

Former Sen. Howard Metzenbaum dies

by UPI

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. -- Former U.S. Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, noted as a consumer champion and dedicated foe of big business, has died at the age of 90. Metzenbaum died Wednesday night at his home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., The Plain Dealer, a Cleveland newspaper, reported. His wife and four daughters were at his bedside, Juanita Powe, the senator's assistant for 45 years, said. Over the past few years Metzenbaum, who retired from the Senate in 1994 after 19 years on Capitol Hill, had been living in quiet retirement, the newspaper said. Before his health declined during the past year, he was active in swimming and travel. Metzenbaum's outlook was forged by the Depression, and his politics by Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. He was as powerful liberal, though he never held an official party leadership post or was chairman of a committee. He was known as "Senator No" because the Senate Democrats knew little that he opposed would get through, The Plain Dealer said. Before his retirement, Metzenbaum achieved near-legendary status as a foe of big business, an advocate for consumer causes and a tough infighter blocking scores of special interest bills. Metzenbaum was born in Cleveland and received bachelor's and doctorate degrees at Ohio State University. During the 1940s, he practiced law in Cleveland, mostly for labor unions. Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1976, after a brief stint in the chamber earlier as an appointee, he became wealthy through insightful investments, particularly in real estate, The Plain Dealer said.

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