

Richard Brodsky, longtime state assemblyman from Westchester, has died, likely of coronavirus

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Former state Assemblyman
Richard Brodsky (Photo: Tania Savayan/The Journal News)

ALBANY - Former Assemblyman Richard Brodsky, known for his bombastic approach to governing and passion for politics, has died after he is believed to have contracted coronavirus in recent days, his former colleagues and family said. He was 73.

Brodsky, a Democrat from Greenburgh, was a towering figure in the state Legislature from 1983 through 2010, always willing to speak his mind and rail for change in state and local governments.

The news of his death shocked his former colleagues in the Assembly.

"When the virus takes someone that strong and that powerful, it spares none of us," said Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, D-Scarsdale. "He was strong, he was strong-willed. I'm so sad about it. I can't even express myself."

Brodsky ran twice for state attorney general in 2006 and 2010, but was unsuccessful both times. In 2006, he [quit his run for attorney general \(https://nypost.com/2006/05/12/a-father-first-pol-quits-to-give-kidney/\)](https://nypost.com/2006/05/12/a-father-first-pol-quits-to-give-kidney/) to donate a kidney to his then-13-year-old daughter, Willie.

"Even if you disagreed with him, you had to love him," said county Democratic chairman Reggie Lafayette. "He had that Brodsky style. He had a style very much fit for government, for public service."

More: [Eurythmics II? Annie Lennox meets...Richard Brodsky \(story/opinion/perspective/2018/08/30/eurythmics-ii-annie-lennox-meets-richard-brodsky/1143031002/\)](#).

His wife, Paige, said Brodsky died Wednesday morning at home after experiencing symptoms consistent with coronavirus. He was tested on Friday, but had not received the results back.

She said he also suffered from a heart condition that may have been exacerbated by the virus.

"He was an award-winning public servant," she said. "He lived his life to serve the public. He was a fabulous father and a very good husband."

In 2007, he was among the candidates for state comptroller when Alan Hevesi resigned, but his colleagues selected Tom DiNapoli for the post.

His most passionate issue was his fight against the state's public authorities, the shadowy offshoot of state and local governments that often worked behind closed doors while overseeing billions of dollars of public money.

He was memorably known to call them "Soviet-style bureaucracies."

As chairman of the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, Brodsky investigated the authorities and exposed many of their failings.

Before he retired from the Assembly, he got the Legislature in 2009 to create the Public Authorities Control board to install oversight over them.

"I can't imagine anyone giving this virus a bigger fight, but it has taken this tenacious, intelligent and passionate voice from us," said Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro, a former Republican assemblyman.

Since then, he wrote regular columns in the Times Union in Albany and the Huffington Post. He had also served as a senior fellow at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University and as a fellow of the public policy group Demos.

"Richard was a great public servant who was very insightful and had the unique ability to go the heart of a matter," said Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, who was Brodsky's successor in the Assembly.

Richard attended Brandeis University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in politics and Harvard Law School, where he received his J.D.

He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

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