

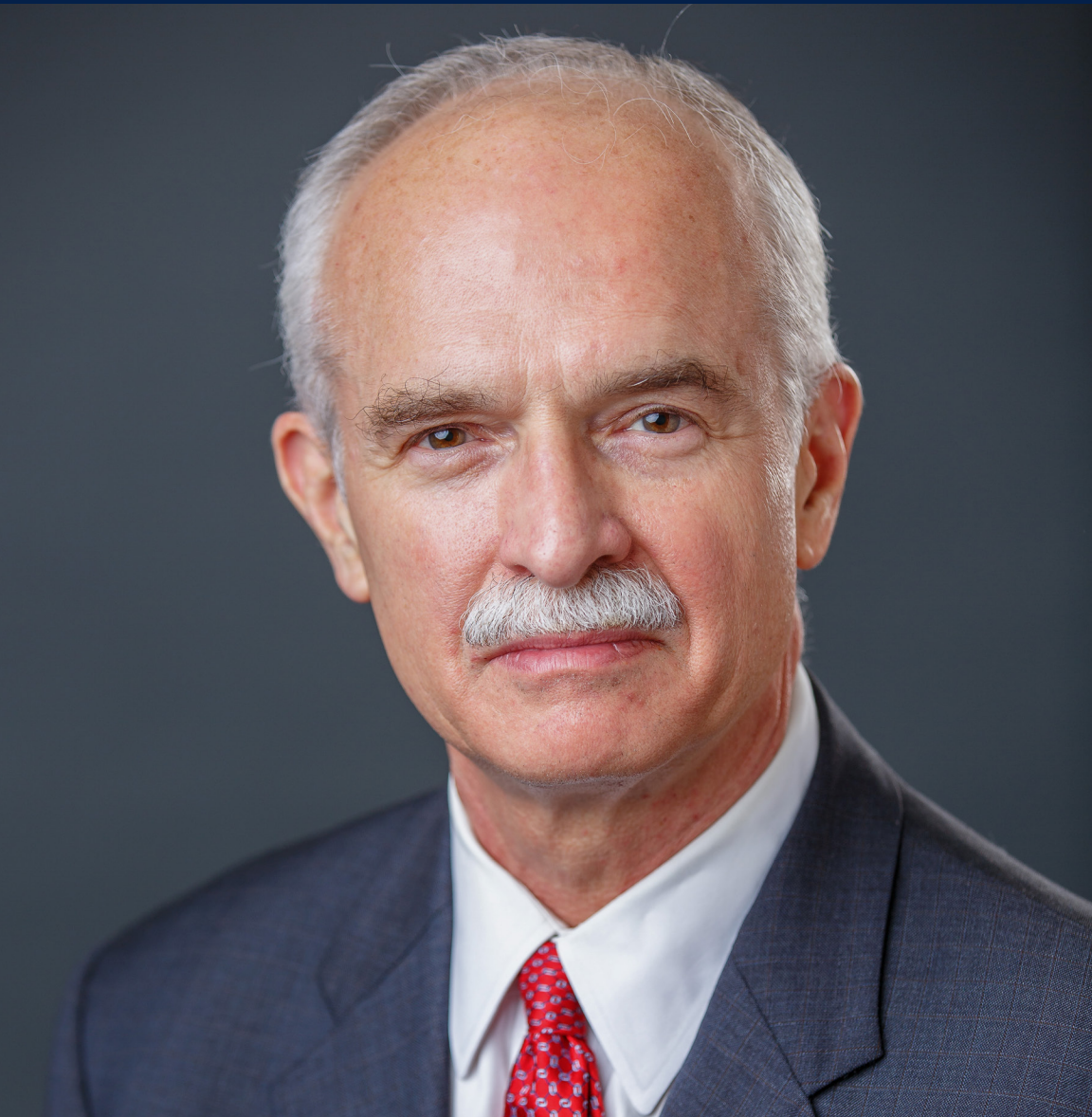
January 12, 2023

Celebration of the Life of

DAVID J. THEROUX

— and —

THE LEGACY AND
FUTURE OF LIBERTY





GEORGE F. GILDER

Chairman, George Gilder Fund Management

Senior Fellow, Discovery Institute

Founding Member, Board Advisors, Independent Institute

Born in New York City, Mr. Gilder attended Exeter Academy and Harvard University. At Harvard, he studied under Henry Kissinger and helped found *Advance*, a journal of political thought, which he edited and helped to re-establish in Washington, DC, after his graduation. He later returned to Harvard as a fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Politics and editor of the *Ripon Forum*. In the 1970s, as an independent researcher and writer, Mr. Gilder began an excursion into the causes of poverty, which resulted in his books *Men and Marriage* (1972) and *Visible Man* (1978); and hence, of wealth, which led to his best-selling *Wealth and Poverty* (1981, updated 2012).

