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UPDATED: Pioneering Connecticut Attorney Michael Koskoff Has Died

Litigator Michael Koskoff of Koskoff Koskoff & Bieder was president of the Connecticut [chapter](#) of the American Board of Trial Advocates. He died Wednesday morning.

By **Robert Storace** | April 24, 2019 at 12:26 PM



Michael Koskoff. Courtesy photo.

Michael Koskoff, a longtime Connecticut attorney, screenwriter and former president of the Connecticut chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates, died early Wednesday morning.

Widely known for his decades of courtroom litigation experience, as well as his sharp intellect and humor, Koskoff was senior attorney at Bridgeport's Koskoff Koskoff & Bieder, which his father founded. He died from complications of pancreatic cancer.

Koskoff was 77 years old. He was Connecticut's only member of the Inner Circle of Advocates, an organization limited to the top 100 trial lawyers in the nation, according to the law firm's website.

The litigator had a wide circle of friends from across the country, including attorney David Rosen, who, after watching Koskoff and his father represent Black Panther Lonnie McLucas in a 1969 New Haven courtroom, knew he had a friend for life.

Rosen, of New Haven's David Rosen and Associates, had represented legendary Black Panther Bobby Seale, and was in awe watching Koskoff, a lawyer for only three years at the time, represent his client in court.

"His father [Ted Koskoff] was the lead counsel, but Mike handled major portions of the case," Rosen said. "He was tough, charming, tremendously effective and as smart as a whip."

The law firm announced his death by stating that the noted attorney "spent his entire career working to thwart injustice, stop corporate and governmental abuse, and give a strong voice to the disenfranchised."

Koskoff's firm credits him with numerous multimillion-dollar jury verdicts and out-of-court settlements. The litigator was a frequent lecturer. A major medical malpractice case he and his firm handled became the subject of "[Damages](#)," a nationally acclaimed book by Barry Werth. Another medical

malpractice case made national headlines and saw a jury award \$12.2 million to a Yale University intern who contracted [HIV](#) during [training](#).

But outside the courtroom, Koskoff was also “enormously fun, enormously interesting and enormously engaged with the people who were with him,” said Rosen, a friend of 50 years who remained in [close](#) contact.

The two lawyers last saw each other this past weekend, when Koskoff was in a hospital bed. Although Koskoff was very sick, Rosen said, “There was not a trace of self-pity.”

“He was completely himself. He was smiling and he was engaged,” Rosen said. “He was too engaged in the world and his family and friends and ideas and things that interested him to have room for self-pity.”

Koskoff had been a trial lawyer since 1966. He spent his early days as an attorney alongside his father Theodore defending the Black Panthers. Most recently, he joined his son Josh in representing several of the Sandy Hook families in their lawsuit against gun maker Remington Arms Co. LLC.

In his role as a member of the Inner Circle of Advocates, Koskoff became friends with the group’s president, Joseph Power Jr. of Chicago-based Power Rogers and Smith, who said the Connecticut attorney “was always there for the little guy.”

“He was such a great attorney. He could do a malpractice case, a trucking case, a defamation case and he’d take on gun makers. He’d take on anyone. Mike was fearless,” Power said.

Power said he last saw Koskoff on a video conference in February, during one of Koskoff’s last assignments—the Sandy Hook case with his son.

“He joined us from a conference room at the hospital. You’d never know Mike was in the hospital as he was so full of life,” Power said. “He was so funny and had a wonderful sense of humor. He just had this presence about him. He knew people so well. He was insightful and brought determination and strength and insight into anything he pursued.”

Koskoff also dabbled in the movies. Along with another son, Jacob, he **wrote the screenplay to “Marshall,”** which became a major motion picture about a case early in the career of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and highlighted the racial injustice of the time.