

# Civil Servant

Sometimes a city is diminished by the death of a man whose name is not a household word or a symbol of power. Samuel Ratensky was what might be called an uncommon bureaucrat, a planner who worked within the system—the city's leveling and standard-defeating housing agencies—with a wise, low-key realism, bending rules wherever possible to the achievement of ideals. He was a gentle fighter of quick strength for better housing and planning, and ultimately for the people of New York.

In his long municipal career, before he joined the State Urban Development Corporation, he silently helped shape some of New York's brighter spots—his skillful expediting of the superior design of Riverbend Houses, for example—for a kind of quality that is alien to the natural municipal process. He was that rare administrator, a man of high standards and humanitarian impulses, the kind of man needed most by any city, and most sorely missed.