

Half Staff – Richard Ross

September 11, 2001

SBYC Member – Sailing Vessel “Traveler II”

RICHARD B. ROSS, 58, CEO OF BOSTON CONSULTING FIRM

Richard B. Ross, a Boston business consultant who on a whim would sing a Frank Sinatra tune as an excuse to dance with one of his daughters, died aboard American Airlines Flight 11 in New York City, when it crashed into the World Trade Center on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. He was 58.

Mr. Ross, of Newton, was a Dorchester native who went straight from high school to his first job – selling baby furniture door-to-door. He was president and chief executive officer of The Ross Group, a consulting firm specializing in the employee relationships of clients ranging from small family businesses to Fortune 500 companies.

By some accounts a hopeless romantic, Mr. Ross was also frequently described as the epitome of a nattily dressed mensch, the Yiddish word for a down-to-earth, good soul. Disqualified from serving in Vietnam because of a back injury, Mr. Ross was leader of his platoon in the Army Reserves. Most recently he was education chairman of the New England Young President’s Organization 49ers.

He co-founded the Brain Tumor Society and was a member of the Chief Executives Organization, the Leadership Council at the Kennedy School’s Center of Business and Government at Harvard University, and the board of trustees of Shakespeare & Company.

For 15 years he coached three sports in Newton as his children went through the baseball, basketball, and soccer programs. No one recalls him ever missing a weekend commitment. He and his wife also co-managed one of the Rosses’ most hallowed institutions, the Friday night family dinner. First they would say the Sabbath blessing and then individually find something for which to give thanks.

For Mr. Ross, this invariably included acknowledgment of a recent blessing from his wife or a family member or a friend – or frequently all three. He leaves his wife, Judi (Rotenberg); two daughters, Abigail of Boston and Alison of New York City; a son, Franklin, of Newton; and two sisters, Rochelle Gordon of Canton and Irene of Jamaica Plain.

A funeral is scheduled for noon tomorrow in Temple Israel in Boston.