

SCNA HALL OF FAME MEMBER

Irene Shannon

1922 - Present

IRENE SHANNON, now age 89, was a lifelong nudist and naturist advocate, she made a unique contribution at a critical time in the 1970's and 80's when local activists were attempting to create legal nude beaches along the California coastline. Over the course of her life she formed several non-landed clubs in Southern California.



She joined Beachfront USA in 1973 while it was trying to legalize long-used clothing-optional Venice Beach, and she became a frequent contributor to Cec Cinder's *Bare-in-Mind* monthly publication, which focused on the national Free Beach Movement.

1974 formed a nudist travel club in Huntington Beach known as the Orange-Peelers and became active in WSA (now the Western Region for AANR) politics, chairing their Non-Park Nudist Activities Committee.

She acted as a go-between and key player in the 1979 bitter struggle to get the ASA (now AANR) to accept the Free Beach Movement as part of its larger mission. The attempt failed, due to the acrimony of many landed club owners, toward the "beachers," whom they considered "hippies" who "wouldn't pay" to join the established landed clubs. So Shannon joined Lee Baxandall and helped him form the Naturist Society as a separate organization in 1980.

A tireless volunteer, Shannon spent much of her spare time during the next decade attending legislative hearings whenever bills were introduced to support or restrict social nudity. She spoke at the 1979 hearing when then-Parks Director Russell Cahill decided to institute his now famous "Policy" protecting nude use of the state parks in traditional places except upon complaint.

When a local Assemblyman from San Diego tried to put thru a bill that said the creation of any nude beach in California it had to go thru the legislature, Shannon convinced 11 of the bill's 13 co-authors to pull their names off the bill so that it died in committee.

Shannon remained active in naturist issues until the very end. In 2007 she attended the Huntington Beach hearing to ban nudity in that city and she passionately spoke against it. She also travelled to San Diego in 2010 and spoke before the CA State Parks Commission to support establishing designated nude beaches.

She was a Lifetime member of SCNA and Hall of Fame recipient. A supporter of the Naturists in the OC club, she was a frequent visitor to the club's monthly swims in Huntington Beach until very recently. She had been in declining health for the past several years, suffering from chronic leukemia. She also was a member of the Olympian club.

A legal secretary by profession, Shannon was also a founder and leading figure in The Hemlock Society and the right-to-die movement.