

**Atlas Economic Research Foundation  
Liberty Forum, November 13, 2014  
Tribute to Leonard P. Liggio**

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Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is a special privilege to honor Leonard Liggio's memory today, not least because like so many here, I count myself among those who owed Leonard the most for the countless gifts that his friendship brought to my life – both professionally and personally.

I would like to thank our friends at Atlas for their invitation to join you. I would especially like to thank Alex Chafuen, Melanie Chafuen, Brad Lips and Paolo Angelini for the unceasing support they gave Leonard in his last months, when so many of Leonard's friends wanted to be on hand to help him but could not be. And if I may, I would also like to thank Christine Blundell, who with her late husband, John, were of special help to Leonard this Spring and early Summer even, as we know, John waged his own courageous battle with terminal cancer.

That John's and Leonard's deaths came so close together was a humbling instance of Providence and gave us all pause. That Leonard and John stayed true to their beliefs, to their principles, and to themselves to the last seems certain. It may come to pass that the inspiration of their final, powerful examples is among their greatest parting gifts to us and to the continued advancement of classical liberalism.

Leonard played so many roles in the movement for liberty that it does not seem possible to highlight only one. He was a historian, a professor of law, the president of institutes and societies, a board member, a counselor – or as he might have preferred given his Italian-Albanian roots, *consigliere*. He was a Knight of Malta, the modest holder of numerous other honors. Above all he was a man of faith, a mentor and a friend, who cared deeply about the members of his philosophical family and was devoted to the members of his birth one.

I first met Leonard when I applied to be a part-time secretary at the Institute for Humane Studies in 1989. I shared Leonard's love of history and although I was not working directly for him, he quickly had me reading Hayek, Lord Acton, Bastiat and Adam Smith. When it became apparent that Professor Liggio, as I always called him then, could discuss anything from the political genius of Eleanor of Aquitaine, to the curiosities of minor members of the Habsburg Dynasty, to the Federalist Papers, to the commercial virtues of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch Republic, all in one fluid, logical conversation, I was initiated into the club of admiring Leonard's historical genius. It was refreshing that Leonard did not seem particularly bothered by being viewed as "up to date" but he was always *entirely present* in his commitments and reflections. And that seemed, somehow, the mark of a truly wise man.

Now, to be fair, for all of his kindness, forbearance, generosity and encouragement, there were a few times when one wondered about risks in being Leonard's friend. If you ever drove with him ---- well, let's just say that speed limits were a relative concept to him and Formula One racers had nothing on him when cutting short corners in downtown Washington, D.C. If you ever tried to help him find papers or files in his office ---- well, his filing system was rather unique and after extensive searches usually one had simply to cease and desist. But if you were

lucky in these situations, you might just get a glimpse of his mischievous sense of humor and occasionally a touch of stubbornness.

In every end, there is a beginning. We seem to be in a gradual time of transition in leadership in the classical liberal world – in the world at large – as Leonard’s generation slowly gives way to those born after World War II, into the early 1960s, and even later. Naturally Leonard was aware of this transition. Characteristically he was a bit ahead of it when in the early 2000’s as President of the Mont Pelerin Society, he challenged libertarian, free-market and conservative scholars to refresh the intellectual roots of our movement by recovering genuine veins of original scholarship; by laying the groundwork for the final intellectual refutation of collectivism and progressivism; and, by being honest within our philosophical family about our differences, remembering all the while that differences do not dilute our common commitment to ordered liberty.

Leonard, John, and many of you here, trained the coming generations well. We will always be Leonard’s students -- his apprentices in liberty -- and if we have genuinely learned from him, then let the dignity and authenticity he personified always be the examples before our eyes.

Thank you very much.