

## OBITUARIES

# William Tomar, 86, lawyer who thrived in S. Jersey

By Joseph A. Gambardello  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

William Tomar, 86, a prominent trial lawyer from Cherry Hill who stayed close to his South Jersey roots, died Wednesday at an assisted-living facility in Potomac, Md.

Mr. Tomar, who had been senior partner of the former Tomar, O'Brien, Kaplan, Jacoby & Graziano, served on the boards of several institutions, including Cooper Hospital-University Medical Center in Camden, the Haddonfield Symphony, and local chapters of the Boy Scouts of America, American Red Cross and Salvation Army.

He had lived in the same house in the Barclay Farm development in Cherry Hill from its construction in 1958 until June, when his wife, Bette, died and he moved to Summerville Senior Living at Potomac.

A 1939 graduate of what is now the Rutgers University School of Law in Camden, Mr. Tomar was admitted to the bar the next year.

"He was the last of the breed of lawyer who did everything," said his son Richard Tomar, also a lawyer. "Now everybody specializes in something."

After serving as a captain in Army intelligence during World War II, Mr. Tomar went into

partnership with another lawyer, Albert Plone, in 1948.

Mr. Tomar eventually saw his firm grow to 60 lawyers and was honored by his law school as one of its 50 finest graduates.

Michael Kulzer, a Haddonfield lawyer, called Mr. Tomar

"a very dignified professional" who always dressed well, was well-organized, had a good speaking voice, and was respected in the field.

"Like many old-time attorneys, he was always very courteous," Kulzer said. "The fact he was your adversary did not detract from that."

Mr. Tomar was a national parliamentarian for the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and received numerous honors from the legal profession.

In 1987, his firm won a major case against the DuPont Co. when a Superior Court jury in Camden found the chemical giant was responsible for the asbestos-related illnesses of six of the company's New Jersey workers.

In a 1975 federal suit, Mr. Tomar represented then-State Sen. Alene Ammond, who had been barred from Democratic caucus meetings after she reported details of caucus deliberations to the media. A judge ruled in Ammond's favor, and she was readmitted to the caucus. Am-

mond is now a Republican.

Mr. Tomar was born in Camden to immigrant parents from Lithuania and lived in the city until 1958.

"He was a real South Jersey guy," Richard Tomar said, noting the family also had a Shore house in Margate.

When fire destroyed their Barclay Farm home in the 1970s, Mr. Tomar and his wife rebuilt it.

"He was an incredible handyman," Richard Tomar said. "He could build furniture and renovate houses."

The son, who lives in Potomac, said his father had been an avid sportsman who enjoyed sailing and skiing and had even sky-dived.

In 1993, Mr. Tomar helped arrange and took part in an Operation Smile trip to Vietnam, where American doctors performed surgery on children to repair facial birth defects.

"He thought it was wonderfully inspiring," his son said. "They operated in very rough conditions, and they made a big impact."

Mr. Tomar also is survived by another son, Jonathan, 11 grandchildren, and a sister.

A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday at Platt Memorial Chapels, 2001 Berlin Rd., Cherry Hill. Interment will be in Crescent Memorial Park, Pennsauken.

Memorial donations may be made to the Haddonfield Symphony, 41 S. Haddon Ave., Haddonfield, N.J. 08033, or Operation Smile, 6435 Tidewater Dr., Norfolk, Va. 23509.

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William Tomar lived 45 years in Cherry Hill.