One of the leading economic and technological thinkers of the past forty years, Mr. Gilder is the author of nineteen books, including *Knowledge and Power: The Information Theory of Capitalism and How It is Revolutionizing Our World*, *The Israel Test*, *The Meaning of the Microcosm*, *The Scandal of Money: Why Wall Street Recovers but the Economy Never Does*, *Recapturing the Spirit of Enterprise*, *Life After Google*, *Gaming AI: Why AI Can't Think but Can Transform Jobs*, and *Life After Capitalism*.

A founding fellow of the Discovery Institute, where he began his study of information theory, and an influential venture investor, he lives with his wife in western Massachusetts.



Program:

Welcome

Graham H. Walker, Ph.D.

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Invocation

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone

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Tributes to David J. Theroux

Various

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The Legacy of David J. Theroux

Mary L. G. Theroux

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The Future of Liberty

George Gilder

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The Future of Independent Institute

Sarah O'Dowd

Member, Board of Directors



Tribute



DAVID J. THEROUX: A GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR

On 23 April 2022 we lost a dear member of our community: David J. Theroux, a gentleman and a scholar.

Sundry reasons account for Theroux's prominence, not least among them the Independent Institute, a non-profit think tank devoted to research and education, in Oakland, California. Theroux founded the institute in 1986. Appropriately named, the Independent Institute has since its inception aspired to transcend partisan interests and politicized debate to serve the common good. Civility and understanding are tough to come by in this day and age. Theroux persevered anyway.

His training was broad, though not without depth. Theroux studied engineering and mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley and business at the University of Chicago. Prestigious institutes both, they enjoy even greater repute for having been attended by students such as Theroux. But as the great founders of the United States were well aware, liberty is not defended in theory alone. Like them, Theroux would combine profound learning with civic duty. He was a gentleman and a scholar. His views were widely sought out. True to his desire to overcome partisan politics, he appeared in various media on both sides of the spectrum, in print and on television. He could also boast (though one suspects he wouldn't) of a prodigious academic output, some 140 books, which he directed or published. The Independent Institute lists the following: "*Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government* by Robert Higgs (1986, with a 25th-anniversary edition in 2012); *Antitrust and Monopoly*, by Dominick Armentano (1990); *Beyond Politics: The Roots of*

Government Failure, by Randy Simmons (updated edition 2011); *Out of Work*, by Lowell E. Gallaway and Richard Vedder (1997); *Entrepreneurial Economics*, by Alexander Tabarrok (2002); *The Empire Has No Clothes*, by Ivan Eland (2004); *Making Poor Nations Rich*, edited by Benjamin Powell (2007); *The Enterprise of Law*, by Bruce Benson (2011); *Living Economics*, by Peter J. Boettke (2012); *Liberty in Peril*, by Randall Holcombe (2019); and many more.”

A man who disdains the inane mudslinging of partisan politics feels the need to go deeper, to penetrate the mysteries of man’s existence. Thus did Theroux found the C. S. Lewis Society of California, “an independent, non-profit, Christian, educational and cultural organization interested in events, publications, and other developments that advance deeper understanding of the enduring philosophical, cultural, historical, literary, spiritual, social, and economic issues of mankind.” I do not believe that Lewis professed with the closed fist of dogma, rather the open hand of gentle persuasion. How appropriate that Theroux should found a society in the lay theologian’s name. No less significant is its establishment after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when more than ever liberty, charity, and justice required defenders, such as Theroux.

Theroux’s ideas and institutions have justly earned him praise – high praise from high places. Desmond Tutu, Ronald Reagan, Milton Friedman, Vaclav Klaus, to name only a few. His work and example have crossed oceans, finding fertile ground far beyond the US alone. For the language that he spoke – the language of liberty and civility – is universal. But the private man is mourned no less than the public man, and we send our deepest condolences to David Theroux’s wife Mary, and their children and grandchildren. We join them in mourning, for we know the kind of man Theroux was.

Tribute



DAVID THEROUX, RIP
Alex Tabarrok

I was saddened to hear of the sudden passing of David Theroux, the President of the Independent Institute. I was a professor of economics at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana when David approached me to be the research director (later Vice-President) of II. I had great colleagues at Ball State but was never happy about living in Muncie. Nevertheless, leaving academia was a big leap. My career at the time, however, was in the doldrums and when things aren't happening it's good to throw some variance into the mix ... so I leapt. David and his wife Mary made my wife and I feel very welcome in Oakland. I remember fondly my young children playing in their garden in their beautiful house in the Oakland hills.

