Melvin L. Zurier



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Melvin L. Zurier, age 95, passed away unexpectedly Friday, August 23, 2024 at his residence. He was the husband of the late Janet (Rosen) Zurier, with whom he shared 71 years of marriage.

Born in Providence, Mel was the son of the late Louis and Frances (Gordon) Zurier, and brother of the late Hilda Glickman and Rosalind Gever. A lifelong resident of the city, he grew up among a close-knit group of relatives who helped support him and his sisters after their parents' deaths.

Mel was among the first generation of his family to be born in the United States and was the first to pursue higher education. With their encouragement, he attended the Henry Barnard School, Classical High School, and Harvard College. He obtained a commission in the Air Force Reserve while at Harvard, and deferred service for three years to attend Harvard Law School. On July 4, 1950, he met the love of his life, Janet Rosen of Allentown, Pennsylvania. They married on July 4, 1951 after a whirlwind courtship.

On completing law school, Mel enlisted in the US Air Force Reserve in the Judge Advocate General Corps, posted to a variety of bases including an extended tour at Sonderstrom Air Force Base in Greenland. Looking to follow that assignment with sunshine, he finished out his commitment in San Francisco. Eventually, he would retire as a Colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

Missing Providence and New England foliage, Mel and his young family returned to Rhode Island in 1957 finding work as an attorney, before getting appointed Executive Counsel to Governor John Notte. Subsequently, in 1962, Mel was a founding member of the law firm Temkin, Merolla & Zurier where he worked for nearly 20 years. Later he practiced with Levy, Goodman, Licht & Semonoff through 2008.

As part of a career-long commitment to service, Zurier was Chairman of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, and served as President of Temple Beth El, and also of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. He was involved with a wealth of charitable, political and educational organizations, including the Classical High School Varsity Club, and the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

He is survived by: four children, Rebecca Zurier and her husband Thomas Willette of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Samuel Zurier and his wife Lauren of Providence; Benjamin Zurier and his wife Linda Movish of New York City; and Sarah Zurier and her husband Jonathan Bell of Providence; eight grandchildren, Rachel Zurier and her husband Daniel Fishman; Jack, Hannah, William and Joseph Zurier, Nathan and Aaron Willette, and Zachary Bell, as well as many nieces and nephews.

His Funeral Service will be held on Monday, August 26, 2024 at 1:00 pm in Temple Beth El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Shiva will be observed on Monday and Tuesday at Laurelmead from 7:00 to 9:00pm.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Classical High School Alumni Association, 11 S. Angell St., Providence, RI 02906. Arrangements are in the care of Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel. For condolences, www.sugarmansinai.com

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