



From a post on Facebook by his granddaughter, Mirella Ceja-Orozco, your GroundSwell editor learned of the passing of Clay Berling.

Clay was a long time director of Common Ground USA, being elected every three years by the national membership to a seat on the Board. In his biographical paragraph in 2015 when he was seeking re-election, he provided the following information. "Introduced to Georgist 50 years ago at a local library in the 10 week basic course under the auspices of the San Francisco (Henry George School) Board. After graduation joined the San Francisco Board, and presided as president for one year. Taught the basic course some 15 times in various settings in school classrooms and personal office. Has given some 40-50, 20-35 minute talks to service clubs, schools, and adult groups. B.A., Chemistry, 1952, University of California. Taught for 4 years at Oakland City College. Then became State Farm insurance agent, retiring in 1998 after 39 years. Served as Park & Recreation Commissioner, Albany, Calif.; V.P. of the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce; for 35 years as board member and officer of Berkeley-Albany YMCA; active in the United Methodist Church locally at several levels; co-founder of benefit shop under auspices of the Interfaith Outreach of Carmel. Was national chair of Soccer In The Streets. In 1991 became a publisher of national soccer news publication, now known as

Soccer America, in addition to insurance business. Received several Soccer organization awards including Honor Award in 1998 – the only non-coach ever by the National Soccer Coaches Assn., and Hall of Fame in 1995 by the United States Soccer Federation."

In 1984 Clay was one of the half dozen Georgists--who were also Methodists from California, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Ohio and Georgia--who signed on to the Property Stewardship petition of Nadine Stoner to the General Conference of the Methodist church in Baltimore.

Clay served on the Common Ground USA national Board until he resigned in 2016 due to ill health. GroundSwell itself emerged from Clay's suggestion in 1987 when as a Director he proposed that our then fledgling national organization needed a newsletter. Retired newspaper editor/publisher Richard Noyes of New Hampshire then volunteered and published GroundSwell until 1992. Clay grew up San Francisco. He was a member of the California chapter of Common Ground USA.

Clay is shown in the above photo after receiving the Unsung Hero award at the annual Council of Georgist Organizations conference in 2013, held that year in Pittsburgh, PA.

Clay and Ruth got married in 1952. Drafted by the U.S. Army, He served two years in Germany, where their first child, Lynn, was born. Ruth died in 1991.

Clay's granddaughter Mirella Ceja-Orozco (Janet's daughter) posted on Facebook the link to Clay's obituary notice Oct. 6, 2017 in Soccer America, <https://www.socceramerica.com/publications/article/75203/clay-berling-soccer-america-founder-dies-at-age.html>. Parts of the article are quoted below.

"In 1967, Clay Berling took his wife and six children to see the Oakland Clippers play because the soccer game presented the only affordable opportunity to bring his entire family to the Oakland Coliseum, which had been constructed the year before. He fell in love with soccer on that day. For less than \$10, Berling and his family watched the Clippers in action in the National Professional Soccer League, which later merged with the United Soccer Association to create the NASL. He left impressed with the skills and teamwork, saw what he believed was a perfect sport for children, and immediately got involved in Northern California youth and adult soccer, serving in a variety of capacities including league commissioner.

"Hungry for soccer news but unable to find it, Berling launched a biweekly newsletter called Soccer West that quickly went national and was renamed Soccer America in 1972 and became a weekly magazine. In the early days, the magazine was laid out on Berling's kitchen table, on the desk of his State Farm Insurance office, and in a Sunday school room rented from the United Methodist Church near the Berlings' home in Albany, California. Later, Soccer America grew to 23 full-time employees and moved to offices in Berkeley, California, and his (continued on page 7)

CLAY BERLING (from page 5)

daughter Lynn Berling-Manuel, currently the CEO of United Soccer Coaches (formerly known as the NSCAA), served as editor-in-chief and publisher. His daughter, Janet Ceja-Orozco, also served at Soccer America in the fulfillment department. Their mother, Ruth Berling, was Clay's partner in the venture and worked in the production department until her death in 1991.

"In 2003, Soccer America Magazine made The Chicago Tribune's list of "The 50 Best Magazines." Clay Berling was inducted in the U.S. Soccer National Hall of Fame in 1995 and into the California Youth Soccer Association Hall of Fame in 1983. Clay and Lynn Berling-Manuel were inducted into the California Soccer Association North Hall of Fame in 2011. In 1990, Clay Berling received the Soccer Industry Council of America's Simon Sherman Award. Berling kept Soccer America going during the sport's lean years following the demise of the NASL after the 1985 season and he never stopped believing that the sport would attain mainstream popularity in the USA.

"He attended first Women's World Cup in China in 1991, the second in Sweden in 1995, and in a 1999 interview, after the USA won the Women's World Cup final that was watched by 40 million on ABC, Berling said: 'I'll never forget being in the Rose Bowl with 90,000 fans watching the U.S. women win the World Cup. It brought women's sports to a level we'd never seen. And it also influenced the rest of the world. Countries that hadn't shown respect for the women's game began taking it seriously.'

"He survived by his wife Sarah, and his children Lynn Berling-Manuel, Janet Ceja-Orozco, Sheryl Berling-Wolff, James Berling, Alan Berling and Ken Berling, and seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

A celebration of the life of Clay Berling was held on Sunday, Oct. 29, 2017 at the Church of the Wayfarer in Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif. The family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in his name to the Southern Poverty Law Center, donate.splcenter.org/clay-berling, as it serves some of his many passions. <<