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Myron S. Isaacs, civil and human rights advocate, dies

By Ruth Mayer
Staff Writer

Myron S. Isaacs, a lawyer and longtime civil and human rights advocate, died Tuesday of pneumonia at White Plains Hospital Medical Center. He was 77.

He had lived in White Plains since 1957.

Mr. Isaacs, a lawyer with a private practice in White Plains, was a founder and the first president of the board of directors of Westchester Legal Services Inc. in White Plains, which provides free legal services to poor people in civil disputes. Last year, he was honored for his longtime service at the organization's 20th anniversary dinner, said his son, John D. Isaacs of Washington, D.C.

"He was sensitive to the problems that poor people have with the legal system," said Gerald Norlander, executive director of Westchester Legal Services Inc.

Norlander credited Mr. Isaacs with doing much of the "unglamorous hard work" involved in establishing the legal services organization.

Fellow lawyer Robert Levine, who met Mr. Isaacs in 1965 while doing volunteer legal work in Mississippi, described Mr. Isaacs as a man who was "concerned with the rule of law and making sure all people were represented."

"Any person who had a legitimate cause and needed help, he would do what he could," Levine said.

In some ways, Mr. Isaacs's volunteer work was inspired by his family, his son John said. "There's been a long history of public service in his family. His father was a former borough president in New York City and a longtime Republican politician." He described his



Myron S. Isaacs

father as a person with a "strong streak of compassion and caring for others, especially for the least fortunate in society."

In addition to his continuing board membership with

Westchester Legal Services Inc., Mr. Isaacs was a member of the board of directors and a former president of Hamilton-Madison House, a settlement house in Manhattan that was founded to help immigrants settle in the United States.

From the 1960s through the 1980s, he volunteered his services to numerous local organizations. He served as chairman of the White Plains Human Rights Commission, vice president of the Westchester Chapter of the American Jewish Committee and as a board member of the Urban League of Westchester.

He also was an officer in organizations, including the Westchester Citizens' Housing Council; the Correctional Association of New York; the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center in Manhattan, an organization named after his father; the Westchester Civil Liberties Union; the Westchester Council on Crime and Delinquency; and the Westchester Community Opportunity Program.

During the last decade, Mr. Isaacs had worked with long-term

prisoners at the Bedford Correctional Facility.

Born June 13, 1911, in Manhattan, to Stanley and Edith Somborn Isaacs, he graduated from Horace Mann High School in Manhattan. He then earned degrees from Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., and Yale Law School in New Haven, Conn.

After serving as a special assistant to the U.S. attorney general and as a lawyer with a private practice in Manhattan, Mr. Isaacs spent a year working for the Bureau of Internal Revenue in New York City. From 1942 to 1955, he served in various legal capacities for the Securities and Exchange Commission in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and in 1955, he returned to private practice. After working for law firms in New York City, he settled into a private practice in White Plains.

Mr. Isaacs was a member of the Jewish Community Center in White Plains and the American Jewish Committee. He also was a member of the Greater White Plains Council of Community Services.

On April 16, 1937, he married Helen S. Salant in Manhattan.

In addition to his wife of White Plains and his son John of Washington, he is survived by two daughters, Jane Toussaint of Paris and Leni Isaacs Boorstin of Studio City, Calif.; a son, Stanley S. of Palo Alto, Calif.; a sister, Helen Isaacs Herrick of Manhattan and Sicily; and nine grandchildren.

ISAACS, Myron S. on September 13, 1988 in White Plains NY, after 77 years & after a lifetime characterized by compassion & caring for the less fortunate in society. Husband for 51 years of Helen Salant Isaacs, father of 4 children Stanley, Jane Isaacs Toussaint, John, Leni Isaacs Boorstin; grandfather of 9. Private Funeral Friday. Date of Memorial Service to be announced. Donations in his memory may be made to the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center or Hamilton-Madison House in Manhattan.

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