

Frederick Centanni, Sylvania official, specialist in economic development

Former Massachusetts commissioner of commerce and development Frederick A. Centanni of Cambridge died Monday in Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge of cancer. He was 61.

A registered Democrat, he was appointed to the state commerce post by former Republican governor Francis Sargent in January 1973. Mr. Centanni resigned the post in 1975 after serving briefly in the incoming administration of Gov. Michael Dukakis to ensure an orderly transfer of work.

Sargent's appointment of Centanni, a noted manpower and training authority, was viewed at the time as an attempt by the governor to win favor with the state's business community. The Massachusetts economy at the time was not good, according to press reports.

Considered a specialist in economic development, Mr. Centanni was once called a "scientist-cum engineer-cum educator" in a news feature story. Before taking the post he had lectured nationally and internationally, mostly in Central and Latin America.

A Cambridge native, he was a retired Sylvania Co. executive who had worked for the Atomic Energy Commission, where from 1951 to 1958 he was supervisor of the fluorometric department, overseeing raw material development.

Since 1958, he had been manager of technical services in the Corrections Improvement Department of Sylvania Electronics.

Mr. Centanni was first chairman of the steering committee and a member of the first industrial advisory board for the Action for Community Development (ABCD).

He also had been a chairman of the Middlesex House of Correction Advisory Board where, among other things, he developed the first federally funded course in radio and television repair for prison inmates.



FREDERICK A. CENTANNI
1974 photo

He was a member of the first board of directors of the Cambridge Unified Health Hospitals and Welfare Department and he was a vice chairman of the state Manpower Planning Council subcommittee for police.

He was director of education and training systems design at GTE Governmental Systems in Waltham and was founder of the Sylvania technical schools. He wrote for hundreds of publications.

During World War II, he was a co-pilot in the Army Air Corps and flew many bombing missions over Europe from England.

After the war, he attended Northeastern University and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in education. He also studied chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Besides his son Ralph, he leaves his wife of 40 years, Incoronata (Colella) of Cambridge; four sons, Frederick Jr. of Cambridge, Arthur M. of Stoneham, Patrick D. of Melrose and Ralph T. of Malibu, Calif.; a sister, Josephine

Ales of Arlington, and two grandchildren.

A funeral Mass will be said at 10 a.m. Friday in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, East Cambridge. Burial will be in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

- WILLIAM P. COUGHLIN

The Boston Herald, Thursday, October 11, 1984

Frederick A. Centanni, ex-state commerce chief

A FUNERAL Mass for Frederick A. Centanni of Cambridge, director of education/training systems design at GTE Governmental Systems in Waltham, and former Commissioner of Commerce and Development for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will be said at 10 a.m. tomorrow in the Sacred Heart Church, East Cambridge.

He died Monday in Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, after a brief illness.

Centanni is internationally recognized in the field of economic development and in manpower programs. He founded Sylvania Technical Schools and was the author of hundreds of publications.

Born in Cambridge and a lifelong resident there, he served in the US Air Force during World War II.

After his return from active duty, he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master of education degree, both from Northeastern University.

He also studied specialized courses in chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

From 1951 to 1958, Centanni was supervisor of the fluorometric department of the Atomic Energy Commission Raw Materials Development Laboratory. Many of his publications at that time were presented at the Geneva Atoms for Peace Conference.

From 1958 to the present, he served as manager of technical services in the Corrections Improvement Department, and of manpower services at Sylvania Electronics.

In 1973, he was appointed by Gov. Francis Sargent to the position of Commissioner of Commerce and Development.

In addition, Centanni was the first chairman of the steering committee, and a member of the first industrial advisory board for Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD).

He was chairman of the Middlesex House of Correction advisory board, a member of the first board of directors for the Cambridge Unified Health, Hospitals and Welfare Department, vice-chairman of the state Manpower Planning Council Subcommittee for Policy.

Centanni received an Outstanding Citizen award for community assistance, and also was an invited speaker on the topic of women in the business sector before the US Senate.

He leaves his wife of 40 years, Incoronata (Millie) Colella; four sons, Frederick Jr. of Cambridge, Arthur M. of Stoneham, Patrick D. of Melrose, and Ralph T. Centanni of Malibu, Calif.; a sister, Josephine Ales of Arlington; and two grandchildren.

Interment will be in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.



City of Cambridge

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COUNCILLOR WALTER SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR VELLUCCI

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 15, 1984

- WHEREAS: This City Council was deeply saddened upon learning of the death of Frederick Centanni, a Cambridge native and former Commissioner of Commerce and Development for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and
- WHEREAS: Fred was considered a specialist in economic development, who was once called a "scientist-cum engineer-cum educator", who prior to being appointed by former Massachusetts Governor Francis Sargent as Commerce Commissioner had lectured both nationally and internationally, principally in Central and Latin America; and
- WHEREAS: Fred Centanni was a retired Sylvania Company executive who had worked for the Atomic Energy Commission, where from 1951 to 1958 he was Supervisor of the Fluorometric Department; and
- WHEREAS: Fred had long been active in local and state civic affairs and had held several advisory positions, including serving as Chairman of the Middlesex House of Correction Advisory Board where, among other things, he developed the first federally funded course in radio and television repair for prison inmates and he also served as Vice-Chairman of the Massachusetts Planning Council Sub-Committee for Police; and
- WHEREAS: Fred has always been active in the East Cambridge community and took pride in having been an early neighborhood activist for development and preservation of historical buildings; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its deepest sympathy to Mrs. Incoronata (Millie) Centanni and the entire Centanni family at this time of such personal loss; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That in recognition of the many years of service and tireless dedication Fred provided to the people of Cambridge and to the Commonwealth, that this City Council go on record naming the pedestrian walkway to be constructed upon completion of the Bulfinch project on Otis Street between Second and Third Street as the "Frederick A. Centanni Plaza", and that upon completion of the project a suitable plaque be erected; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Mrs. Centanni on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council October 15, 1984.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of 8 members.

Attest:- Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.



City of Cambridge

30

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 7, 1990

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

" Sullivan

- WHEREAS: The City Council on October 15, 1984 adopted a resolution dedicating the walkway in front of the Bulfinch Building in memory of the late Frederick A. Centanni, former Cambridge resident and Commissioner of Commerce and Development for the Commonwealth; and
- WHEREAS: Now that the park and walkway are completed, a suitable plaque should be constructed; now therefore be it
- RESOVLED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to instruct the Assistant City Manager for Community Development to take the appropriate steps to arrange for the design and construction of said plaque.



City of Cambridge

30.

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 7, 1990

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN

- WHEREAS: The City Council on October 15, 1984 adopted a resolution dedicating the walkway in front of the Bulfinch Building in memory of the late Frederick A. Centanni, former Cambridge resident and Commissioner of Commerce and Development for the Commonwealth; and
- WHEREAS: Now that the park and walkway are completed, a suitable plaque should be constructed; now therefore be it
- RESOVLED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to instruct the Assistant City Manager for Community Development to take the appropriate steps to arrange for the design and construction of said plaque.

In City Council May 7, 1990.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joseph E. Connarton".

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk

Order # 30

H-44

Councillors Toomey and Sullivan re: walkway
in front of Bulfinch Building in memory of the
late Frederick A. Centanni.

In City Council,

May 7, 1990

ORDER ADOPTED