

Barnett Alan Greene, Doctor, Expert Witness

By Seth Stern

STAFF WRITER

As a doctor, Barnett Alan Greene became the first board-certified anesthesiologist in Brooklyn and an early expert witness in malpractice suits and against tobacco companies.

As a dancer, Greene and his wife Leona, who first met at a dance, liked to cha-cha and merengue the night away on cruise ships.

Relatives say Greene, who died June 26 at the age of 91 following open-heart surgery, lived a full — and occasionally wild — life dedicated to medicine and his family.

Greene was born in Manhattan but grew up in Brooklyn where his father operated a kosher restaurant, and he attended Boys High School, according to his son William H. Greene of Dix Hills.

He worked nights dispatching Western Union money orders to pay his way through City College, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1929.

He parlayed an interest in chemical engineering into a career as an anesthesiologist after graduating from NYU Medical School in 1934. In the late 1930s, his son said, he became the first board-certified anesthesiologist in Brooklyn.

After serving as an Army physician during World War II, Greene practiced at Brooklyn's Women Hospital and Kings County Hospital and taught at SUNY Downstate Medical Center.

He also became an early expert witness testifying against fellow doctors in malpractice suits, Greene said.

"He felt very strongly that substandard care should not be tolerated," his son said. "That earned him some unhappiness with some of his colleagues."

For a time, Lloyd's of London insured Greene when insurance companies retaliated for his testimony, his son said.

Both of Greene's sons followed their father into medical-related careers. William Greene fights infectious diseases as a physician at University Medical Center at Stony Brook. His other son, Stuart Greene, worked as a hospital administrator and owned a medical billing business. He died in 1997.

Greene married Leona Adelman of Brooklyn in 1932. They lived in East Flatbush before moving to Lawrence in 1969.

In addition to his son and wife, Greene is survived by two daughters-in-law and six grandchildren.

A funeral service was held yesterday at Boulevard-Riverside Chapels in Hewlett and burial followed at Knollwood Cemetery in Cypress Hills, Queens.