**CHRIS PALMER**

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Chris Palmer is an author, speaker, wildlife filmmaker, conservationist, educator, professor, and grandfather. He dedicated his professional career to conservation but now devotes his life to advocating for reform in aging, death, and dying. He is an end-of-life planning advocate. His 10th book, *Achieving a Good Death: A Practical Guide to the End of Life*, will be published by Rowman & Littlefield on October 1, 2024. He is a trained hospice volunteer and founded and runs an aging, death, and dying group for the Bethesda Metro Area Village.

He serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Montgomery Hospice & Prince George’s Hospice ([MHI](https://montgomeryhospice.org/)), is vice president of the Board of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland & Environs ([FCAME](https://mdfunerals.org/)), and serves on the Advisory Council for the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight ([OCO](https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/cem/)). He is on the Bethesda Metro Area Village Board and, until recently, was a Board member of the Green Burial Association of Maryland.

Chris and his wife, Gail Shearer, created and funded the [“Finishing Strong Award”](https://wavevillages.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=523430&module_id=533598) with the Washington Area Village Exchange ([WAVE](https://wavevillages.org/)) to encourage villages to hold more discussions about end-of-life issues. WAVE is the largest regional village organization in the nation.

He frequently gives presentations and workshops to community groups on aging, death, and dying issues.

Chris is also president of the [MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation](http://www.mffeducation.org/), which produces and funds IMAX films on science and conservation issues. [MacGillivray Freeman Films](https://macgillivrayfreeman.com/) is the world’s largest and most successful producer of IMAX films.

For over thirty-five years, he spearheaded the production of more than 300 hours of original programming for prime-time television and the IMAX film industry, which won him and his colleagues many awards, including two Emmys and an Oscar nomination. He has worked with Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Jane Fonda, Ted Turner, and many other celebrities. His IMAX films include *Whales*, *Wolves*, *Dolphins*, *Bears,* *Coral Reef Adventure*, and *Grand Canyon Adventure*.

During his filmmaking career, he swam with dolphins and whales, came face-to-face with sharks and Kodiak bears, camped with wolf packs, and waded hip-deep through Everglade swamps.

He has written nine books, the latest of which is [*Finding Meaning and Success: Living a Fulfilled and Productive Life*](https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Meaning-Success-Fulfilled-Productive/dp/1475850530/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3UC4F4KPZ95YT&keywords=finding+meaning+and+success+by+chris+palmer&qid=1646357305&s=books&sprefix=finding+meaning+and+succ%2Cstripbooks%2C90&sr=1-1), published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2021. All proceeds from Chris’s books go to fund scholarships for students at American University.

Starting in 2004, Chris served on American University’s full-time faculty as Distinguished Film Producer in Residence until his retirement in 2018. While at AU, he founded and directed the Center for Environmental Filmmaking at the School of Communication. He also created and taught a popular class called *Design Your Life for Success*.

Chris and his wife Gail have lived in Bethesda, Maryland, for nearly 50 years and raised three daughters. They now have nine grandchildren. Chris was a stand-up comic for five years and has advanced degrees from London and Harvard. He has jumped out of helicopters, worked on an Israeli kibbutz, and was a high school boxing champion. Chris is currently learning to juggle, draw, dance, play tennis, and play the piano. He loves standing on his hands for exercise and keeps a daily gratitude journal.

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**More information on Chris:**

Chris’s filmmaking career began in 1983 when he founded National Audubon Society Productions, a nonprofit film company and part of the National Audubon Society, which he led as president and CEO for eleven years. In 1994, he founded National Wildlife Productions, a nonprofit multimedia company and part of the National Wildlife Federation, which he led as president and CEO for ten years.

