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Remembering Richard H, Goodwin, Conservation Pioneer

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in memoriam
**Remembering Richard H. Goodwin,
Conservation Pioneer**

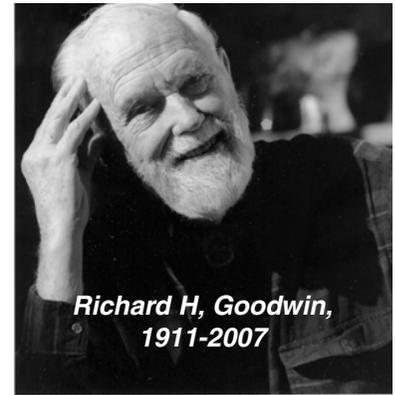
by Juliana Barrett

Dr. Richard H. Goodwin, a world leader in land preservation, died on July 6, 2007, at the age of 96. Goodwin leaves a legacy of land conservation and preservation both locally and globally. Two term president of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and co-founder of the Connecticut Chapter, in 1960 Goodwin orchestrated the then-largest land deal in TNC's history with the protection of 3,000 forested acres in northern California.

Here in Connecticut, Goodwin and his wife, the former Esther Bemis, donated the first parcels of land which were to become the Burnham Brook Preserve. Now covering over 1,000 acres, the area includes forest, fields, streams and rocky outcrops in East Haddam. Goodwin also donated his own home as part of the Preserve to house scientists conducting research. The Preserve is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy. Dave Gumbart, of TNC, said, "I joined The Nature Conservancy in 1990, when Dick would have been about 80 years old. As I came to know Dick over the years, one thing I was always impressed by was not the considerable list of achievements he had been involved with TNC, and conservation in general, but the fact that he was always looking forward. There was always more to be done, and our conversations over his last few years inevitably focused on what was next."

Goodwin's leadership and vision helped energize the conservation movement and the protection of million of acres worldwide, yet the credit was often left to others.

According to Steve Gephard, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, longtime associate and friend of Goodwin, "He understood that people and programs needed time to think about things and get 'on-board' with a



project. He also probably sensed that he was ahead of his time and that the truths apparent to him now would be obvious to others years later....It will be difficult for future generations of conservationists to fully appreciate the huge debt they owe Dick Goodwin."

Goodwin was the Katharine Blunt professor emeritus of botany at Connecticut College where he served as professor of botany and chair of the botany department from 1944 until 1976, and helped the college create one of the first environmental studies programs in the country. He and the late Dr. William Niering, his long-time colleague at Connecticut College, collaborated on many research and environmental projects, including their support of the completion of the Route 11 highway through Salem, Montville and East Lyme as a greenway project. They argued that protected open space along a carefully designed highway corridor would do more to protect the environment than leaving the area open to development pressures.

Those who knew him will remember Goodwin's quick wit and the twinkle in his eyes, yet we all will benefit from the conservation and protection of the many acres of land that are now protected in perpetuity through his foresight.



Connecticut College Arboretum

Botany students get a lesson from Dick Goodwin in the Connecticut College Arboretum's greenhouse.