



Heal the Bay

For Immediate Release

## **HEAL THE BAY FOUNDER DOROTHY GREEN PASSES AWAY**

*Determined leader scored clean-water victories by inspiring collaboration, volunteerism*

Santa Monica, CA (October 13, 2008) -- Dorothy Green, a California environmental activist best known as the founder of the influential water-quality group Heal the Bay, passed away at her home Monday in Los Angeles after a long battle with melanoma. She was 79 years old.

A onetime stay-at-home mom, Green would later embark on a journey of hands-on activism and self education, becoming one of the state's most respected authorities on water quality issues. Spurred by the social disruptions of the early 1970s, she would serve as a mentor to generations of volunteers, scientists and public policy makers throughout her life.

Initially gathering a few concerned colleagues in her living room in 1985, Green grew Santa Monica-based Heal the Bay into one of the state's most powerful environmental organizations. The science-driven group now has some 15,000 members and wields considerable influence on water-quality issues throughout the state.

Under her watch, the organization's first major victory was successfully advocating for the upgrade of Los Angeles' Hyperion and Carson sewage treatment plants to comply with the federal Clean Water Act. The group also devised the trademarked Beach Report Card, which provides water quality grades to the general public for more than 500 beaches statewide.

Green would later help found the California Water Impact Network, a nonprofit group that advocates for the equitable and environmentally sensitive use of all the state's water resources. She also helped establish the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council and remained its president emeriti for the rest her life.

"Dorothy Green was simply the most influential water quality activist in California for the last 30 years," said Mark Gold, her protégé and current president of Heal the Bay. "What made Dorothy most extraordinary was her ability to attract talented volunteers of all skills and turn them into tireless activists who feel privileged to protect the environment."

Heal the Bay has co-authored or sponsored numerous pieces of legislation aimed at improving water quality throughout the region's waterways, protecting the health of humans who swim and surf in the Santa Monica Bay, and sustaining the overall health of the region's marine life. The organization's public education and outreach programs have informed and inspired millions of Southland residents to be better ocean stewards.

Green's zealous determination and innate intelligence, coupled with a warm personality, enabled her to build consensus among diverse stakeholders. Her genuine manner defused confrontation and won her admiration and respect from all interested parties on sensitive environmental issues. Behind the scenes always supporting her was her husband, Jack Green, who died in 2005.

Born in 1929 in Detroit, Green came to California to enroll at UCLA as a music major and played the cello in the school orchestra. She would later start a family and enjoy life raising three children.

She became swept up in the activism of the early 1970s, beginning her career as a water quality advocate in 1972 by working on the campaign to pass Proposition 20, the ballot initiative that established the California Coastal Commission. She then became president of the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters, which marked her introduction to the issues surrounding sewage treatment and its disposal.

"I got involved in environmental issues generally because I was looking for a place that needed work," Green said in a 2005 interview marking Heal the Bay's 20th anniversary. "It was a response to my depression, really, about the Vietnam War, civil rights issues -- all that was going on in this country at the time. 'I said: 'I've got to get out of bed and do something!'"

Realizing there wasn't an organization to monitor the disposal of sewage and alarmed about the harmful impacts on the Santa Monica Bay, Green began holding meetings of concerned citizens in her Westwood living room. The foundation of Heal the Bay took shape there.

Lacking formal scientific training, she nonetheless plunged confidently into the complex world of public infrastructure. "Reading the [federal] Environmental Protection Agency's analysis of sewage treatment and its disposal was my science education," she recalled years later.

Green's approach -- encouraging collaboration among groups that often had contrasting perspectives on how to tackle a problem -- was not only a hallmark of her personal style but was extremely pragmatic.

"Heal the Bay is such a positive organization and Dorothy set the tone for all of us," said Madelyn Glickfeld, a member of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and former Heal the Bay board member. "I was in a lot of meetings with Dorothy, and it wasn't about stopping things, but always about starting things."

She also served as a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power commissioner for three and a half years, and chaired the most important water policy conference in the state, the California Water Policy (POWER) Conference, for the past 17 years.

"Dorothy believed strongly that California is not in a drought; there is enough water for the people and the environment. It just needs to be managed differently. Scaring people to vote for \$10 Billion in new bonds to build 2 new dams and a peripheral canal is not the

answer," said Carolee Krieger, President of the California Water Impact Network. "C-WIN will continue her work to stop the mismanagement and implement a sustainable water policy for our state."

The U.S. government honored Green's three decades of leadership in 2006, bestowing her with the prestigious President's Volunteer Service Award. In the fall of 2007, the University of California Press published her book "Managing Water: Avoiding Crisis in California."

"Dorothy's legacy is extensive, and will be amplified in the world by those whom she taught to make a difference, instead of just making noise," recalled Laurie Coots, a Heal the Bay Board of Governors member who serves as chief marketing officer for ad agency TBWA/Worldwide.

Green is survived by three sons, Joshua, Avrom and Herschel, and three granddaughters, Jessica, Katherine and Tara.

A public memorial service will be held Thursday at 2 p.m. at Mount Sinai Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to the California Water Impact Network, the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council or Heal the Bay.

**Note:** To access photos of Dorothy Green visit [www.healthebay.org/photos/dorothygreen](http://www.healthebay.org/photos/dorothygreen)

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