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## CCOM HONORS THE LEGACY OF RICHARD KAHN

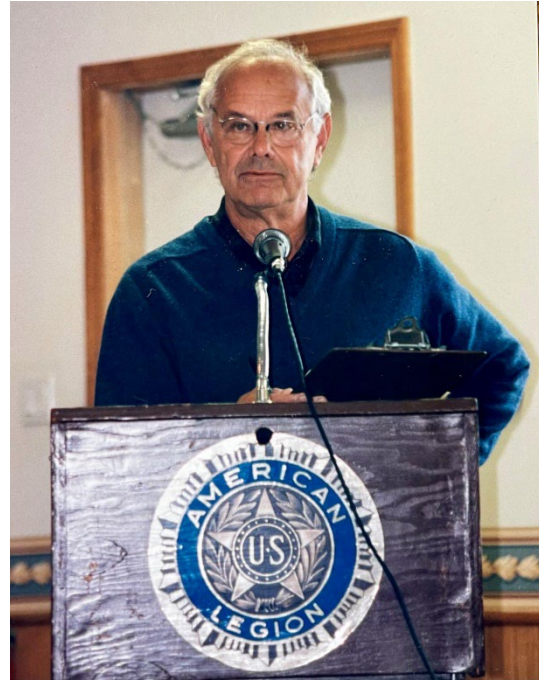
April 25, 1931 - November 17, 2023

CCOM honors the legacy of Richard Kahn, who served on the Board of CCOM from 1990 to 2021. Richard deserves enormous credit for so much of what CCOM achieved during that time, through application of his considerable legal skills, organizational leadership, quiet fortitude, and a creative approach to complex issues. In addition, Richard deserves credit for his incredible ability to work collaboratively and productively with everyone.



At the point when he joined the organization, many of the large land parcels in Montauk (Hither Woods, Theodore County Park, Camp Hero) had already been saved from development, and work toward preserving Shadmoor, Culloden, and Amsterdam Beach was in process. With his strong guidance, the organization's focus over time became directed more toward water quality and reining in overdevelopment.

Following his retirement from the New York City law firm Debevoise and Plimpton, Richard applied his fierce intellect and rigor to a host of environmental issues in Montauk. He was particularly concerned with water quality, especially that of Lake Montauk, and brought his legal expertise to bear in making strong arguments to aid the Town in dealing with pollution going into the lake. He advocated for Lake Montauk to become a no-discharge zone and against illegal dock expansion. Zoning and development were also key concerns; he was a strong advocate for better code enforcement and called attention to egregious environmental violations. He was also an advocate of local Dark Skies (lighting) legislation and of adopting the Community Preservation Fund.



Richard’s impact was also on CCOM as an organization and its effectiveness. He was instrumental in securing important grants year-over-year to keep the organization viable. As the complexity of the environmental challenges facing Montauk grew, it was Richard who helped professionalize what had been an all-volunteer organization to include paid staff. With this support, CCOM was able to refine its mission to preserve and protect the unique environment and ecology of Montauk through education, advocacy, and grassroots citizen action and to focus its work plan on the key challenges: water quality, coastal resiliency, and environmental sustainability.

In addition to Richard’s public service, he had many other fascinating sides, as this [lovely article about his garden](#) with his wife, Elaine Peterson, attests.

More details about Richard’s life and work are covered in [his obituary](#).

As Board Chair David Freudenthal writes: “After knowing Richard and his family for decades and learning so much from him about CCOM, it meant a great deal to me to be able to serve with him in his last years on the board. His passion and conviction inspired my interest and deepened my understanding of both our environmental challenges and the opportunities to make things better. The achievements we are seeing today—like the delivery of sand on our beaches through FIMP—are built on the foundation of Richard’s work. That I can raise oysters in Lake Montauk is a direct result of his successes in improving the Lake’s water quality. One of my fondest memories was sharing 90 oysters with Richard and Elaine in celebration of his 90th birthday! I am grateful both for his

generosity of spirit in sharing his knowledge and for all that Richard did to build this organization in service to our community.

While Richard will be dreadfully missed by all who knew him, his legacy lives on in every inch of Montauk.

For more personal recollections from CCOM Directors and Richard's role in the organization, click [HERE](#).