

From: Kevin Roberts (The Heritage Foundation)
Sent: Fri, 18 Jul 2025 20:40:53 -0500 (CDT)
To: Bradbury, Steven (OST)
Subject: Onward, Always. Mourning the Loss of Edwin J. Feulner

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Dear Friends of Heritage,

It is with deep sorrow that we share the passing of Edwin J. Feulner — founder, trustee, and the longest-serving president of The Heritage Foundation.

Each of you receiving this note likely carries a personal story of Ed's kindness and lasting impact. Among his many gifts, perhaps the most enduring was his commitment to mentoring those who would follow in his footsteps — myself included.

Ed was known by many and cherished by all. Those of us who had the privilege to work alongside him experienced his indefatigable and infectious spirit most fully.

As I noted in the statement below soon to be released to the media: Ed was more than a leader. He was a visionary, a builder, and a patriot of the highest order.

His principled legacy will continue to guide us — always.

Kevin Roberts

Heritage Foundation Mourns the Loss of Its Founder, Ed Feulner

WASHINGTON—[The Heritage Foundation](#) released the following statement today from Heritage President [Dr. Kevin Roberts](#) and [Board of Trustees](#) Chairman [Barb Van Andel-Gaby](#), lauding the legacy and mourning the loss of Heritage Founder [Edwin J. Feulner](#):

“It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of Edwin J. Feulner, founder, trustee, and the longest-serving president of The Heritage Foundation.

“Ed Feulner was more than a leader—he was a visionary, a builder, and a patriot of the highest order. His unwavering love of country and his determination to safeguard the principles that made America the freest, most prosperous nation in human history shaped every fiber of the conservative movement—and still do.

“Ed founded The Heritage Foundation in 1973, planting a flag for Truth in a town too often seduced by power. What started as a small outpost for conservative ideas became—under Ed’s tireless leadership—the intellectual arsenal for the Reagan Revolution and the modern conservative movement. In the four decades that followed, Ed’s foresight, discipline, and moral clarity made Heritage a battleship, unshaken by political winds and focused solely on fighting for the American people.

“After leading Heritage for 37 years as president, Ed continued to serve on our Board of Trustees, offering encouragement and sage advice in equal measure. Ed was an important mentor to us, respectively, and to all of those who had the honor of knowing him. In addition to his work at Heritage, he continued his active participation in many other conservative organizations.

“Whether he was bringing together the various corners of the conservative movement at meetings of the Philadelphia Society, or launching what is now the Heritage Strategy Forum, Ed championed a bold, “big-tent conservatism.” He believed in addition, not subtraction. Unity, not uniformity. One of his favorite mantras was ‘You win through multiplication and addition, not through division and subtraction.’ His legacy is not just the institution he built, but the movement he helped grow—a movement rooted in faith, family, freedom, and the founding.

“His ‘Feulnerisms’ still resonate in the halls of Heritage—where they will always be remembered. ‘People are policy,’ for instance— the heartbeat of his mission—to equip, encourage, and elevate a new generation of conservative leaders, not just in Washington, but across this great country. And we still remember his adjuration to never be complacent or discouraged: ‘In Washington, there are no permanent victories and no permanent defeats.’

“Ed himself seemed immune to discouragement. Every day was, for him, a new opportunity to strike a blow for freedom, to further the promise of America and make it a reality for all. His was a life of joyful defiance in the face of tyranny and bureaucratic decay—a life defined by courage, conviction, and the word he signed off with every single day: *Onward!*

“To his beloved wife, Linda, their children, and grandchildren—we extend our deepest prayers and condolences. And to Ed—we say thank you. Thank you for showing us what one faithful, fearless man can do when he refuses to cede ground in the fight for self-governance.

“The Heritage Foundation will honor Ed’s life the best way we know how: by carrying his mission forward with courage, integrity, and determination. We will never forget his leadership, his example, or his favorite charge:

“*Onward. Always.*”

Longtime Heritage colleague and conservative movement leader [Bridgett Wagner](#), executive director of the Edwin J. Feulner Institute at The Heritage Foundation, said:

“Today we lost a giant. I’ve known Ed my entire adult life. His wisdom, guidance, eternal optimism, and confidence in our cause inspired countless individuals, built enduring institutions, and shaped the conservative movement profoundly. We mourn Ed today, pray for Linda and their family,

and we look forward to celebrating his remarkable life over the coming months. Rest in peace, EJF."

About Ed Feulner

Edwin John Feulner Jr. was born Aug. 12, 1941, in Chicago to Helen Joan Feulner and Edwin J. Feulner Sr., who owned a real estate firm. After growing up in suburban Chicago, Feulner attended Regis University in Denver. There he read Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater's best-selling manifesto, "The Conscience of a Conservative" and Russell Kirk's "The Conservative Mind," which influenced his thinking and the direction of his life.

He graduated from Regis University with double majors in English and business and received an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business in 1964. He later attended Georgetown University and the London School of Economics before earning a doctorate degree at the University of Edinburgh in 1981.

Feulner began his Washington career as public affairs fellow for the Center for Strategic Studies (now the Center for Strategic and International Studies) and at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, where he wrote on subjects such as economic trade embargoes with the Soviet Union. He later became a confidential assistant to Rep. (and later Defense Secretary) Melvin R. Laird (R-WI). Afterward, Feulner became chief of staff to Rep. Philip M. Crane (R-IL), whom he met in 1962 after founding an Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) group on campus. Feulner went on to have a lifelong relationship with ISI and serve on its board of trustees.

Prior to founding Heritage in 1973, Feulner served as executive director of the Republican Study Committee. He became Heritage President in 1977, a position he held until 2013. Feulner served as president again on an interim basis from 2017-2018. President Ronald Reagan awarded Feulner the Presidential Citizens Medal in 1989.

Feulner was the author of nine books: "The American Spirit" (2012), "Getting America Right" (2006), "Leadership for America" (2000), "Intellectual Pilgrims" (1999), "The March of Freedom" (1998), "Conservatives Stalk the House" (1983), "Looking Back" (1981), "Congress and the New International Economic Order" (1976), and "Trading with the Communists" (1968).

He was the editor of "U.S.-Japan Mutual Security: The Next Twenty Years" (1981), "China—The Turning Point" (1976), and a contributor to 10 other books and numerous journals, reviews and magazines. Feulner also was publisher of Heritage's *Policy Review* magazine from 1977 until 2001, when Heritage

transferred the publication to the Hoover Institution. He was the co-founder and Chairman of the website Townhall.com, which was established to coordinate online activities of dozens of conservative organizations and columnists.

Feulner's leadership of The Heritage Foundation transformed the think tank from a small policy shop into America's powerhouse of conservative ideas and what *The New York Times* calls "the Parthenon of the conservative metropolis."

As the nation's largest, most broadly supported conservative research and educational institution, The Heritage Foundation has been leading the American conservative movement since our founding in 1973. The Heritage Foundation reaches more than 10 million members, advocates, and concerned Americans every day with information on critical issues facing America.

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