



IN MEMORIAM

Arthur Diamonstein, a former rector of Old Dominion University's Board of Visitors, died in Norfolk on Aug. 14. He was 92.

Diamonstein was a member of the board from 1992 to 1996 and served as rector from 1994 to 1996.

President Emeritus James V. Koch, who led the University when Diamonstein was rector, called him "one of the best consensus builders I have ever encountered."

"Upbeat and optimistic even when the times were trying, Arthur Diamonstein was a savvy, wise individual devoted to public service," Koch said. "We were lucky enough to corral him for a variety of tasks. As our rector, he was adept politically and understood instinctively how to present issues and stimulate productive discussions."

Diamonstein received his bachelor's degree in business administration from Virginia Tech. He served in the Army's 45th Thunderbird Division during the Korean War, receiving a Purple Heart, and was later in the Army Reserves.

After his service, he joined Paramount Sleep Co., his family's mattress business, and rose from truck driver to president.

"He didn't get bogged down in the details," said his son Richard, the managing director of the company. "He managed at a very high level, which allowed the people who reported to him to develop and, in a lot of cases, develop successfully. You'd state your case, he'd ask you thoughtful questions, and he'd let you run with it."

Diamonstein also made it a point to get to know his employees. "He made such a deep connection with so many people, regardless of their role," said his daughter, Anne Fleder. "He treated everybody with the same respect."

Until the pandemic, "Arthur came to work every day, even after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, just to continue to feel the pulse of the organization he helped build," his obituary said.

Diamonstein was significantly active in several civic organizations. He was chairman of the board of The General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, the Norfolk Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Fort Norfolk Retirement Center (Harbor's Edge). He was vice president of Norfolk Academy's board and treasurer of the Chrysler Museum of Art's board. He also served on the boards of Ohel Sholom Temple, the Virginia Opera, the Virginia Symphony Orchestra and Tidewater Winds. Diamonstein was named First Citizen of Norfolk by the Cosmopolitan Club in 2001.

"His life was all about his family, his business and his community," Richard said in his eulogy. "He followed his heart and commitment to others."