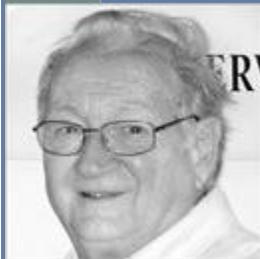


ANSEL BURT CHAPLIN

Obituary [Condolences](#) [Flowers](#)



CHAPLIN, Ansel Burt Ansel Burt Chaplin, 85, of Truro, founder of the nationally recognized Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts which has helped preserve more than 8,000 acres of Cape Cod's fragile environment, died peacefully on January 27, 2017 with his wife, Hon. Anne Kenney Chaplin, at his side. Mr. Chaplin co-founded The Truro Conservation Trust, a local non-profit land trust, in 1981 and served as its chair for many years. He helped to preserve more than 250 acres in the Cape Cod town, including High Head and many scenic spots along his beloved Pamet River. In 1984 he began convening several other local land trusts on the lower Cape so that they could learn from one another and, two years later, they founded The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc., the "oldest self-sustaining regional network of land trusts in the U.S.," according to the national Land Trust Alliance. Mr. Chaplin served as President of The Compact for its first 15 years. Now 30 years old, The Compact represents all of the land trusts on Cape Cod and five watershed associations, 26 groups in all. Mr. Chaplin also led the effort to create a revolving capital loan fund for land trusts to buy open space through The Compact, which to date has enabled the purchase of more than \$20 million of new conservation land on the Cape. Mark H. Robinson,

long-time executive director of The Compact, said, "Ansel inspired many other volunteers to contribute their minds, money and muscle to the task of saving special places on Cape Cod, especially daunting in the ramped-up development boom of the 1980s and 90s. He believed in the adage that the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in times of crisis, did nothing. The Cape was in crisis and he brought his prodigious talents to bear on its environmental problems. He brought me into the fold, for which I will be forever grateful."

Robinson noted that The Compact's sole annual award is named after Mr. Chaplin for those who "demonstrate excellence in the preservation of open space on Cape Cod." Mr. Chaplin attended the 30th annual meeting of The Compact in 2016. In 2002 national Land Trust Alliance Chairman Robert Bowers praised Mr. Chaplin's leadership, "While tensions among parochial communities may not be unique to the Cape, they do seem to be magnified. To have been able to form and sustain The Compact as a regional idea rising above these differences is a mark of distinction. We expect that The Compact will continue to serve as a national model of collaboration among land trusts." Mr. Chaplin also helped to establish the Truro Neighborhood Association, a grass-roots citizen's issues forum, and was a very important guiding hand in the formation and evolution of the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown. Charles (Stormy) Mayo, Senior Scientist and Director of the Right Whale Ecology Program at CCSP, noted that he valued Ansel's wisdom and "his faithful and unwavering dedication to the ideals of conservation of the land he loved." He also served on the Board of Directors of Outer Cape Health Services, the Board of Directors of the Dexter Keezer Community Fund in Truro, and on the Truro Planning Board, the Truro Board of Health and the Truro Shellfish Advisory Committee. Mr. Chaplin was born in Deerfield, Illinois on June 12, 1931, the son of Col. Robert T. Chaplin (U.S. [Army](#)) and Ruth (Burt) Chaplin. After graduating from St. Albans School in Washington, D.C. in 1949, Ansel majored in English at [Princeton University](#) and graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1953. He received a Fulbright Fellowship for study in Paris and Algeria. He then served in the U. S. Army in Germany before attending Harvard Law School where he was a member of the winning team in the 1959 Ames Moot Court Competition. He clerked for Chief Justice Raymond S. Wilkins of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1959-60. A longtime Boston lawyer, Mr. Chaplin initially joined the firm of Gaston, Snow, Motley, and Holt (later Gaston, Snow and Ely Bartlett). He went on to form first Chaplin and Barzun (later Chaplin, Barzun, and Casner), then Chaplin and Milstein, and ultimately Chaplin & Chaplin of Boston and Orleans. He continued to practice law in Orleans and later in Truro until his death. The Cape, and especially the town of Truro, were always dear to him. A self-proclaimed Army brat, he moved repeatedly as a child, but always found a home in Truro, where

his stepmother, Lucy Elizabeth Chaplin (nee Worthington) and her family welcomed him. In 1976 he first bought a house in Truro, and he moved there permanently in 2002. In 1959 he married Maud Hazeltine, and they had three children together, Rawson, Margaret, and Jane, before divorcing in the early 1990s. In 1995 he married Anne Kenney. He is survived by Anne, Rawson, Jane, Margaret and her husband Mike Aronow, and five grandchildren, Ben, Rachel, Max, Miles, and Sam Aronow. Interment services will be private. The family will host a memorial gathering in Truro at a later date. Charitable contributions in his memory can be made to the Truro Conservation Trust, P.O. Box 327, N. Truro, MA 02652 or the environmental [charity of your choice](#) .

[View the online memorial for Ansel Burt CHAPLIN](#)

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Ansel Burt Chaplin was born in Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and came to Princeton from St. Alban's School in Washington, D.C. He majored in English, wrote his senior thesis on "John Steinbeck: Proletarian Prophet," and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He was a member of Tower Club and Literary Editor of the Daily Princetonian his senior year. After a Fulbright Year in Paris and Algiers, Ans served with the army in Germany and then went to Harvard Law School. He spent a year clerking for the Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court before spending thirteen years as an associate and then a partner of a Boston law firm. Declining to be part of a merged firm, he opened his own office with a younger associate. Ans became increasingly involved in conservation issues and founded the Truro Conservation Trust in 1981 serving as its chair for many years. In 1986 he brought together a number of conservation organizations in the area and was instrumental in forming the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts which is now "the oldest self-sustaining regional network of land trusts in the United States" and has helped preserve over 8,000 acres of fragile environments on Cape Cod. Ans died on January 27, 2017, in Truro, Massachusetts. He is survived by his wife, Anne Kenney, his three children and five grandchildren.

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Christopher L. Webber