David was a great intellectual entrepreneur. He was the founding Vice President for the Cato Institute and the founding President of the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy. He started the Independent Institute on a shoestring budget in 1986, building it into a major institute that produced many important books and research articles.

David spotted talent in other people, encouraged them, and made things happen. He was a prime mover in launching Bruce Benson's important work on the law merchant and a big supporter of the great Robert Higgs (who started *The Independent Review*).

I learned a lot from David, especially about militarism and libertarian foreign policy, the marketing of ideas, and also about what it means to be an entrepreneur. I recall two instances in particular. The first was during the Microsoft trial when we

had published the excellent book *Winners, Losers & Microsoft: Competition and Antitrust in High Technology* by Stan Liebowitz and Stephen Margolis. II opposed the antitrust case against Microsoft, seeing it as waste of resources in a rivalrous industry (in retrospect, yup we got that one right). Larry Ellison at Oracle (a Microsoft competitor) didn't like our work and hired detectives to buy the Independent Institute's garbage and sift through it (yes, really!) to try to discredit us. The story become a page one headline in the New York Times (Independent Institute not really Independent!). I was worried about the impact on the Institute but David always saw the positive even in "bad news." At the time I found this frustrating as this seemed to me like a failure to see reality but David had the entrepreneur's faith that vision, a positive attitude, and hard work can make reality. He kept calm and steered us through the difficulties to further strengths. I was wrong. David was right. He made it happen. The second time was when II was launching its scholarships for low-income children to attend private schools in Oakland. I sketched out a careful, well-thought out plan to get us ready to go in a year. David said no, "I want it ready in six weeks!". I thought this was insane. But we did it! No surprise that David was an entrepreneur and I was an academic. Ultimately, of course, I returned to academia by moving to GMU but not before learning many valuable lessons from David and my years at the Independent Institute.

He will be missed.

Tribute



Benjamin Powell
Treasurer, Mont Pelerin Society

David Theroux (1949-1922), the Founder and President of the Independent Institute, passed away in Oakland, California on April 23rd after a brief illness. David was an active and important contributor to the development of classical liberal thought and the institutions supporting those ideals for nearly 50 years, though he only recently became a member of the Mont Pelerin Society in 2020.

Prior to founding the Independent Institute in 1986 David had previously been a founding Vice President and Director of Academic Affairs at the Cato Institute, and the Founding President of the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy. While David authored dozens of scholarly articles himself, he dedicated most of his career to cultivating, developing, improving, and promoting other scholars advancing classical liberal thought. I personally benefited from David's mentorship as a young assistant professor, while also working with him at the Institute, where he published and substantially improved my first book, and gave me the confidence and skills necessary to productively engage the media while promoting free markets.

The Independent Institute published more than 140 scholarly books under David's leadership. The style of most Independent Institute books reflects David's own qualities: they are scholarly, principled in their deep dedication to advancing liberty, and simultaneously don't confine themselves to mere academic theorizing but offer positive paths forward to a more efficient, freer, and just world. Independent Institute books received more than 50 prestigious awards including the Templeton

Freedom Book Award, two Mencken Awards for Best Book, and eight Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Awards for Best Book, among others. David also co-founded, with Robert Higgs, *The Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy* that has published path breaking work by many of our society's members.

David is survived by two sons and his wife, Mary Theroux, who worked side-by-side with David as Vice President to build the Independent Institute since its founding. She's now serving as Independent's Chairman and CEO and will continue to work with the Institute's talented staff to advance the ideas that David dedicated his life to. He will be missed by his many friends and colleagues in our society. RIP my friend.





Tribute



DAVID THEROUX:
GENTLEMAN, SCHOLAR,
ENTREPRENEUR

To anyone who knew David Theroux, especially those who worked with him, his recent passing came as a shock. As that shock gives way to grief, we have a moment to reflect on David's influence both on us individually and on the broader movement for a freer and more prosperous society.

WILLIAM RUGER, PH.D.
PRESIDENT

“It was sad to learn of David’s sudden passing. He was an ardent defender of a free society, faithfully dedicated to promoting his organization and its cause of individual liberty. David was a strong anti-interventionist, and when there were so few opponents of our idealistic misadventures in the Middle East in the 2000s, he kept faith with his principles when so many others broke bad. I’ve known David for 20 years and the great thing about him was that he seemed to have the same energy and vigor for liberty and anti-interventionism at the end as when I first met him.”

