

William S. Kassal was the supervisor of Bloomingdale Township for 17 years and promoted an array of services for senior citizens and young people in northern DuPage County. "Township government is probably the best organization of government," Mr. Kassal told the Tribune in 1988. "It's the closest to the people. It's the cheapest unit of government, and people get the most out of township government." A longtime resident of the unincorporated Medinah area, Mr. Kassal, 80, died of kidney failure Friday, Feb. 11, said his son, Scott. Mr. Kassal grew up in the near west suburbs. He worked briefly as a Northlake police officer and later as a semitrailer driver for American Can Co. in Maywood. He later ran his own carpentry business for a time. He became involved in Bloomingdale Township government in the early 1970s, and in 1978 he was chosen as the leader of the township Republican Party. Two years later, he became the township's full-time supervisor. Mr. Kassal supported a variety of services for senior citizens, including extensive transportation services, and supported programs aimed at preventing teen crime. "Helping the community was one of his things," his son said. "He liked the give-and-take of debating and of helping people. He built up a good record as township supervisor." By the mid-1990s, Mr. Kassal's leadership style, likened by supporters and opponents alike to that of an old-fashioned political boss, started to wear thin among township committeemen. In March 1996, he stepped down as Bloomingdale Township's GOP chairman after it was clear he would not be chosen again. In December 1997, Republican leaders in the township declined to back his bid for re-election as supervisor. A month later, he nonetheless sought Republicans' backing at the township caucus, telling the Tribune, "I ain't through doing a good job yet." At the caucus, Republicans unanimously voted against slating him on the party's ticket in the general election. That prompted him to make an independent bid for supervisor in the general election, losing to the GOP candidate. "He was a pillar of the community, and he loved helping people," his son said. "He was a big, burly guy, and he could be blustery, but he was a big teddy bear at heart. And he was really the coolest guy I knew. He would tell it like it was." Mr. Kassal's marriage to Diane Kassal ended in divorce. A fiancée, Ardyth Gonzales, died in 2003. Mr. Kassal also is survived by a daughter, Kelli, and two grandsons. Services were held.

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