

Philip R. Gerard

Philip R. Gerard, a native New Yorker, who had a thirty-year career as a motion picture executive with Universal Pictures, Inc., died on --- in Manhattan. He was --- years old. The cause was ---according to his Son, Richard A. Gerard.

Born on the Lower East Side on August 23, 1913, he spent his youth (from 1924 to 1935) at the Hebrew Orphanage Asylum on 138th Street and Amsterdam Avenue where he later served on staff as a counselor during his college years. He graduated from Baruch College of the City University of New York in 1935 with a Bachelor's of Business Administration. In college he met Lillian Nadel, who was embarking on a career in public relations and foreign films. They married shortly after graduation in 1936.

After a brief stint teaching in a public school for the WPA, he was hired by Consolidated Amusement Enterprises, which controlled over a hundred theaters throughout the five boroughs and was given the Squire Theater at 8th Avenue and 44th Street to manage. Later, he and his wife formed Gerard Associates, a public relations company that handled press coverage for theaters. During the war, he joined the North Atlantic Division of Engineers of the War Department as a civilian assistant to L.T. Colonel Austin D. Smith, building morale incentives for manufacturers who were doing work for government contractors.

In 1946 he joined the advertising department of MGM and then moved to Universal Pictures' press department in 1948. He was appointed Eastern Publicity Manager (1950-59); East Coast Director of Advertising and Publicity (1969-68) and a Production Executive (1968-78), cultivating independent film projects such as "A Diary of a Mad Housewife," directed by Frank Perry and "Taking Off" directed by Milos Foreman. Over the years he was associated with many screen personalities and worked closely with actors Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart, Gregory Peck, Rock Hudson, Tony Curtis, Alfred Hitchcock, Boris Karloff, Jane Wyman and Shelly Winters.

Upon retiring in 1978, he wrote his memoirs of the Hebrew Orphanage Asylum entitled "The Home on the Hill." The work is part of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research collection and talks of his experiences growing up in an institution with a thousand children. He also immersed himself in writing poetry and sculpturing in clay.

During the mid-80s he served on the R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) Advisory Council and was an executive producer of its annual Recognition Day, a gala for 8,000 peers at Radio City Music Hall. In 1986 R.S.V.P. presented him with a special recognition award for outstanding volunteer work at its 20th Anniversary Luncheon. He was also part of the volunteer staff at New York Hospital Cornell Medical Center and served for many years on the Hospital's Visitor's Day Committee. Over the past decade, he volunteered at the International Center where he spent many hours with graduate students from around the world in conversational English.

His wife of 66 years, Lillian Nadel Gerard passed away in January of this year. He is survived by his son, Richard of Manhattan, and his daughter, Jennifer Gerard Maric of Westport, CT, and three grandchildren.