

Dear GEAA members and friends,

Today I'm writing to you to celebrate the life and mourn the passing of [George P. Mitchell](#), GEAA's founding benefactor. Mr. Mitchell passed away on July 26th at the age of 94.

The son of Greek immigrants, Mr. Mitchell's life was filled with monumental accomplishments, among them the creation of [The Woodlands](#) in 1974. This community in Houston redefined the American suburb and is still recognized today as a model for America's most livable communities. With the addition of wooded trails, pocket parks and preservation of woodlands throughout, Mitchell offered a multimillion-dollar neighborhood infrastructure to buyers of the lowest-priced homes as well as those geared to higher-income buyers. Based on the concept of designing with nature, the Woodlands became the inspiration for the Low Impact Development movement here in the United States.

Always a mover and shaker, Mr. Mitchell provided the impetus to bring together thousands of like-minded Texans by providing the funding that resulted in the creation of GEAA. In 2004 GEAA received a three year challenge grant for \$500,000/year from Mr. Mitchell. The grant challenged GEAA to work with students and faculty at central Texas institutions of higher learning, with citizens and private businesses, and with scientists and other professionals committed to sustainable land and water use practices in the Edwards Aquifer region.

"Given the rapid growth in the Austin/San Antonio corridor, I believe a strong case can be made for a major conservation commitment," said George P. Mitchell in 2004. "I'm also familiar with the way karst limestone aquifers like the Edwards are uniquely vulnerable to pollution and excessive pumping from urban development and agricultural activities."

Mr. Mitchell's generosity and foresight enabled GEAA to leverage other funds and create the organization that you know today. The money was also distributed to our member groups - resulting in the defeat of many ill advised projects and the preservation of hundreds of acres of Hill Country land.

The work funded by the grant was, in turn, inspired by the late [Ian McHarg](#), an architect whose book "Design with Nature" remains the seminal guide to environmentally sound development practices. Before his death, Mr. McHarg was a personal friend and consultant to Mr. Mitchell. Inspired by the Woodlands and the work of Mr. McHarg and others, GEAA set out to create the GEAA Low Impact Development Handbook for Edwards Aquifer. This publication is designed to address the needs of south Texas by providing instruction and case studies on designing residential and commercial sites to minimize the water uptake by plants, the need to irrigate during times of drought, provide maximum filtration on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone,

and enhance opportunities for infiltrating high quality water to recharge the aquifer. We expect to publish this handbook, dedicated to Mr. Mitchell, at the end of this year.

During subsequent years (2009 -2012) GEAA received generous grants from the [Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation](#), enabling us to continue the work that you know and support. Please, say a prayer and lift a glass of Edwards Aquifer water in memory of Mr. George C. Mitchell. We are extremely grateful to this Texas hero and his family for their long time support of GEAA's programs and projects. With your help, we hope to continue this work for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Annalisa Peace
Executive Director
[Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance](#)

