



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:**

Georgia Berkovich

[gberkovich@midnightmission.org](mailto:gberkovich@midnightmission.org)

310-383-1795

### **The End of an Era**

**The Midnight Mission's Managing Director, Clancy Imislund, has Died at the Age of 93.  
*Once kicked out for fighting, he returned to run the organization 16 years later.***

Clancy Imislund, Managing Director of The Midnight Mission since 1974, passed away peacefully on August 24, 2020. For 46 years, he worked relentlessly, helping disenfranchised people in Skid Row find a pathway to self-sufficiency. Clancy is known worldwide for his leadership in the 12-step community, speaking globally to bring a message of life-saving hope to those in the darkest places.

Among his many accomplishments, Clancy was responsible for bringing the 12-step philosophy to The Midnight, establishing the organization as one of the first providers of addiction treatment on Skid Row, earning him the title, "The King of Skid Row." Clancy has said that what The Midnight Mission does "is the difference between giving a hungry person a fish and teaching them how to fish."

Clancy led The Midnight through the many dramatic changes occurring on Skid Row over the past five decades. During his tenure, he saw drastic changes in the population, which began to include not only homeless men but women and children, too. Clancy championed the Capital Campaign to build TMM's facility at 601 S. San Pedro Street, which opened in 2005 to handle the diverse populations The Midnight Mission now serves.

***TMM President & CEO Mike Arnold stated, "Clancy has been part of The Midnight Mission family for almost 50 years, and has a special place in our lives, and our hearts. He was my mentor, my advocate, my fellow Norwegian, who always understood and loved my Olli and Olaf jokes, and a kindred spirit in his desire to help people live better lives than they ever imagined for themselves. We can and should celebrate that we had the opportunity to spend so much time with this man whose presence was always larger than life, and recognize that we may never meet anyone who has left a bigger footprint on not only The Midnight Mission but the world at large than our friend, Clancy."***

Where Clancy's life ended was a far cry from where he began. He was born in the small town of Eau Claire, Wisconsin in 1927. At the tender age of fifteen, Clancy left home, joined the Merchant Marines, marked his sixteenth birthday in Pearl Harbor, and then joined the U.S. Navy at the age of 17. After the war, while in college, Clancy began drinking with other Veterans and growing more



dependent on alcohol. Despite not liking the taste, he continued to drink because it was "the thing to do." Alcohol slowly took control of his life, and after a 15 year downhill battle, Clancy found himself alone and penniless on the streets of Skid Row. He had lost everything, his career as a successful marketing executive, friends, and his family. Only the clothes on his back and portable typewriter remained, which he pawned for ten dollars so he could function a bit longer.

When Clancy was thrown out of The Midnight on October 31, 1958, after a brief scuffle, no one dreamed that one day he would return to become the organization's leader. Back out on the street again, Clancy realized he had finally hit bottom. His recovery began by his walking 71 blocks, in the rain, to an alcoholic rehabilitation center on Wilshire and Fairfax. Upon entering, Clancy was finally willing to do whatever it might take to get his life back. Under the instruction of a mentor, Clancy found a job, a plan for life, and began his journey on the road of recovery.

After five years of sobriety and laborious progress on his part, his wife and family reunited. He made his way back into the work world and, after some time, became an executive at KHJ radio and television in Los Angeles, where he was instrumental in introducing the "boss radio" format. During this time, he began working with alcoholics and speaking to civic groups about alcoholism and rehabilitation. He had found his passion in helping others get their lives back. No one could describe alcoholism or talk to "drunks" the way that Clancy could.

*"Clancy Imislund was the Jonas Salk of recovery," TMM supporter and friend, actor/activist Ed Begley, Jr. explained. "With 12 steps (and often 12 good jokes), he could inoculate a large room, or one lonely and desperate soul with a cure that, unlike polio, didn't last a lifetime, but one manageable a day at a time. The millions of people that he touched around the world will never be the same."*

In 1974, Clancy was enjoying a second successful career in publishing and radio promotion, when a member of TMM's Board of Directors asked if he knew of any candidates that were qualified for the Managing Director position. He could find no one that would take the job and decided to do it himself on an interim basis. Clancy discovered his true calling and was so effective using his talents that he stayed on permanently.

Over the years, Clancy had a profound impact at The Midnight and in the lives of the thousands of people who have come through our doors. Clancy brought an unmatched level of empathy and understanding to the organization. **TMM Board member and former President and CEO Larry Adamson wrote, "A great man has been called to his place in God's kingdom. Everywhere I traveled and spoke of The Midnight Mission, Clancy's name would immediately become the subject. He was**



*a man who had more impact on humanity than anyone I ever had the privilege to know. God, thank you for allowing me the privilege to have shared the leadership of The Midnight Mission with him. Until we meet again, my brother, until we meet again. Rest in Peace."*

Never one to mince words, Clancy was known for his direct, no-nonsense demeanor, but also his approachability. He always seemed to have the time to listen and provide a few words of wisdom. To say that Clancy was the heart and soul of The Midnight would be an understatement. Clancy saved homeless lives, as well as the lives of alcoholics all over the world. He offered hope to everyone: rich and poor, those living in tents and boxes, and those living in Beverly Hills mansions. They would all come to the Midnight to get his help to beat alcoholism. **Longtime friend and TMM supporter, entertainer Dick Van Dyke said of Clancy, "He was one of a kind. How many of us owe our lives to him?!"**

The cornerstone to recovery is one alcoholic helping another alcoholic. For over 61 years, Clancy lived a life that mattered and showed others by his example, how helping one person help another could make an enormous difference to those whom the world may consider hopeless. The traditions he established will have a ripple effect on the lives of those who knew him and will continue to impact for generations to come. **"Clancy was the most influential person in my life," TMM board member and friend Steve Watson said. "He taught me that it is our great honor to be able to help another human being, no matter what their pain or suffering or needs are. He helped give me a purpose for my life, and that is to help my fellow man, woman, or child."**

To carry on his legacy, Clancy leaves his five children, fifteen grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and thousands of friends who considered him their teacher and mentor. He was preceded in death by his wife, Charlotte, and his son.

**About The Midnight Mission:** Founded in 1914, The Midnight Mission offers paths to self-sufficiency to men, women, and children who have lost direction. Our emergency services and 12-step recovery, family living, job training, education, and workforce development programs offer a compassionate bridge to achieve and maintain healthy, productive lives. We remove obstacles and provide the accountability and structure that people who are experiencing homelessness need to be productive in their communities. Our conviction and commitment to their success define us. For additional information, please visit [www.midnightmission.org](http://www.midnightmission.org).