

Michael P. Koskoff, prominent Bridgeport attorney, dies at 77

by Phil Hall
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• • • • Michael P. Koskoff, a Bridgeport-based lawyer who gained prominence for representing nationally recognized clients including the Black Panther Party and the family of Michael Jackson, died today at the age of 77.



Michael Koskoff Photo courtesy Quinnipiac University

A graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Law, Koskoff became a trial lawyer in 1966, joining his father Theodore Koskoff in the firm Koskoff Koskoff & Bieder, which was founded in 1936. His legal focus covered diverse subjects ranging from medical malpractice, aviation, personal injury and drug product liability.

He entered the media spotlight in 1970 by teaming with his father as part of the defense team representing members of the Black Panther Party in a series of 1970 trials in New Haven related to the murder of Black Panther member Alex Rackley, who was suspected by his comrades of being a federal informant. In the 1970s and 1980s, Koskoff worked with black police and fire

organizations in Bridgeport and New Haven, and in 1999 he was lead counsel in a class-action case accusing the state of Connecticut of illegal wiretapping that resulted in a \$17 million settlement.

Koskoff was also part of the legal team retained by the family of Michael Jackson in their lawsuit against Anschutz Entertainment Group and its concert promotion subsidiary, AEG Live, in connection to the pop singer's drug-induced death in 2009.

During his career, Koskoff served as a member of the advisory board of the Quinnipiac College School of Law and for many years was appointed by the U.S. District Court in Connecticut as co-chairman of the Special Masters Program. He also served as president of the Inner Circle, which the National Law Journal defined as "a fraternity of superstar personal injury litigators," and in 2008 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association.

Outside of the courts, Koskoff studied acting with the American Shakespeare Academy and collaborated with his son Jacob on the screenplay of the 2017 film "Marshall," about the life of Thurgood Marshall.

Koskoff was a Westport resident and is survived by his wife, Roz, and their children Josh, Jacob and Sarah