

TONY LOOK:
1917-2006

'John Muir of S.C. County' remembered

BIO-L

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SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

8-11-06
Tony Look, an environmentalist who was the primary force behind the expansion of Castle Rock, Butano and Big Basin state parks, died Saturday in Davis. He was 88.

Look was drawn to Santa Cruz in 1966, when, as conservation chairman for the Sierra Club's Northern California chapter, he built a coalition with the Save-the-Redwoods League to preserve a patch of redwoods set to go under the ax near Big Basin's Berry Creek Falls.

Two years later, Look was in Big Basin again, this time to pre-

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serve 320 acres earmarked for a subdivision by a private developer. The state wanted to buy the property but fell \$12,000 short. Look, a Los Altos pharmacist, raised the money in less than a month before the chain saws moved in. The effort reinvigorated The Sempervirens Fund, one of the state's oldest environmental organizations, after years of dormancy, and Look was at the helm.

The late state Sen. Henry Mello once called Look Santa Cruz County's own John Muir.

"Tony was a force to be reckoned with for years in Santa Cruz," said Dave Vincent, Santa Cruz district director of State Parks. "He was the driving force for protecting Castle Rock State Park."

The creation of the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail, which stretches more than 10 miles from Castle Rock through Big Basin to Waddell Creek Beach, is considered one of Look's finest accom-

plishments and one of the state's premier hikes.

After buying land and obtaining the necessary permission for public access from property owners, Look organized an estimated 2,500 volunteers to build the trail over the course of one week-end in 1969.

The Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Association was born, and continues to sponsor hikes each Sunday, as well as monthly trail maintenance projects.

Born in Eureka in 1917, the grandson of a Pacific Lumber logger, Look said he became active in environmental issues after returning from South America, where he served in the Army Air Corps.

"When I came back out of the service, Humboldt was a changed county," Look recalled in a 1988 interview with the Sentinel. "During the war they cut the redwoods like matchsticks. There was flooding and erosion — all of the problems inherent when trees are taken off the land in reckless fashion."

The erosion had, in fact, washed away his family's burial plot.

During his time with the Sierra Club, Look also addressed issues on coastal

management, the proposed California aqueduct project and public access to San Francisco Bay. He helped stop the damming of the Eel River to prevent flooding of the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

In the late '70s, Look's activism expanded to include environmental problems on a global scale. He founded the first environmental conference between the United States and Japan, according to friend and author Denzil Verardo. A decade later, the meetings became known as the Pacific Rim Conference.

Look served as executive director of the Sempervirens Fund until his retirement in 1985. Today, the nonprofit group, named after Sequoia sempervirens, the Latin word for redwood trees, has 7,500 members and has saved more than 23,000 acres.

With his wife Mildred, he continued in later years to take hikes in the Los Altos Hills and led overseas nature trips.

Tony Look

BORN: Dec. 15, 1917, in Eureka.

DIED: Aug. 5, 2006, in Davis.

SURVIVORS: Wife of 67 years, Mildred Look of Davis; daughter Andrea Ellicott of Bellingham, Wash.; and son Dennis Look of Placerville.

AWARDS: Restore the Earth Award from the United Nations, 1988; Golden Bear Award from the California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1974; and the Forest Conservationist of the Year Award from the California Wildlife Federation.

SERVICES: Oct. 8 at Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

MEMORIAL: Contributions are preferred to Sempervirens Fund, Drawer BE, Los Altos, CA, 94023. Call 650-968-4509 or visit www.sempervirens.org.



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