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## Richard A. Bieder of law firm Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder dies at 80

By Kevin Zimmerman

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High-profile attorney Richard A. Bieder, of the Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder firm, died Jan. 16 at his home in Stamford. The cause was complications from Lewy Body Disease.



As senior partner at the firm – whose offices include locations in Bridgeport and Danbury – Bieder fought for victims in class action suits resulting from state and national mass disasters, battled insurance companies and other powerful institutions and fought for the unempowered.

He represented victims and families from the L’Ambiance Plaza building collapse in Bridgeport; the Dupont Plaza Hotel fire in San Juan, Puerto Rico; families of individuals

killed in the Oklahoma City bombing; and investors bilked by the Colonial Realty Empire.

After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Bieder helped organize a network of lawyers nationwide to create Trial Lawyers Care (TLC), believed to be the largest pro bono legal program in the history of the U.S. The American Association for Justice (then known as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America or ATLA) developed TLC to assist families eligible to file claims under the Government September 11 Victim Compensation Fund.

Bieder collaborated with Kenneth R. Feinberg, Special Master of the Victims Fund, to help families find volunteer lawyers to represent them and represented 19 clients, most of whom were from Connecticut. Bieder served as president of TLC from 2003-04.

He represented a family suing Connecticut's Department of Correction over the death of a mentally ill inmate by correction officers and medical staff, settling for \$3.2million. He also represented the family of a 20-year-old inmate who hung himself while in custody.

Bieder was appointed by a Federal Judge to be a federal special master overseeing ongoing litigation between the city of Hartford and its substantial minority population involving several issues from 2001-09. He was co-founder of the Connecticut Child Justice Foundation that provided free representation for children in the Department of Children and Families custody.

Outside the U.S., Bieder was a member of lawyers' organizations and lectured in Argentina, Australia, Netherlands, Ireland and South Africa on topics ranging from product safety to misconduct of insurance companies to trial lawyer techniques and most persuasive arguments. He produced multiple instructional audiotapes and DVDs designed to assist young trial lawyers.

Bieder was born in Stamford on Sept. 26, 1940. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance in 1962 and New York University Law School in 1965.

From 1965-68 he served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy's Judge Advocate General Corps, ultimately stationed at the Naval Air Station in Subic Bay, the Philippines.

After the Navy, Richard returned to Connecticut to begin his 40-year career as a trial lawyer. He joined the firm headed by Ted Koskoff in Bridgeport in 1969. At that time, the senior Koskoff and his son Michael P. Koskoff were preparing a case defending the Black Panthers.

In 1972 the firm became Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder. After Ted Koskoff's death in 1989, Bieder and Michael P. Koskoff successfully guided the firm's growth, productivity and philanthropy into the 21st century. Michael died in 2019.

Bieder received several awards, among them a citation from the Connecticut Legislature and the Stamford branch of the NAACP. The Fairfield County branch of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) praised him for outstanding legal effort, dedication and support for a case that overturned Connecticut law by making persons who served liquor to minors liable in negligence.

Among other awards, Bieder was the first recipient of the Driscoll/Tianti Memoria Award, given by the Connecticut AFL/CIO, UConn Labor Education Center, and Connecticut AFL-CIO Women's and Civil Rights Committee in recognition of his contributions to workplace safety and health.

He also received lifetime achievement awards from the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association and the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association; the Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and the National Board of Trial Advocacy; and the Pro-Bono Award from the Connecticut Law Tribune.

His wife, Bonnie Logie Bieder, predeceased him. His survivors include his son, Erik Bieder of Norwalk; his daughter, Julie Robson of Surf City, North Carolina; his sister, Joan Bieder of Kensington, California; his sister-in-law, Linda McCarthy of Branford; five grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

Due to Covid-19 there will be no funeral services and the burial will be private. A memorial service will be held at a future date.