

[Romoda, Joseph J.]

DR. J.J. ROMODA, VICE PRESIDENT OF S.L.U., DIES AT 59

Special to the Times

CANTON—Dr. Joseph J. Romoda, 59, vice president of St. Lawrence university and dean of the college of letters and science at the university, died unexpectedly of a heart attack Monday afternoon at 1:05 at Syracuse Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Romoda was stricken with a heart attack Saturday while in Syracuse to testify in a court matter involving the university. He was taken immediately to the hospital.

Dr. Romoda had suffered a mild coronary attack on June 5, 1962, during a fishing trip to Bob's lake, north of Kingston.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Ruth Whitnall Romoda; two sons, Lieut. Thomas H. Romoda, with the army in Vietnam, and Alan J. Romoda, a student at Syracuse university; his mother and two sisters.

Born in Chicago on Nov. 13, 1907, a son of Edward and Ann Kriston Romoda, he attended high school in Lorain, O., and was graduated from St. Lawrence university in 1933, magna cum laude. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

While a student at S.L.U., Dr. Romoda was president of the Thelomathesian society, the student government body; president of the student council; managing editor of the student literary magazine, and a member of Kixioc, senior honor society.

Before attending college, Dr. Romoda held a variety of part-time jobs while a student in high school. These were in the industrial and farm fields, and for two years he was a part-time reporter and feature writer for a daily newspaper in Lorain, O.

Following graduation from St. Lawrence, he taught a variety of subjects and coached baseball, football and forensics at Webster high school while completing studies for his master of arts degree in education, which he received from St. Lawrence in 1937. He joined the Syracuse University faculty in 1937 and served as an instructor and administrative officer in the school of education while completing requirements for a doctor of philosophy degree, which he received in 1942.

Dean Romoda entered the navy in 1943 as a lieutenant (j.g.) and served as an operational and instructor training officer for the Third Naval district and later saw combat service aboard a light cruiser during the Okinawa and Iwo Jima campaigns. He was separated in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant commander and was retired a commander in the naval reserve.

He joined the St. Lawrence faculty in January, 1946, as head of the department of education and director of the summer session. Later that

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year he became the director of the university's Collegiate Center in Watertown. He was named dean of the college of letters and science at St. Lawrence in 1949, succeeding R. Finney Markham, who resigned. He assumed the additional position of vice president in 1963.

For the past 17 years Dr. Romoda directed the Frederick A. Moran Memorial Institute on Delinquency and Crime, held annually on the St. Lawrence campus. He received a citation signed by Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller in 1964 for his "brilliant, dynamic, untiring and effective accomplishment" in his work on the institute.

The citation, a surprise to Dr. Romoda, was presented by Paul D. McGinnis, commissioner of correction for New York state, who also presented the dean with a portrait painted by an inmate of a state's prison. The prisoner, being rehabilitated under a statewide program, made the large painting from photographs of Dr. Romoda.

"Joe, I want you to know that we have a lot of talent within the state correctional system and not all of it comes from paid civil servants," quipped the commissioner just before the presentation.

In 1950 and again in 1960, Dr. Romoda was appointed to the White House Conferences on Children and Youth.

Since 1965 he had served as general secretary of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity, in which he had been active since his undergraduate days, serving as vice president and a trustee of the national organization.

He was a member of the board of directors of the First National Bank of Canton. He was a member of the Universalist-Unitarian church and was a founder of the St. Lawrence Valley association. He was also active in the local chamber of commerce and the Stillwater club and many professional educational organizations.

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Transcribed on 23 Jan 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY