

Remembering Jay Berman

1940-2023



Titan Theater
California State University, Fullerton
2 p.m., October 21, 2023

Jay Berman, Journalist & Irene's Muse

Stephen Jay Berman, 83, of Manhattan Beach, a wonderful husband, father, teacher and friend, died on June 9, 2023, after a long battle with cancer and myelodysplastic syndrome. He died at home in his sleep, with his beloved wife of 44 years, Irene Machuca, at his side.

Jay was a humorous, warm and kind man. He will be remembered for his never-ending devotion to Irene, his love for his

son Dennis, and the countless careers launched as a teacher and mentor. He was a great writer in his own right, published in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, the Times of London, travel publications and many other outlets.

Jay was a devoted fan of Buddy Holly, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and The Beatles.

He had encyclopedic knowledge of all things



Berman, Baseball, Beatles & Buddy

baseball, with particular fondness for the Angels going back to their Pacific Coast League days. He loved writing about baseball more than anything. He was a longstanding member of the Society for American Baseball Research and saw baseball games in as many countries as possible.

Jay and Irene traveled across the globe, their favorite cities being Vancouver, B.C., and London. Jay adored little animals, especially squirrels, and always carried peanuts, almonds and walnuts in his pocket to feed whatever little friends he encountered.

Jay was a talented and thoughtful journalist and a brilliant and inspiring teacher at California State University, Fullerton, from 1981 to 1992, and part-time in the '70s at University of Southern California. His



students often became his lifelong friends. He would not let them call him Professor Berman. He was always just Jay. He was proud to tell people that his students went on to careers as media professionals across the country and world.

Jay was born on March 17, 1940, in Los Angeles, to David Berman and Thelma Collins Berman. He graduated from Marshall High School in 1957 and started his college years at Occidental College, before transferring to USC, graduating in 1961. He later returned to USC to get his master's degree and

Editor's Editor Made Daily Titan Home



Dean Rick Pullen and Jay during Daily Titan's 1981-92 "golden era."

work on Trojan football radio broadcasts.

Jay was a reporter and then city editor at The Daily Breeze in Torrance and The Santa Monica Evening Outlook in the 1960s. He returned to the Breeze as a copy editor from 1986 to 2009.

He had multifaceted talents and interests, and showed his versatility in his career choices. In the '60s, he was a reserve

police officer in Hermosa Beach, honored by the city for rescuing a child who had fallen off the city pier.

In the early '70s, he was spokesperson for Los Angeles District Attorney Joseph Busch. In 1977, he was press secretary of the re-election campaign of Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. In 1978, he managed Yvonne Brathwaite Burke's losing campaign for state attorney general.

Through Thick & Thin, Always Irene

After his political work, he joined the staff of ICPR, a public relations firm, and taught part-time at USC.

In 1981, Jay joined the faculty at Cal State Fullerton, where he taught journalism and was faculty advisor for the award-winning student newspaper, the Daily Titan.

For 11½ years, he helped launch countless news and communications careers.

Jay is survived by Irene, the love of his life, of Manhattan Beach; his son Dennis Berman and

his daughter-in-law Carol Berman of Cypress; and granddaughter Samantha Berman of Long Beach. Brothers Richard Berman of Los Angeles and Martin Berman of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, died earlier. He also is survived by his aunt Nancy Norman, a singer who performed with Sammy Kaye's Swing and Sway Band.

Jay remained friends with his first wife, Dennis' mother Joan Lewan, who died in 2023.

Burial was private.

How to Donate in Jay's Memory

Cal State Fullerton's College of Communications has generously paid the expenses of today's memorial. All donations to the Jay Berman Daily Titan Scholarship will go entirely to supporting Daily Titan students, many of whom are first-generation college students or members of traditionally underserved communities.

Donations to the **Jay Berman Daily Titan Scholarship** can be made securely at

give.fullerton.edu/jay

Jay the Consummate Journalist: His Métiers Were Music, Baseball, Little Critters, and His Students

It was no surprise in May 2023 when more than 50 Daily Titan alumni from the 1980s and early '90s – along with colleagues, family and friends – gathered to honor Jay [below].

From 1981 to '92, Jay built a remarkable streak at the Daily Titan. He called it the “golden era.”

Two alumni became Havana bureau chiefs for news services, one retired as senior editor for news operations at The New York Times, another was a highly regarded NBA journalist for ESPN. They worked at Amer-

ica's oldest paper, The Hartford Courant; at one of the youngest, USA Today; plus The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune and NBC News.

One was a key factor in The Denver Post's 1986 Pulitzer Prize. Others covered wars, culture, sports and business. Many left journalism for successful careers elsewhere.

Jay wrote about music, baseball and puppies, but his students wrote about Jay. When Jay left CSUF, alumni and students issued 8 broadsheet pages lamenting his loss [right].





Diana Griego Erwin

There's no gold in this handshake

He is nudged inside his office, knee deep in books. The stacks, old bound programs, textbooks and yellowed newspaper clips, which he holds in his hands, are the reason for it to come down to the last day," he says, shaking out his office.

It is 10:15 a.m. Friday, Jay Berman is on his feet. Chances are you've never heard of Berman, but he is cited as an important professor for 11 years at California State University, Fullerton, and advisor to the student newspaper, the Daily Titan. Berman has trained hundreds of aspiring journalists. Dreams have gone on to snag jobs at some of the nation's most respected newspapers.

But that is over. Spectacularly over. It makes no way to academy.

His way is coming. In academia, a doctorate is most important than real-world experience, period. In the end, that means Berman, a practicing journalist, had just one option left: to accept the "golden handshake," the university's early retirement program, and leave the job he loved. If not, his job would end in June.

The phone rings. It is a former student. Any chance that Berman might change his mind the way Ron Ford did and go to the people? Ever wary, Berman answers with a fake smile. "No, the people have spoken, and I am outta here." He hangs up, shuffles some papers. A Daily Titan reporter asks him how he is in the office. "I just wanted to say goodbye," Susan Adams says. "I guess I won't see you anymore."

"No, I guess not," Berman says, smiling. All this time, the paper's 22-year-old executive editor, Assistant A. Pruck, checks out photo files just outside Berman's office. It is as though he wants to offer comfort he doesn't know how.

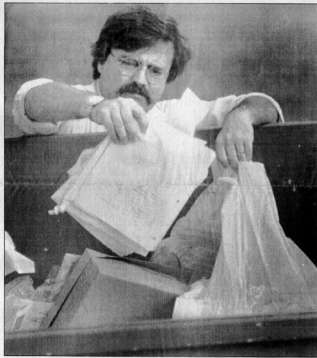
Berman sides one last in his car and returns. KLOS-FM rocks the afternoon. "An... you just missed a good one," says one of the staffers. This day Berman was the singular generational gap—music—inspiring Berman. "I was a Beatles-Bill Dylan kind of guy."

There is a voice. Today, for the first time, Berman looks his age. He looks 40 in a day.

Never was he so close, he glances at his position, the student paper was awarded a national including first place in 1984, 1985 and 1988. The California Page 2

JAY! 11 years on the elephant's back

It's come to this



Menem Menem goofily. Jay Berman, with a dandy clump of facial hair, prepares for a feast.

Beloved adviser's armor cracks

By Scott French
Staff writer

Jay Berman couldn't help but grin. The half-smiled apple he'd plucked from a Venice market's garbanzo bin was the first food he'd tasted in days.

But the smile couldn't replace the shame of the former Cal State Fullerton newspaper's face. Berman, once a cornerstone of the industry, mailed the last two his national jacket and checked away, searching for a secretary in which to

enjoy his job. "Three months after accepting the 'Golden Handshake' from CSUF's office attempting to fill the university's teaching ranks, Berman has traded his Manhattan Beach abode for a cardboard box in San Diego's Fremont university. "I'm up this week, and I've got a pad," says the 52-year-old Berman, 55. "I just wish I had a car."

Berman has learned the hard way how gently his status is negotiable. "The week after receiving his handshake, he

got on out. "I know I shouldn't have blown the whole deal on crack," Berman says, a little embarrassed. "But you know what they say: One hit and you're hooked." His wife, Irene, looked him up of her life after he sold her jewelry to buy drugs. "Irene and I bought," he means. "And Mr. Jones don't care how you get it."

"I just want a little weed, and who didn't?" says Rich Nicchols, a law firm. Page 2

"That hairy guy who alienates those up in his apartment," Stuart Durando returns to fill 8 a.m. sports deadline. "I'm not the most street in newspaper class."

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Oct. 16, 1982: Marie Montgomery complains about

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BLIND JUSTICE

The brew was flowing and the fun was flowing, and that could mean just one thing: another Christmas bash at Manhattan Beach. But the annual Berman bash turned instantly — quite literally — when former-architect brought truth to law. Parliament of the formals. Evicted! Now Jay Berman went on the campaign, and three partners were handed at area hospitals for genital warts.

"You can make fun of the

Titan, you can do on Buddy Holly, you can praise 'The Rose' (Cherrie) — named an obscurely mentioned Berman (then born in photo art, with obligations in hand, surrounded by fellow friends). But don't mess with my guy George Clinton (Brew).

Police charged Berman with "being too hairy," and he spent a night sobering up in Manhattan Beach's jail. "It was no big deal," he guffed. "Just me and my dog."



See COLASPE, Page 3

Today's Program

**SHARLOTTE GIBSON
"I WILL" (LENNON-MCCARTNEY)**

+

IRENE MACHUCA BERMAN

+

JOE SALTZMAN

+

BRONWYN ANTHONY

+

TOM ELIAS

+

JOYCE GARCIA BUXTON

+

GREG NELSON

+

DEBORAH BLINDER

+

PAT DUNNE

+

SHAUNA SNOW-CAPPARELLI

+

**SHARLOTTE GIBSON
"YESTERDAY" (LENNON-MCCARTNEY)**

+

DENNIS BERMAN

Where to remember Jay

jay-irene.us

give.fullerton.edu/jay

history.dailytitan.news ("1981-92 memories")