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Sagarin, frequent CHDS speaker, passes in bicycle accident

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Marine ecologist Raphael Sagarin, who applied adaptability and risk in nature to homeland security education as a regular speaker at Center for Homeland Defense and Security executive programs, died May 28 from injuries sustained in a bicycle accident. He was 43.

Sagarin died after being struck from behind by a pickup truck as he rode his bicycle on State Route 77 near Oracle, Arizona. The driver faces manslaughter charges, according to media reports.

Sagarin was a research scientist with the University of Arizona Institute for the Environment. He began speaking at CHDS events in 2010 and was a regular presenter for the [Executive Leaders Program](#) and the [Radiological Emergency Preparedness \(REP\) Executive Education Program](#). He was a guest speaker at the 2011 [CHDS Alumni Education and Professional Exchange](#).



“Rafe brought many innovative and creative ideas to our programs at CHDS—he was always so full of energy and great humor,” said Ellen Gordon, CHDS Associate Director for Executive Education Programs. “He certainly inspired all of us to become more adaptable within our organizations and in our daily lives. He will be missed by everyone.”

During the 2011 CHDS alumni conference, Sagarin said he looks to risk and threats in natural organisms, how those organisms adapt to survive and apply those to organizations and even the homeland security enterprise, a concept he called “Natural Security.”

“I consult with organizations large and small, public and private, as well as with individuals, on how to be adaptable,” he notes on his web page. “All of my lessons are pulled from the massive database of nature – a 3.5 billion year history of surviving and thriving in an uncertain and risk filled world. *This work, which focuses on adaptability, can be applied to terrorism, natural disasters, cyber security, emerging infectious diseases—basically anywhere that risk, variability and uncertainty collide. Nature has a lot to tell us and none of it is classified*”

Sagarin worked on the Biosphere 2 project in which he was seeking to create a living model of the Gulf of California. He also authored two recent books, “Learning from the Octopus: How Secrets from Nature Can Help Us Fight Terrorism, Natural Disasters, and Disease” (Basic Books) and “Observation and Ecology: Broadening the Scope of Science to Understand a Complex World” (Island Press).

While pursuing his undergraduate degree at Stanford University and advanced degrees from UC Santa Barbara, Sagarin intensely studied the Monterey Bay. While earning his master’s and doctoral degrees he researched at Hopkins Marine Station, according to the alternative newspaper the Monterey County Weekly.

Joaquin Ruiz, Dean of the University of Arizona College of Science, said: “Dr. Sagarin was committed to education and research, and understood that the Biosphere was a unique platform for science and education. He represented all of us in our commitment to quality and making things better. Rafe will be deeply missed. His energy and enthusiasm were contagious, and it was a blessing to have known such wonderful colleague.”

According to the Monterey Weekly, Sagarin is survived by his wife, Rebecca Masten Crocker; two daughters; brothers Mark Sagarin of New Plymouth, New Zealand and Joshua Sagarin of Atlanta, Georgia. No plans for

services have been announced.

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