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# RUTH I. ABRAMS



## **FUNERAL HOME**

Levine Chapels  
470 Harvard Street  
Brookline, MA

## RECORDS

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**A**BRAMS, Ruth I. The first woman to serve on the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, died on September 12, 2019, in Boston, Massachusetts. Justice Abrams was 88 years old. She was a graduate of Radcliffe College, Class of 1953, and Harvard Law School, Class of 1956. From 1957 to 1960 she entered private practice with her father, Samuel Abrams, and her brother, George. In 1961, she became the only woman serving as an Assistant District Attorney in the state, serving in the Middlesex District Attorney's office until 1969 when she became Chief of the Appellate Section of the Attorney General's office. In 1971, Ruth Abrams became Special Counsel to the Supreme Judicial Court and two years later Governor Francis Sargent appointed her to serve on the Massachusetts Superior Court. She was the second woman to serve on that court. In 1977, Governor Michael Dukakis appointed Judge Abrams to the Supreme Judicial Court, the first woman since its founding in 1692. She served on the court for 23 years, during which time she wrote 501 opinions and served on 10 special legal and bar committees. Justice Abrams wrote landmark decisions covering family law, gender equality, criminal law and minority rights. She was known for encouraging and mentoring women in the field of law and for her major efforts to have more women appointed to judicial positions. Ruth enjoyed following sports, attending operas and theater, and traveling extensively in Europe and Asia. She maintained close relations throughout her life with her brother George and his late wife Maida, her sister Susan and her husband Richard Medalie, her nephews Samuel and Daniel Medalie and his wife Diana, her nieces Sarah Abrams and Rebecca Abrams and her husband Nathan Benn, her grandniece Clara Medalie and her grandnephews Benjamin Medalie and Tobias Benn. She also had close relationships with her cousins and other members of her extended family and with colleagues, former law clerks and with many friends. A celebration of her life will be held in the near future. Donations in Ruth's memory can be made to the Ruth Abrams Endowment, Social Law Library, c/o the SJC Historical Society, John Adams Courthouse, Suite 4100, 1 Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108. Levine Chapels, Brookline



617-277-8300

[www.levinechapel.com](http://www.levinechapel.com)

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Published by Boston Globe from Sep. 19 to Sep. 22, 2019.

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## MEMORIAL EVENTS

**No memorial events are currently scheduled.**

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### 6 Entries

She was always kind to me and I will miss her. May her memory be for a blessing.

**Lauren Inker**

October 1, 2019

To the Family of Justice Abrams,  
She achieved great milestones for women and I have always admired her. I remember fondly of dinners with her and our mutual friends. My deepest sympathies to you.

Fondly,

**Marilyn Miller**

September 22, 2019

RIP

September 21, 2019

To the Justice's Family and Friends:

Please accept our deepest sympathies. Justice Abrams touched many lives and



was admired greatly by court staff, practitioners and those who came before.

You are in our prayers and thoughts.

Sincerely,

The Superior Court Clerks' Association

**Michael Sullivan**

September 20, 2019

To the Abrams Family:

Please accept my deepest sympathies. Justice Abrams was a kind and generous person and a wonderful friend. She was a mentor to many.

You are in my thoughts and prayers

Sincerely,

Michael Sullivan

**Michael Sullivan**

September 20, 2019

Joan Projansky Nordell '49

**Joan Nordell**

September 19, 2019

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*RIP 2021:*





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