



City of Cambridge

26.

IN CITY COUNCIL

August 4, 1997

COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
VICE MAYOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR REEVES
MAYOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: This City Council was deeply saddened at learning of the death of **Irwin Rosen** on June 25, 1997 at the age of 93; and

WHEREAS: Irwin Rosen was a longtime resident of Cambridge who owned and operated, since 1951, Mandrake Books in Harvard Square, one of the finest independent bookstores in the country; and

WHEREAS: Irwin was born in New York City, grew up in the Bronx and attended Morris High School; he went on to Harvard College where he majored in the classics and literature while starring in the tennis team, and he graduated magna cum laude in 1925; and

WHEREAS: Irwin married his college sweetheart, the late Rose Koral, and moved to New York City where he taught high school, entered the doctoral program at Columbia University and worked for several Jewish philanthropic organizations; and

WHEREAS: During the late 1930's, Irwin worked in Paris and Amsterdam, just ahead of the Nazi take over to obtain emigration visa for Jews, facing Nazi persecution and internment. After the war, he facilitated the emigration of concentration camp survivors to the U.S., Israel and South America; and

WHEREAS: As the proprietor of Mandrake Books, Irwin specialized in books in architecture, philosophy and psychology; he proudly refused to pander to popular tastes and refused to post in his store the New York Times bestseller list, which he termed the "Schlock list;" and he was proud that when Harvard dean John Munroe was disturbed with books that undergraduates were purchasing with their award money from a college book prize, he insisted they spread their awards only at Mandrake Books; and

WHEREAS: Irwin's passing will leave a void in the lives of all of his surviving friends and family, his daughter Diana Miller, his four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS: Irwin will be sorely missed by all he touched and loved; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its deepest sympathy to the family of **Irwin Rosen** at this time of such personal loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the Rosen family on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council August 4, 1997

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;



ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

FD

#531

Irwin Rosen, 93; was proprietor of independent Mandrake Books

By Tom Long
GLOBE STAFF

Irwin Rosen of Cambridge, an independent bookseller who catered to the Cambridge intelligentsia for more than 40 years, died yesterday in Youville Hospital in Cambridge of injuries sustained in a fall on May 26. He was 93.

Mr. Rosen was the proprietor of Mandrake Books, which was located on Boylston Street before relocating to the Architects Collaborative building on Story Street in the late 1950s. He specialized in books on architecture, philosophy and psychology.

When Nathan Pusey addressed Harvard undergraduates after becoming president of the university in 1953, he told them that browsing in Harvard Square's bookstores should be considered part of their education. A stop at Mr. Rosen's bookstall was an integral part of the Harvard experience for many students.

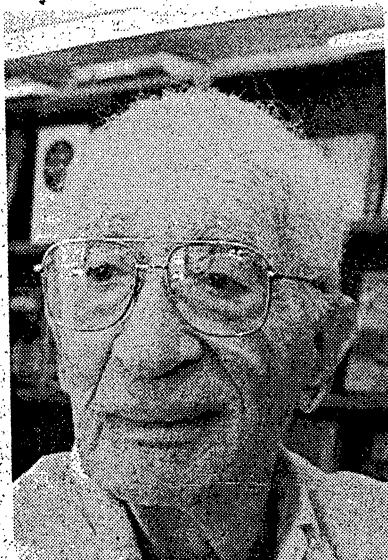
"A store is or isn't a store of character," Mr. Rosen proclaimed in a story published in the Globe on Oct. 16, 1986. According to Mr. Rosen's customers, there was no shortage of character at Mr. Rosen's store.

"Faultless syntax," Mr. Rosen said, "is a characteristic of this store."

His greatest pleasure, he said, was participating in "dialogue around a book."

Mr. Rosen was born in New York City. After graduating from Harvard College in 1925, he was a social worker in New York City and an administrator at Brandeis University before taking over Mandrake Books from the wives of two Harvard faculty members.

Mr. Rosen proudly refused to pander to popular tastes. He refused to post the New York Times Best-seller list in his store. He called it "the schlock list."



IRWIN ROSEN

"We have very few frivolous books," he sniffed.

He also refused to host readings in his store. He held writers in too high regard. "If you can write, why should you read?," he said. "That's being an entertainer."

Mr. Rosen was particularly proud to inform a visitor that when Harvard dean John Munro was disturbed with the books undergraduates were purchasing with their award money from a college book prize, he insisted they spend their awards only at Mandrake Books.

In recent years, Mr. Rosen was chagrined by the arrival of Barnes & Noble and other large chain book superstores. "I'm sorry about the changes I see," he said in a story published in the Globe on March 18, 1996. "But who am I to sit on the sidelines and complain about it. This is no longer a university village like it was when I was in college, now it's a metropolis."

Fortunately, he said, "making money isn't important to me, or I might just as well be selling butter and eggs."

He leaves a daughter, Diana Miller of Cambridge; four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements are private.

Can you do a 7/11
Resolution on this
man

Councillor
Duhay

1110

Irwin Rosen

Owner of Mandrake Bookstore

Irwin Rosen was a "wonderful man and everybody loved him," said his daughter, Jessica. A longtime resident of Cambridge, Mr. Rosen was the owner of the Mandrake Bookstore in Harvard Square since 1951.

Mr. Rosen died Wednesday, June 25, 1997, at the age of 93, at Youville Hospital. Before sustaining a fall on Memorial Day, he had maintained a six-day work week for the past 45 years.

Born in New York City, Mr. Rosen grew up in the Bronx, attended Morris High School, where he excelled both in athletics and academics, and went on to Harvard, where he majored in the classics and literature while starring on the tennis team. He graduated magna cum laude with the class of 1925. Shortly thereafter he married his college sweetheart, Rose Koral. She died in 1958.

Following graduation from Harvard, Mr. Rosen taught high school in New York City, entered the doctoral program in psychology at Columbia University and worked for a number of Jewish philanthropic organizations. He worked in Paris and Amsterdam in the late 1930s, just ahead of the Nazi takeover, to obtain emigration visas for Jews trying to escape Nazi capture and internment. After the war he facilitated the emigration of concentration camp survivors to the US, Israel, and South America.

When he bought the Mandrake Bookstore, Mr. Rosen realized his entrepreneurial potential and found a place for his convictions and his spirited individuality. On his 90th birthday he said: "It is better to sit in the back row and be discovered, than to sit in the front row and be found out."

From a small bohemian enclave, Mr. Rosen transformed the Mandrake into one of the finest independent book stores in the country, with patrons throughout the world, including major artists, intellectuals and academics. While the Mandrake became specialized recently in the direction of therapy and psychoanal-

ysis, Mr. Rosen remained an authority in many intellectual areas and the publishing field, in general. The Mandrake was one of the few surviving independent book stores in Harvard Square. Mr. Rosen ran it single-handedly, until a month before his death.

Mr. Rosen is survived by a daughter, Diana Miller of Cambridge, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A memorial service is being planned. Burial was private.

FD

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needs a lower
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does #54

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WHEREAS: Irwin's passing will leave a void in the lives of all of his ~~the~~ surviving friends and family, his daughter Diana Miller, his four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren

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Consent Order #26

Entire
memb
R-1009

Councillor Duehay and entire membership
re: Resolution on the death of Irwin
Rosen.

In City Council August 4, 1997

ORDER ADOPTED