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State Sen. Tom Morahan dies of leukemia at 78

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State Sen. Thomas Morahan died today in a Manhattan hospital, where he was surrounded by family, a spokesman said.

Morahan, 78, was diagnosed with a terminal form of leukemia earlier this year. The Republican lawmaker represented the 38th District, which includes all of Rockland and the Orange County towns of Tuxedo and Warwick.

Morahan was first elected to the state Senate in 1999. He was Rockland's only Senate representative and previously served on the Rockland County Legislature and in the Assembly.

He was chairman of the Senate's Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee, co-chairman of the Senate's Hudson Valley Delegation, and a member of the bipartisan Senate Taskforce on Government Efficiency.

Morahan announced in May that he would not seek re-election.

Thomas P. Morahan was born on Oct. 11, 1931, in the Bronx. He was the youngest of four children. He attended Holy Family Elementary School and graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School.

Morahan served during the Korean War with the U.S. Army Flash Ranger Battalion, attaining the rank of staff sergeant.

In 1952, he married Helen Killion. In 1963, they moved to Rockland County where they lived in New City and raised seven daughters. Morahan had 17 grandchildren.

Morahan worked at New York Telephone Company for four decades before becoming a senior level manager at Orange and Rockland Utilities.

He began his community service as a member of the Clarkstown Zoning Board of Appeals. In 1977, he was elected to the Rockland County Legislature. In 1980, he was elected to the state Assembly.

In 1984, Morahan returned to the Rockland County Legislature and in 1996, he was unanimously elected to serve as its chairman.

In a special election in 1999, Morahan was elected to fill the unexpired term of retiring Sen. Joseph Holland.