

Independent Thinking

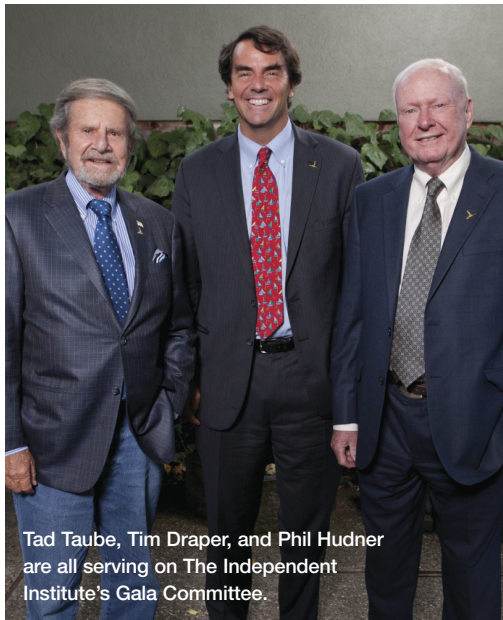
On November 15, the Bay Area-based nonprofit The Independent Institute will celebrate 25 years of non-partisan, scholarly research and education focused on in-depth studies of critical social and economic issues with a gala reception honoring former President of Poland and Nobel Laureate Lech Walesa, world-acclaimed novelist, politician, journalist, and essayist Mario Vargas Llosa, and economist and historian Robert Higgs. All three will be presented with the Alexis de Tocqueville Award in recognition of their exceptional contributions to humanity in advancing the ideas and ideals of individual liberty, entrepreneurship, personal responsibility, civic virtue, and the rule of law. *Gentry Wealth* reports.

TEXT BY STEFANIE L. BEASLEY

When asked how he became involved with The Independent Institute, Silicon Valley venture capitalist and Gala Co-Chair Tim Draper recalls meeting Institute Founder David Theroux. “We were at an event where George Shultz was talking about the benefits of school vouchers. David was an avid supporter of school vouchers and had a whole philosophy centered on how more freedom and less government drives economic progress. I have been a supporter of his ideas and the Institute ever since.”

Indeed, Theroux’s mission statement for The Independent Institute is to boldly advance peaceful, prosperous, and free societies grounded in a commitment to human worth and dignity. The Institute works to look beyond the partisan interests that are all too pervasive today. Public-policy debate is so politicized that it is largely confined to a narrow reconsideration of existing policies. In order to fully understand the nature of public issues and possible solutions, the Institute’s program adheres to the highest standards of independent scholarly inquiry.

Institute supporter, former CEO of KPMG and Gala Co-Chair Robert Alspuagh points out, “So much of what we see in think tanks today is colored by political and financial support so that when the reader picks up the analysis, they must begin by think-



Tad Taube, Tim Draper, and Phil Hudner are all serving on The Independent Institute’s Gala Committee.

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ing about what slant is put upon the information provided.”

The non-partisan nature of The Independent Institute makes it stand out from the think-tank crowd. Attorney and Gala Co-Chair Philip Hudner notes that the Institute, “. . . dares to challenge the conventional wisdom of the establishments of both political parties, academe, and the mainstream media.”

Honorary Chair Tad Taube became familiar with Theroux and the Institute during a public policy conference at the Hoover Institution. “I was struck that the Institute’s philosophy was aligned with mine with respect to the idea of limited government and personal responsibility. The upcoming Gala has succeeded in bringing together local and world leaders recognized for their roles in promoting freedom and liberty.”

Indeed, the Gala will honor two icons of freedom, Lech Walesa and Mario Vargas Llosa, as well as Robert Higgs, one of the Institute’s most prolific and insightful scholars. This will be a “fine way to showcase the Institute’s progress and its respect among prominent

people,” notes Co-Chair Charles Crocker III, chairman of the board and CEO of Crocker Capital, Inc. Hudner echoes, “To see and hear them all at the same event will be truly extraordinary. It will make history in San Francisco.” And rightly so. ■

The Independent Institute’s 25th Anniversary Dinner

Presentation of the Alexis de Toqueville Awards
Tuesday, November 15

The Ritz Carlton San Francisco

For tickets and details, call 510.632.1366 x152
www.independent.org