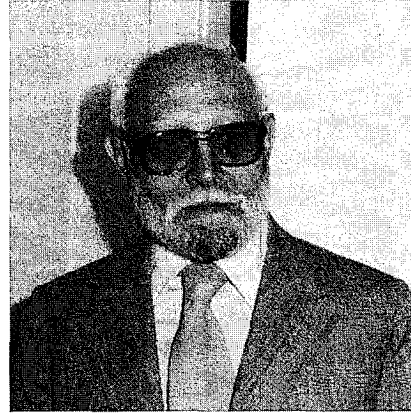


## Sam Venturella, Rest in Peace.

by Joseph L. Bast

Well, I lost another friend last week. Sam Venturella, small of stature but big of heart, a natty dresser with a carefully trimmed snow-white beard and shiny bald head, died of cancer at the age of 78.

Sam had the three attributes of every great teacher: patience, a deep knowledge of his subject, and a contagious enthusiasm that made learning an adventure. Sam had hundreds, probably thousands, of students over the years. His classrooms, though, were his dining room, the backrooms of restaurants, and small storefronts rented over the years by the Henry George School.



Sam wasn't an academic, though he could easily have become one. He attracted adult students willing to pay a modest tuition to study an unconventional subject, without the promise of credits or the elaborate pomp and circumstance of a university.

Sam was devoted to the ideas of Henry George. Georgists, like all of us who think we've glimpsed the truth, can be dogmatic, but Sam never lectured me, never criticized me for not being a true believer, and never gave up trying to win me over.

Georgism for Sam was less about doctrine and more about justice, freedom, and love of one's fellow man. During the past year he was working on a paper exploring the theological roots of rights in land. We often discussed his latest ideas at the conference table at Heartland's office.

Sam was one of the first persons I ever met outside the university who had devoted his life to ideas — finding them, learning them, teaching them. I learned from him that it was a noble calling. And he stuck with a set of ideas despite their out-of-hand rejection by people who know almost nothing about land, taxes, or justice, the subjects Sam knew so well. Sam was a model of graciousness while his critics often made fools of themselves without knowing it.

Sam probably attended Heartland events more regularly than anyone but Diane and me, and he often asked the first question. I will sorely miss seeing him at our upcoming events.

Sam is survived by his lovely wife Dorothy and many children and grandchildren. Donations in his name can be made to The Henry George School, 417 South Dearborn Street #510, Chicago, Illinois 60605. 