The staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors at the Bolsa Chica Conservancy mourn the passing of one of our founding members, Peter M. Green, PhD. He passed away on June 5th, 2022 at the age of 96. He was a long-time board member of the Conservancy and served as our Board Chairman for a number of years and his contributions were recognized by his selection as a Conservator of the Year.

His Doctoral Degree in Ecology and his experience as a professor in the Golden West College Mathematics and Sciences Division made him an invaluable resource in helping the Conservancy to grow into the organization it is today, one that prides itself on its educational programs and habitat restoration efforts.

Peter also served for 12 years as a member of the Huntington Beach City Council, during which time he served as mayor on two occasions. He was a champion of environmental issues and represented the City on the Orange County Harbors, Beaches, and Parks Commission; the Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency; the Orange County Marine Institute; and the California League of Cities Environmental Quality Committee.

The community will sorely miss Peter, as his actions in life have left lasting impacts that will be remembered for generations to come. We can not thank him enough for all that he has done for the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve and for the greater southern California region.

Farewell, dear friend.

Obituary
Peter M. Green, Ph.D

On June 5, 2022, we said goodbye to our beloved Dr. Peter Green, former WW2 Navy radio operator, Benedictine Monk, Professor, and Mayor of Huntington Beach. As a devoted husband, father, friend, teacher, student, and defender, he was dear to so many.

Peter was a kind contrarian with a strong moral compass. He was a politician who said exactly what he was thinking, a high school dropout who became a university president, a pragmatic scientist and a devout Catholic.
He was a man who in his forties, could walk away from the life he had known with nothing but his principles and build a new family and a deeply rooted community in a growing beach town.

Born in 1926, and raised in Minneapolis to a poor but tight-knit family that included his parents, two sisters and three brothers. He dropped out of high school to join the Navy at the height of WWII. For this decision, he was rewarded with unprecedented luxuries such as his own bed and the most abundant and delicious food he had ever tasted.

At the end of the war, Peter entered both college and the seminary. He spent the next 20 years as a priest in a Benedictine Monastery on the campus of St Gregory’s University in Oklahoma. His days were filled with study, teaching, and prayer. He continued to pursue graduate degrees in life sciences, and won National Science Foundation grants to further his studies. One of these grants involved studying wheat rust, a disease that plagued local crops, but he was prematurely called back to the monastery.

St. Gregory’s needed Peter and so he continued to teach. Later, he was promoted to Dean and then President of the University.

In 1968, Peter wrote to the Vatican for full dispensation to leave the priesthood. He received it, and remained a lifelong devout Catholic.

Two years later, he met Catherine Clary with whom he fell in love. They married two months later, and were happy together for 52 years.

At 44 years old he started his new life with his new bride, a handful of job offers from colleges across the country, and a budget befitting a piggy bank. He accepted the position of Professor at the then newly-formed Golden West College in Huntington Beach because he missed teaching. For 35 years he educated, supported, and occasionally played matchmaker to generations of students.

Peter met many like-minded faculty members with whom he remained close friends, and he became a founding member of Amigos de Bolsa Chica. This group was dedicated to keeping the Bolsa Chica Wetlands from being developed into a marina, which would destroy a vital ecosystem and cause sand erosion on the beach. After a victorious 20-year battle, the Bolsa Chica Wetlands were preserved.

In 1984, Peter ran for a seat on the Huntington Beach City Council and won. Overall, he spent four terms as a council member, including two terms as Mayor, on an environmental platform.

President George Bush personally presented him with the Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award “In Recognition of Outstanding Accomplishment and Achievement in the Areas of Conservation and Wise Stewardship of Natural Resources” in 1992.

In 2005, the city dedicated Peter Green Park, at 18751 Seagate Drive, Huntington Beach, CA in his honor.

Peter leaves behind much more than a wife, two children, and countless friends. He leaves a city and community he helped shape, a park where families can gather, and a beach where thousands of people each year can sink their toes in the sand and watch the surf.

***A funeral mass will be held at St. Bonaventure Church, 16400 Springdale Street in Huntington Beach on Wednesday, June 29 at 10:30am. corner of Springdale Street & Heil Ave.***

Peter could have lived in any time period in the world and would have been a classic Renaissance Man.