His first two published books were on wildlife filmmaking: [*Shooting in the Wild*](https://www.amazon.com/Shooting-Wild-Insiders-Account-Kingdom-ebook/dp/B003S3RL8A/ref=sr_1_1?crid=BQCMEL55DQZ0&keywords=shooting+in+the+wild+by+chris+palmer&qid=1646357834&s=books&sprefix=shooting+in+the+wild+by+chris+palmer%2Cstripbooks%2C84&sr=1-1) in 2010 and [*Confessions of a Wildlife Filmmaker*](https://www.amazon.com/Confessions-Wildlife-Filmmaker-Challenges-Industry/dp/1938954076/ref=sr_1_2?crid=9HTA0T8MFNSW&keywords=confessions+of+a+wildlife+filmmaker&qid=1646357910&s=books&sprefix=confessions+of+a+wildlife+filmmaker%2Cstripbooks%2C79&sr=1-2)in 2015. They were followed by [*Raise Your Kids to Succeed: What Every Parent Should Know*](https://www.amazon.com/Raise-Your-Kids-Succeed-Parent/dp/1475829833/ref=sr_1_1?crid=V9G0FLA6Q2FD&keywords=Raise+Your+Kids+to+Succeed%3A+What+Every+Parent+Should+Know&qid=1646357990&s=books&sprefix=raise+your+kids+to+succeed+what+every+parent+should+know%2Cstripbooks%2C64&sr=1-1) in 2017 and [*Now What, Grad? Your Path to Success After College*](https://www.amazon.com/Now-What-Grad-Success-College/dp/1475823657/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3JAMYBY9Z8LS&keywords=Now+What%2C+Grad%3F+Your+Path+to+Success+After+College&qid=1646358101&s=books&sprefix=now+what%2C+grad+your+path+to+success+after+college%2Cstripbooks%2C53&sr=1-1)(First Edition in 2015 and the Second Edition in 2018). In 2019, he wrote [*College Teaching at its Best: Inspiring Students to be Enthusiastic, Lifelong Learners*](https://www.amazon.com/College-Teaching-Its-Best-Enthusiastic-ebook/dp/B07PK6GML7/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2DDB82RO7ROJD&keywords=College+Teaching+at+its+Best%3A+Inspiring+Students+to+be+Enthusiastic%2C+Lifelong+Learners&qid=1646358165&s=books&sprefix=college+teaching+at+its+best+inspiring+students+to+be+enthusiastic%2C+lifelong+learners%2Cstripbooks%2C74&sr=1-1)*,* and in 2021, he wrote [*Finding Meaning and Success: Living a Fulfilled and Productive Life*](https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Meaning-Success-Fulfilled-Productive/dp/1475850530/ref=sr_1_1?crid=DA0VRA3EVYTO&keywords=Finding+Meaning+and+Success%3A+Living+a+Fulfilled+and+Productive+Life&qid=1646360951&s=books&sprefix=finding+meaning+and+success+living+a+fulfilled+and+productive+life%2Cstripbooks%2C147&sr=1-1). Rowman & Littlefield published his last five books.

His next book for Rowman & Littlefield will be on death and dying. Bethesda Communications Group published [*Love, Dad*](https://www.amazon.com/Love-Dad-Letters-Father-Daughters/dp/173215015X/ref=sr_1_6?crid=20ZXILNO1DURN&keywords=Love%2C+Dad+by+Chris+palmer&qid=1646361016&s=books&sprefix=love%2C+dad+by+chris+palmer%2Cstripbooks%2C88&sr=1-6) in 2018, a 700-page book of his letters to his daughters, and [*Open Heart: When Open-Heart Surgery Becomes Your Best Option*](https://www.amazon.com/Open-Heart-Chris-Palmer/dp/1735772992/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1R752XX9XZ6R2&keywords=open+heart+by+chris+palmer&qid=1646357670&s=books&sprefix=open+heart+by+chris+palmer%2Cstripbooks%2C83&sr=1-1) in 2021, a book co-written with his daughter Christina (a family doctor). Chris and Christina have written half a dozen books for children on health-related issues.

Chris gives pro bono presentations and workshops on various topics, including how to live a meaningful and successful life, aging well, achieving a good death, living well to die well, medical aid-in-dying, decluttering and death cleaning, completing advance directives, writing memoirs, composing legacy letters and ethical wills, funeral planning, green ways of body disposition, and hospice care. In 2015, [Chris spoke on wildlife filmmaking at TEDxAmericanUniversity](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3SnIMZ43EQ). While teaching at AU, he was a stand-up comedian and performed regularly in DC comedy clubs for five years. In 2017, he founded and now directs a group on aging and dying well as part of the Bethesda Metro Area Village, where he serves as a Board member.

Chris was honored with the Frank G. Wells Award from the Environmental Media Association and the Lifetime Achievement Award for Media at the 2009 International Wildlife Film Festival. In 2010, he was honored at the Green Globe Awards in Los Angeles with the Environmental Film Educator of the Decade award. In 2011, he received the IWFF Wildlife Hero of the Year Award for his “determined campaign to reform the wildlife filmmaking industry.” In 2012, he received the Ronald B. Tobias Award for Achievement in Science and Natural History Filmmaking Education. In addition, he received the 2014 University Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching at AU, the 2015 University Film and Video Association Teaching Award, and the 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Wildlife Film Festival.

In his twenty years before becoming a film producer, Chris was an officer in the Royal Navy, an engineer, a business consultant, an energy analyst, an environmental activist, chief energy advisor to a senior U.S. senator, and a political appointee in the Environmental Protection Agency under President Jimmy Carter.

Chris holds a B.S. with First Class Honors in Mechanical Engineering, an M.S. in Ocean Engineering and Naval Architecture from University College London, and a master’s in Public Administration from Harvard University. In addition, he was a Kennedy Scholar and received a Harkness Fellowship.

Born in Hong Kong, Chris grew up in England and immigrated to the United States in 1972. He is married to Gail Shearer and is the father of three grown daughters: Kimberly, Christina, and Jennifer. He and Gail have endowed a scholarship for environmental film students at AU to honor Chris’s parents and encourage the next generation to save the planet.