representative. She also did radio broadcasts to promote the founding of Israel. She was a member of Temple Beth-El.

She taught calculus at Classical High School, retiring in 1985. A 1994 Providence Journal article by Bob Chiappinelli reported on how in the early 1970's, she had recognized the innate brilliance of a local student named John Laterra, and surprised his parents and him by recommending that he should become a doctor and focus on research. When he went on to a nationally prominent career researching the cellular and molecular biology of the brain at Johns Hopkins, he credited her with playing a key role. A math wiz, she was also expert at crossword puzzles, a master chef, an avid reader, and in her younger days wrote speeches for many political figures.

She is survived by two sons, both of whom are lawyers, Dean N. Temkin of Providence and Charles B. Temkin of Washington, D.C., and two grandchildren Jacqueline L. Temkin and Nicholas B. Temkin of Washington, D.C. She was the sister of the late Myles S. Backman.

Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, December 27th at 10 AM at Sugarman Sinai Memorial Chapel, 458 Hope Street, Providence. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Brown University, Box 1893, Providence, RI 02912 or to Home & Hospice Care of Rhode Island, 169 George Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860. Shiva will be private.