

Timothy Cook, 38, Ex-Civil Rights Aide Who Set Off Storm

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Timothy M. Cook, a lawyer who was executive director of the Washington-based National Disability Action Center and who formerly served a stormy tenure with the Justice Department's civil rights division, died Tuesday at Georgetown University Hospital. He was 38 years old and lived in Washington.

His family said the cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage.

Mr. Cook, who suffered from fused knee joints caused by a childhood illness, was a longtime advocate for the disabled. In recent years, he successfully argued legal cases that forced the Foreign Service to hire the blind and that required all federally supported public transportation to provide access to people in wheelchairs.

Earlier, as a staff lawyer in the civil rights division during the first four years of the Reagan Administration, he criticized the division's handling of enforcement cases involving the rights of the handicapped.

In a 1983 memorandum to Attorney General William French Smith, Mr. Cook charged that his immediate superior, Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds, and Mr. Reynolds's deputies "were doing their utmost" to thwart provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Mr. Reynolds in turn accused Mr. Cook of "knowing mischaracterization" of the division's position. Later that year, Mr. Cook resigned, maintaining that the Justice Department had "balked at enforcement" in "practically every civil rights case."

Mr. Cook was born in Pittsburgh and was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Surviving are his wife, Geraldine; his son, Phillip; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Cook of Washington, Pa.; two brothers, James and Paul, of Washington, Pa.; four sisters, Patricia Cook-Zaccone, of Scenery Hill, Pa., and Barbara Seaman, Amy Amon and Mary Beth Cook, all of Washington, Pa., and his maternal grandmother, Philomena Bauer of Pittsburgh.