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Obituary- William J. CANNING

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Mr. William J. Canning, 82

WORCESTER - William J. "Ski" Canning, 82, of 97 Blue Bell Road, a former jockey, died Tuesday in the University of Massachusetts Hospital after an illness.

His wife, Phyllis M. (DeBonis) Canning, died in 1993. He leaves two sons, William T. Canning and James Michael Canning, both of Worcester; three daughters, Monica A. Lemieux of Milford, Mary Jane Jenket and Maureen Careno, both of Worcester; three brothers, James T. Conlon Jr., Paul J. Conlon, both of Worcester, and Thomas J. Conlon of Melbourne, Fla.; a sister, Mary Rita A. Krizik of Worcester; 11 grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; several nephews and nieces. He was born in Worcester, son of William J. Canning and Mary (Early) Canning Conlon, and graduated from Sacred Heart Academy. His longtime stepfather was the late James T. Conlon. He spent several winters in Florida.

Mr. and Mrs. Canning were survivors of the Coconut Grove fire in Boston. From 1939 to 1949, Mr. Canning was a professional jockey of thoroughbred horses. He rode at several racetracks along the East Coast, including Hialeah Park and Hollywood Park, both in Florida, and Belmont Park in New York. After a successful racing career, he became director of the Jockeys Guild. He later worked for many years as a thoroughbred racing official on the New England racetrack circuit, retiring from racing in 1974. He worked for the Massachusetts State Lottery from 1974 to 1989.

Mr. Canning was long active in the Democratic party. He was a member of St. Christopher's Church, the Jockeys Guild and the Sacred Heart Academy Boosters Club.

The funeral will be held tomorrow from the Athy Memorial Home, 111 Lancaster St., with a Mass at 10 a.m. in St. Christopher's Church, 950 West Boylston St. Burial will be in St. John's Cemetery. Calling hours are 5 to 8 tonight at the funeral home.

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