PHILLIP W MAGNESS, PH.D.
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

“I will always remember David for the value he placed on friendship within the broader free-market tradition. On more than one occasion, he reached out to me to simply offer a kind word of encouragement and support. He would call to remind me that there were still people who had my back, even as I was taking the brunt of an attack from the New York Times’s *1619 Project*, from Anthony Fauci’s efforts to “take down” critics of lockdown policies, or from the enforcers of academia’s various pieties on a range of issues from wealth taxation to school choice

to the violation of economic liberty in the name of a false social equity. He would offer an ear in counsel and a hand in support to convey that I was not alone in the fight. He displayed a meaningful and sincere commitment to intellectual respect for the principles of a free society, a willingness to defend them against extreme adversity, and in doing so provided an example for others to emulate.”

RYAN M YONK, PH.D.
SENIOR FACULTY FELLOW

“My interactions with David started as a newly minted Assistant Professor who stepped in to speak at one of the student seminars his beloved Independent Institute was sponsoring. I still remember the phone call from David where he wanted to make sure that I understood both the importance of the message, and how much he cared about the ideas.

Throughout my entire career David was a fixture of consistent principles, and someone you always expected would leave a voicemail with some new great idea and a push to get you to do more, engage more fully, and to never forget that standing still in the fight for a freer world isn't really an option.

I was fortunate to collaborate with David and with the Independent Institute on the publication of *Nature Unbound*, a book that David tirelessly promoted and made sure was part of discussions about environmental policy. That willingness to push good ideas forward is what made David the unflinching supporter we all remember fondly.

I will greatly miss David and we are all worse off from his too soon departure.”

IN MEMORIAM: DAVID J. THEROUX

David J. Theroux passed away on April 23rd, 2022, after a brief illness. Like other intellectual giants before him, his legacy lives on through his work and those who continue to be inspired

by it. He was a gentleman and a scholar. Theroux founded the Independent Institute where he reached millions through scholarship, commentary, publishing, and media.

Theroux held two bachelor's degrees, a master's degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and an MBA from the University of Chicago. After completing his education, he worked for the Cato Institute as a founding Vice President and Director of Academic Affairs. He also served as a founding President of the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy. In 1986, he subsequently founded the Independent Institute where he served as President for 36 years. In addition to his work with Independent, he also founded the C.S. Lewis Society of California.

A consummate example of leadership, Theroux showed the world what it means to be an entrepreneur in the world of ideas. He constantly identified new opportunities and projects for the Institute. He was a fearless challenger of orthodoxy across the political spectrum, and his work appeared in *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *Washington Times*, and more. He reached even more individuals through his media appearances on ABC, MSNBC, Fox, CNN, C-SPAN, and NPR.

Theroux described the Independent Institute as being “in the business of raising questions.” Under his leadership, the Institute decried military interventions, economic sanctions, tariffs, the war on drugs, government bailouts, the death penalty, and more. The Institute also published prolifically under his leadership, printing over 140 books alongside the Institute's quarterly journal, *The Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy*. The journal features in-depth scholarship on policy issues by leading academics and experts. Many AIER scholars have been fortunate to contribute articles and book reviews to the journal.

Tribute



REMEMBERING
DAVID THEROUX
Alberto Mingardi

Today would have been David Theroux's birthday. David passed away, one month ago, on April 23. I met David a few times over the years and always found him interesting and kind, but he had the reputation of a difficult person. I admired him greatly, for the think tank he built.

He was the founder and president of the Independent Institute. In the relatively small market of classical liberal/ libertarian think tanks, the Independent Institute wanted to be both scholarly and radical, a combination which sounds easier on paper – shouldn't scholars be freer in their thinking and writing than policy experts, whose hands are somehow tied by relationships with the world of politics? – than it is in practice. But Theroux came close, and he did so by sticking with a most traditional set of think tank activities: by publishing serious books and by publishing one of the few openly libertarian journals, *The Independent Review*. It is a very long term approach. Of course the Independent Institute has its blog and its social media activity: you can't avoid these things, if you want to look alive these days. But I appreciate that this is clearly of secondary importance, compared with the more long term dissemination of ideas.

