

# Stolberg, Irving J.

Hartford Courant - February 15, 2009

## **STOLBERG, Irving J.**

Irving J. Stolberg of New Haven, twice Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives, died peacefully February 13, 2009 after a year-long battle with leukemia. He was surrounded by loved ones at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford, a facility he helped establish.

He was born September 24, 1936 in Philadelphia, the son of the late Ralph Stolberg and the late Lillian Blank Alpert. He grew up primarily in Los Angeles where he graduated from U.C.L.A. in International Relations in 1958. He earned an M.A. and completed course work and all exams for a Ph.D. in Geography and African Studies from Boston University. In recognition of his public service to democracy, he received a Juris. Dr. Hon. from the University of Hartford on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. He taught Geography at both Southern Connecticut State University and Quinnipiac University and as an Africanist did research in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

Stolberg served twenty-two years in the Connecticut House of Representatives. He was a member of virtually all committees of the General Assembly, chairing Human Services, Intern, Legislative Management and Finance. He led the initiative that brought more progressive tax policies to Connecticut and was instrumental in establishing the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. As President of the National Conference of State Legislatures, he held the highest state legislative office in the land and later served as President of the Foundation for State Legislatures.

A devoted internationalist who sought to build democracy around the world and to strengthen instruments for peaceful resolution of conflicts among human beings, Stolberg was until recently the President of the Connecticut Division of the United Nations Association (UNA) and prided himself in producing the widely-distributed UNA Calendar for Peace. He was elected to the UNA national Board of Directors and in 2006 he was elected to represent the United States on the Executive Committee of the World Federation of UNAs (WFUNA). He was a consultant to UNESCO. He was a true global citizen, traveling to more than 90 countries, conducting many cultural exchange tours to Asia and Africa. He visited China twenty two times, lecturing at several universities and other institutions. He helped develop training programs at American universities for more than 700 Chinese Provincial Officials, many placed in New Haven. Among his numerous accolades, in 2004 he received the Qilu Friendship Award and Medal from the government of Shandong Province. He helped with the democratization process in Eastern Europe, especially in Bulgaria, and played a part in drafting Brazil's Constitution.

Delegate to six Democratic National Conventions and for many years a member of the Democratic National Committee, Stolberg was a founder and President of the Caucus of

Connecticut Democrats. President Clinton appointed him to the Commission on the Preservation of American Culture Abroad. On the Commission he had the lead responsibility for relations with Slovakia, Ukraine and Moldova.

Stolberg was a fellow at Yale's Calhoun College. Among his many interests, he was an avid mineralogist and was an active member of the New Haven Mineral Club. He was a serious collector of African art and a passionate tennis player. He was a fan of UConn athletics.

He is survived by his son Robert of San Jose, California, former wife, Alicia Barela of Los Gatos, California, a brother Roger of La Costa, California, a sister Melody Gentry of La Jolla, California and a brother Frank Alpert of Brisbane, Australia. He was predeceased by a brother Ronald of Los Angeles. Memorial services in Connecticut and Southern California will be held later with advanced public notice. In lieu of flowers, he requested that gifts be made to UNA-CT and to the American Friends Service Committee.