

Clement J. Berwitz

Dr. Clement J. Berwitz died peacefully at home at 6:05 a.m. on Sept. 17, 1998. Sitting vigil by his bedside were his wife, Jean Harris, and her grandchildren:

"He was the bravest man I have known," said Harris' grandson, Beau Lynott.

Clem's passion for life, politics and humankind never faded — even when difficult times set in, said Harris' granddaughters, Jennifer Harris and Julia Sherburne. They said he was an exceptional man who gave us so much — love, encouragement and advice that will be with us forever.

"A true inspiration. I'm glad I got to be a part of his life," friend Francisco Nanclares said.

"What I was amazed by was Clem's ability, his accepting of each circumstance as it came," said Jo Ellen Harris, his stepdaughter.

Also at Clement's bedside were his ~~daughter~~ and two grandchildren:

"He was the best father imaginable — a constant source of love, comfort and support. We loved each other all our lives," daughter Linda Michaels said.

"Being Clem's only granddaughter was and will always be the pride and joy of my life. He is my hero," Julie Birnbaum said. "As a model of class, decency and integrity, my grandfather had the highest character of anyone I have known. I loved him and will miss him. He was an extraordinary man," said Michael Birnbaum.

"Clem made many friends during his seven short years in Oxnard because he was so charming, bright and interesting. Also he was fun! For the first time (as a big city New Yorker) he took a special relish in participating in grassroots issues and politics. Clem brought a richness and vitality to everyday life that rounded out the bits and pieces of events that make up our lives. His special interest remained young people — those who were deciding on careers, beginning college, reaching their goals. He was a professor without portfolio. Always interested in affirmative action in the workplace, he wrote many published papers on the subject including his doctoral thesis, which later became a textbook on the subject. When we traveled, we would check at colleges and universities all over the world and most contained his books and articles," his wife, Jean Harris, said.

Clement outlived his three sisters, most of his cousins and boyhood friends, yet remained young in spirit throughout his long years. If we attain immortality through each person we touch, Clem will live forever in lucky people, enriched by his enthusiasm, creativity and singular caring love. Foremost in his mind was the desire and duty to treat his fellow man with dignity and respect.

On our wedding day, the leader quoted an old Indian prayer:

*Now you will feel no pain,
for each of you will be shelter for the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
for each of you will be
warmth to each other.
Now you will feel no loneliness,
for each of you will be
companionship to the other.
Now you are two persons
but there is only one life between you.
Go now to your dwelling place
to enter into the days of your life together*