The books that the Independent Institute has published are remarkable: their catalog includes some "classics", at least within the boundaries of our movement (I think of Dominick Armentano's *Antitrust and Monopoly*, Bruce Benson's *To Serve and Protect*, Dowd and Timberlake's *Money and the Nation State*, the excellent *The Voluntary City* edited by Beito, Gordon and Tabarrok); some provocative pamphlets (like Alvaro

Vargas Llosa's *The Che Guevara Myth*) and a good number of titles which would deserve to be better known (our own Scott Sumner's *The Midas Paradox* or *The Economies of Immigration* edited by Ben Powell, for example). *The Independent Review* is even more extraordinary. Its founding editor, Robert Higgs, is a remarkable (and much underrated) economic historian and left his impression in the journal. Besides *Crisis and Leviathan*, Higgs wrote a number of important works, my favorite being perhaps *Depression, War, and Cold War: Challenging the Myths of Conflict and Prosperity*, a genuine eye-opener. In many ways, he is that rare bird: a scholar who is both outspoken and rigorous.

His successors as editors of *The Independent Review* (Chris Coyne, Mike Munger and Robert Whaples) are doing a splendid job. "Independent scholarship developed by independent minds" sounds a bit like an advertisement quip, but in this case is a fair description.

His long-time association with Higgs signals that David had a clear vision for his think tank, the philosophy (the kind of libertarianism, if you prefer) it should advance and the means by which it should promote it – and kept to it, for some 35 years. Not bad. His legacy is of great relevance, for classical liberals all over the world.

A TRIBUTE TO DAVID THEROUX

John Papola

The creative process, like life or grief, goes through a series of psychological stages from idea to execution. Stage 1: This is awesome! Stage 2: This is tricky. Stage 3: This is terrible. Stage 4: I am terrible. Stage 5: This might be okay. Stage 6: This is awesome! I have lived this process on every creative project for my entire life. It's a painful process that tests the patience of even the best collaborators.

It was almost midnight on Sunday evening in late April when I got an email inbox notification. It was a new reply in a thread titled "Feedback on Love Gov" with my longtime collaborators David and Mary Theroux at the Independent Institute. David, like so many entrepreneurs and leaders I've come to know, was always working. And since we were somewhere between stage 3 and stage 4, the stages that keep you up late at night, such a message would normally be unsurprising. If only that were the case.

Instead of a fresh message bursting with ideas and optimistic energy, I received the terrible news from Mary that the love of her life and my good friend David had passed suddenly, shockingly, the prior morning as the result of a previously undetected health issue. That it was quick was the only solace for such painful news. Of course, my sadness in that moment couldn't compare to Mary's loss. There are never the right words for moments like this, just as there is never, really, any way to fully prepare for the loss of people we love.

I've known David Theroux personally for almost a decade and known his work and the work of the great organization he

founded, the Independent Institute, for much longer. Among the small set of people who've dedicated both their personal and professional lives to advancing liberty, he has a very special place in my heart. In the earliest days of our company, David approached our little team with a project that excited us: tell the story of the negative impacts and the very real costs government has on people's lives through the perspective of a young professional.

Like David and Mary, my wife Lisa and I are also partners in marriage and business. Lisa came up with the perfect idea: what if Government was the overbearing, irresponsible boyfriend you met in college? He'd convince you to take out more debt to fund a lavish 6-year undergraduate playtime. He'd make your life harder as you tried to start a business after graduation. He'd mess with your personal choices. He'd wreck your credit. And when you finally tried to dump him, he'd spy on you like the controlling creep he is. And so "Love Gov", was born.

Love Gov, which has now spanned multiple seasons and years, became the first of many creative collaborations with David and Mary, including a recent documentary film, *Beyond Homeless*. Through them all, I'd come to know both David and Mary Theroux as truly good, special people.

David was committed to the classical virtues that built western civilization. He was a forceful, yet friendly champion for real scholarship. He was a man of deep Christian faith who, I believe correctly, recognized how essential the soul is to a proper conception of human dignity, equality under the law, and individual rights. This made him especially unique thinker among radical libertarians. I can't begin to capture the full scope of his professional and scholarly legacy here.

What I loved most about David was youthful, kid-like energy. It was this energy as well as his genuine appreciation for the process that made him such a great creative partner. He



played with ideas like a fresh box of legos. He was absolutely giddy about our shared projects, and though that giddiness sometimes meant weekend and Sunday evening emails or calls to discuss script tweaks or marketing ideas, I was always happy to answer.

Mine is but a tiny sliver of one experience and one life that David touched among surely tens of thousands directly and millions indirectly. I offer it in memorial to a great friend and a great man who has been taken from this world and his family far too soon. I know he has moved on to a new chapter in his story with much to share from his time here. I know I'm not alone in saying that I will miss my friend, David. May he rest in peace in the love and grace of the Lord, God Almighty.



