

Meet Our New Regional Director...

CORNELIA GOULD

Representing Districts 22 and 23 on the ACBL National Board

By Jessica Dee Rohm

Some people measure their lives in years; Cornelia Gould measures hers in horizons—legal, nautical, and now, bridge regional director. From Pasadena to the Pacific and beyond, her story is one of curiosity, courage, and community.

Early Roots and Global Perspectives

Born and raised in Pasadena, California, Cornelia showed an early appetite for exploration and learning. In high school, she spent a year as an AFS exchange student in Johannesburg, South Africa—an experience that opened her eyes to a world far beyond her California roots.

After returning home, Cornelia attended UC Davis and graduated from Pitzer College with a degree in Political Science. Her intellectual curiosity and commitment to rigorous thinking led her to law school, where she earned her Juris Doctor and became a member of the California Bar. Never one to stop learning, she also earned a master's degree in Taxation.

A Career in Law and a Leap to Freedom

Cornelia spent over two decades practicing as an ERISA attorney—specializing in retirement plan law—with several prominent San Francisco firms. From 1977 through 1998, she built a respected career advising on complex financial and regulatory matters. But in 1998, Cornelia decided it was time for a different kind of challenge: one that traded legal briefs for blue water and boardrooms for the open sea.

Five Years Under Sail

When her husband, Ed Gould, retired in 2007, the couple embarked on an extraordinary new chapter—literally casting off into the unknown. They moved onto a sailboat, and spent the next five years exploring the world's oceans.

Their voyage began along the Mexican and Central American coasts before they crossed the vast Pacific in 2010. Starting from Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands, they navigated to the Marquesas, Tuamotus, the Societies, Cook Islands, American Samoa, Samoa, Tonga, and finally New Zealand. The following years took them to Fiji, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia before their odyssey ended in Brisbane, Australia, where they sold their boat in 2012.



A Cappella - Our Home from 2007-2012



The Cruising Life



A team Win at the San Diego Regional 2024 - with Michael and Mary Wells



At Denali in Alaska Summer 2024



On Komodo Island, Indonesia Summer 2025



With Grandchildren in New Jersey August 2025

"It was the adventure of a lifetime," Cornelia recalls. "Every day brought a new horizon—sometimes calm, sometimes challenging—but always unforgettable."

From the High Seas to the Bridge Table

After returning to land, the Goulds settled first in Walnut Creek, then Incline Village, Nevada, and now Indian Wells, California. Along the way, they discovered a new shared passion: bridge.

Cornelia and Ed joined the ACBL in 2011, initially while back on shore between voyages. Their real immersion into the bridge world began at Rossmoor in Walnut Creek where they played duplicate for the first time. Then it progressed when they moved to Incline Village, where they became directors and founded the Top of Tahoe Bridge Club, hosting weekly summer games. Their involvement deepened through Unit 465 in Carson City, where Cornelia served on the Board and co-chaired a Sectional Tournament. She was slated to chair the following year's event—but then COVID-19 hit.

Still, Cornelia's leadership was undeterred. She was elected as one of her Unit's representatives to the D21 Board, later serving on its Executive Committee. After moving south in 2024, she transitioned to representing D22 on the ACBL Advisory Council. In 2025, she became a member of both the D22 and Unit 533 Boards, serving as D22's District Tournament Coordinator and STaC (Sectional Tournament at Clubs) Coordinator, and as Secretary of Unit 533.

Life Today: Balance and Adventure

Cornelia's calendar may be full of bridge commitments, but her zest for life extends well beyond the card table. She enjoys walking Harley, her yellow lab; playing bocce ball and trivia; staying active with water aerobics; and spending time with family and friends—including Ed, two children and five grandchildren.

Summers are devoted to travel—a well-earned escape from the desert heat of Indian Wells. Cruises are a favorite, especially those featuring ACBL bridge onboard. "We love the combination," she says. "Traveling the world while playing the game we love—it's perfect."

Looking Ahead

Whether navigating complex legal codes, the open sea, or a tricky 3NT contract, Cornelia approaches life with the same qualities: intelligence, persistence, and grace. "There's always something new to learn," she says with a smile. "And that's what keeps life interesting."

From Pasadena to Papeete, and now from the bridge table to the ACBL boardroom, Cornelia Gould continues to chart her own remarkable course—one defined by curiosity, courage, and connection. ♣