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# Connecticut **LawTribune**

## Tributes Pour In for Famed Connecticut Tort Lawyer Richard Bieder, Who Died Jan. 16

Connecticut attorney Richard Bieder, known for representing victims of state and national disasters, has died. He was 80.

By **Robert Storage** | January 19, 2021 at 04:13 PM



Attorney Richard Bieder of Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder in Bridgeport. Courtesy photo

Remembered as a socially conscious attorney who mentored many and represented clients in class actions suits resulting from state and national mass disasters, longtime Connecticut attorney Richard Bieder died Jan. 16.

Bieder, a Stamford resident, was 80 years old. He was ill the last several years and died from complications from Lewy body dementia.

As a senior partner at Koskoff Koskoff & Bieder in Bridgeport beginning in 1972, Bieder represented victims and families from the L'Ambiance Plaza building collapse in Bridgeport; the Dupont Plaza Hotel fire in San Juan, Puerto Rico; survivors and relatives of people killed and injured in the Sept. 11, 2001, World Trade Center attack; and families of individuals killed in the Oklahoma City bombing, among others.

“Richard Bieder, more than any other lawyer in Connecticut, made the mass tort causes of action a reality. There’s a reason why Ralph Nader was attracted to tort lawyers as a force to achieve justice in public safety and economic restitution, and Richard Bieder did a good job helping ordinary individuals go up against big corporations,” said [Thomas Scheffey](#), a friend of Bieder and an attorney in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as well as member of the Connecticut Law Tribune editorial board.

Koskoff managing partner James Horwitz joined the firm 35 years ago and said Bieder became a fast friend and mentor.

“He was the heart and soul of our office. As a young lawyer, if I had a question that I was trying to figure out, he’d put down what he was doing and sit down with you and spend as much time that needed to be spent to sort through whatever the issue was,” Horwitz said Tuesday.

Horwitz continued: “His legacy is to remind us that we, as lawyers, have great responsibility and that we should be prepared to take on the fight for the little guy; for the people affected by greed or injustice. He was a gentleman, but not a pushover. He was tenacious.”

Horwitz said it was Bieder’s involvement with helping create Trial Lawyers Care that meant so much to him. Soon after Sept, 11, 2001, Bieder helped organize a network of lawyers nationwide to create Trial Lawyers Care, believed to be the largest pro bono legal program in the country’s history. Horwitz said the group assisted families eligible to file claims under the government’s September 11 Victim Compensation Fund.

“He felt it was part of the responsibility of good citizens and good lawyers to reach out to other people in need. He felt it was the right thing to do. They helped get billions of dollars in compensation for that fund,” Horwitz said.

Attorneys Alex Knopp and Robert Reardon Jr. were friends of Bieder and both said his loss over the weekend hit them hard.

“Richard Bieder embodied the socially conscious crusading litigator who wanted to use tort law as a sword against unjust laws and unaccountable wrongdoers and to help bring about a safer society. He was an energetic and dogged in his representation of clients against big institutions,” said Knopp, a retired attorney and former Norwalk mayor.

Reardon, principal at The Reardon Law Firm in New London, knew Bieder for 40 years. The two men and their wives, and often Reardon’s two daughters, would travel together to various conventions that either the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association or the Association of Trial Lawyers of America would sponsor. In fact, they traveled together at least once every year from 1982 to 2015.

Reardon said he and Bieder had a Brooklyn, New York, bond as both of their fathers were from the borough and they'd often "tell stories of what old guys in Brooklyn shared." Their wives both enjoyed the arts and bonded over that.

"Whenever you saw Richard across the room, he broke out in a big smile. He never seemed to be down; always up. He'd also hug us every time he saw us. He was just a warm and loving guy," Reardon said.