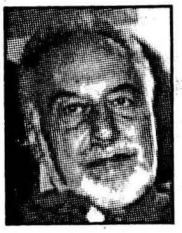
PJ - 6-9-1999

**LEONARD YANKU,** 73, of 53 Circuit Drive, a patriarch of Rhode Island Amateur Wrestling, and founder of the Rhode Island Over 50 Softball League, died Monday at home. He was the husband of Esther (Lecht) Yanku.



Born in Providence, he was a son of the late Bernard and Rose (Katz) Yanku. Mr. Yanku was inducted into the Rhode Island Amateur Wrestling Hall of Fame in 1980, and was a prominent member of the amateur wrestling scene on the state, regional, and national levels.

He had been a coach and an amateur wrestling referee since 1955. He was a member of the board of the Eastern College Athletic Conference, a past president of the New England Intercollegiate Wrestling Official Association, a member of the New England Prep and High School Wrestling Official Association, and the Rhode Island Wrestling Officials Association.

He was an amateur athletic union referee, and officiated at the 1960, 1964, and 1968 Olympic wrestling trials. He was the wrestling coach of the Quonset Point Wrestling Team, which was an All-Service champion team for three years.

He helped found the Rhody Grapplers in the 1960s, and was a competitor and Gold Medalist in the Rhode Island Senior Olympics from 1980-1984.

In 1982 he was the founder, organizer, and commissioner of the Rhode Island Over 50 Softball League, which has grown to include over 26 teams.

He was probation and parole counselor for the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, Division of Probation and Parole, from 1959 until 1977, and a supervisor, from 1977 until he retired in 1983.

He was a reporter/writer for radio station WLKW from 1965 until 1975, and a schoolboy sports reporter for the Providence Journal from 1955 until 1965.

He was a graduate of Brown University, where he founded, and was a member of, the wrestling team, and where he played on the football team. He was a religious instructor at Temple Sinai in Cranston, and a docent and tour guide for Downtown Providence, College Hill, and Roger Williams Park Zoo. He was an Army veteran of World War II.

He leaves three sons, Robert Yanku of Lorton, Va., Alan Yanku of Lincoln, and Steven Yanku of Cranston; two daughters, Sharyn Yanku Wilk and Lisa Yanku Maroni, both of Cranston; a sister, Miriam Seagal of Van Nuys, Calif.; 12 grandchildren; and his wife.

The funeral service will be held today at 11 a.m. in the Max Sugarman Memorial Chapel, Hope Street, Providence. Burial will be in Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery, Exeter.

YANKU, LEONARD

**YANKU, Leonard**

June 7, 1999. Residence: Circuit Dr., Cranston. Devoted father of Sharyn Yanku Wilk, Cranston; Lisa Yanku Maroni, Cranston; Robert Yanku, Lorton, Va.; Alan Yanku, Lincoln; and Steven Yanku, Cranston. Dear brother of Miriam Seagal, CA. Grandfather of twelve. He was married to Esther (Lecht) Yanku. Funeral services Wednesday at 11 a.m. MAX SUGARMAN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 458 Hope St. (corner of Doyle Ave.), Providence. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Providence Athenaeum, 251 Benefit St., Providence, R.I. 02903. Shiva will be observed at the home of Mr. Alan Yanku, 18 East Butterfly Way, Lincoln, Wednesday and Thursday 2-4 and 7-9, Friday 2-4.

HIGHLAND MEMORIAL Park: (2) located in Garden of Tranquility, $1700/both. 252-771-2832