

## Robert R. Augsburger:

Early Visionary of the Land Trust Alliance

Robert R. “Bob” Augsburger, a former vice president of Stanford University, the first executive director of the Peninsula Open Space Trust, and the first chair of the board of directors of the Land Trust Exchange, as the Land Trust Alliance was then called, died in December at his California home at the age of 83. Below, some fellow board members pay tribute to Bob and his vision for the land trust movement.

“What a kind, warm and dedicated man,” says Ben Emory, former Land Trust Exchange board member who serves currently on the boards of Land for Maine’s Future and Downeast Coastal Conservancy.

“Bob was a generation older than the rest of us who were founders and on the original board. I remember how much he loved working with us young ‘uns and everyone else in the land trust world. At one of our gatherings, his son accompanied us on a field trip. Bob told me that evening that his son said to him, ‘Dad, this is the greatest group of people you have ever worked with.’ Bob very much agreed.”

Gordon Abbott, who also served with Bob, remembers that sometimes finances were tight in those early days: “In the 1970s, out of money but not out of luck, Bob and I asked our assistant director to sell off our stamp collection to the offices on every floor of our Boston location. We made \$400 from our door-to-door sales pitches! When no one else knew where we were going, Bob’s leadership led us in the right direction and helped to put our organization on the map.”

Joan Vilms, a broker/consultant specializing in land conservation in Santa Rosa, California, remarks on Bob’s warm personality: “What I remember most about Bob was his ever-present smile and bemused demeanor.



Bob and Jean Ann Augsburger

“Imagine how exhilarating it was, after working alone in uncharted territory, to join forces with colleagues and give birth to the land trust movement!”

I don’t recall ever seeing him angry or flustered when we served together on the founding board.”

“Those early days were invigorating and joyous,” says Joan. “We were a small handful of land-saving practitioners coming together for the first time. Imagine doing this before computers (and e-mail!), before *The Conservation Easement Handbook*, and before Rally. Imagine how exhilarating it was, after working alone in uncharted territory, to join forces with colleagues and give birth to the land trust movement! Guided by Bob’s gentle temperament as board chair, diverse, strong and passionate personalities merged and worked in unison to build the Land Trust Alliance’s solid foundation. I’m honored to have been there with that remarkable group of people.”

Bill Sellers says that the challenge for Bob was great. “He had to meld an effective board from a motley crew of hard-charging, risk-taking innovators on one side and more conservative process-types on the other, and guide us through strategic planning and fundraising to create a modern organization. It’s a tribute to his consensual style, flavored with wit and humor, that we came together and went from facing extinction or at least hibernation to an organization that grew with confidence and solid achievements. He felt right at home with these young fun-loving folks, and in fact led us in occasional mischief.”

Jean Hocker, who served on the board for three years with Bob before being named president in 1987, says, “When new endeavors succeed, it’s usually due to a fortunate combination of the right people at the right time. How lucky we are that Bob, who had already had an illustrious career in business and education, was willing to devote his talents and experience to land trusts.”

“In his role as head of the Peninsula Open Space Trust, Bob saw how much leverage there could be in knitting land trusts together in a network of information, learning and communication. He was willing to chair the board of a fledgling organization that was trying to do something new and creative. Bob’s steady hand, firm but congenial leadership, and belief in the cause were just what every young organization should wish for. Bob also kept a sense of humor and perspective that made working with him a huge pleasure. Those of us who were privileged to work with him, and indeed the entire land trust movement today owe Bob a huge debt of gratitude.” •

Read Bill Sellers’ history of the Land Trust Exchange at [www.lta.org/savingland](http://www.lta.org/savingland).

While Stewart Udall was secretary of the interior, the National Park Service added four national parks, six national monuments, nine recreation areas, 20 historic sites and 56 wildlife refuges. Canyonlands National Park (pictured) was created during that time.



NEAL HERBERT

## Two Who Touched Many Lives

EDGAR WAYBURN, father of former Land Trust Alliance board member Laurie Wayburn, protected more than 100 million acres in his lifetime. He died at the age of 103 in March.

A physician who later served as president of the Sierra Club in the 1960s, Dr. Wayburn received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1999. The Sierra Club called him “the 20th-century John Muir.” Legend has it that upon receiving his medal from President Clinton, Dr. Wayburn grasped Mr. Clinton’s hand with a strong grip and proceeded to tell the president of the many natural areas his administration had failed to protect.

STEWART L. UDALL, interior secretary in the 1960s whose strong ties with lawmakers, conservationists, writers and others led to the addition of vast tracts to the country’s land holdings and to landmark statutes on air, water and land conservation, also died in March.

President Obama, quoted in the *New York Times*, said that Mr. Udall “left an indelible mark on this nation and inspired countless Americans who will continue his fight for clean air, clean water and to maintain our many natural treasures.”

“Mr. Udall left an indelible mark on this nation and inspired countless Americans who will continue his fight for clean air, clean water and to maintain our many natural treasures.”

President Obama, as quoted in the *New York Times*