



Anthony Chang:
The lawmaker, who served in the state Senate, is remembered as a consensus-builder.

ANTHONY CHANG / 1944-2012

Legislator shaped environmental laws

By Gary T. Kubota

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Former state Sen. Anthony Kai Ung Chang, described as a statesman who was instrumental in shaping Hawaii environmental laws, died Tuesday morning. He was 68.

Chang died at Straub Clinic & Hospital, where he underwent cranial surgery last month after a head injury.

"He was a consensus-builder," former Hawaii Gov. John Waihee said. "That was his nature."

Chang was born September 5, 1944, in Honolulu and was in the first graduating class of the William S. Richardson School of Law in 1976.

He was elected as a Democrat to the state Senate in 1982, representing Nuuanu, Liliha, Pauoa, Alewa Heights, Chinatown, Papa_ko_lea and Pacific Heights.

He served for 12 years in the Senate, working in a number of roles, including as chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Waihee, who knew Chang as a young Democrat and fellow University of Hawaii law student, said Chang was a very good friend and a thorough researcher who spoke with people on all sides of an issue.

Waihee said Chang was chairman of the environmental committee for the 1978 Hawaii Constitutional Convention and was instrumental in shaping environmental laws that were adopted in the state Constitution.

"It's a big loss," said state Rep. Angus McKelvey (D, Olo_walu-Kapa_lua), who was a legislative aide for Chang in the 1990s.

"He taught me a lot, how to listen to all sides, not to burn bridges. He got people to see the big picture."

McKelvey said Chang was so respected for his diplomacy skills that he was made chairman of the committee that addressed the diverse interests of Native Hawaiians and water, agriculture and ocean resource advocates.

Laws Chang introduced the placement of agricultural amnesty bins at airports and fines for importing alien species, McKelvey said.

McKelvey said Chang also helped build support for the development of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Center.

He led efforts to pass a bill requiring automobile dealers to put into newly purchased vehicles in Hawaii a pamphlet informing consumers of their rights under the state's "lemon law."

The new law helped to stem complaints about dealers failing to inform consumers of their legal rights to obtain a refund or a replacement vehicle if the car they purchased turned out to be chronically defective.

After his political career, Chang worked as an attorney with the city Office of Corporation Counsel and the Liquor Commission from 1994 through 2000.

He also wrote a food column for an online publication, taught as an adjunct professor at Kapiolani Community College and Hawaii Pacific University, and led tours of historic Chinatown.

Chang is survived by wife Lisa Konove; daughters Ahnya, Cymri and Morgen; brother Nathan Chang; and sisters Leburta Chock Kanno and Melissa Chang.