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Tributes to Edwin J. Feulner

Remembering a conservative hero

After we shared the sad news of Ed Feulner's passing, we received so many heartfelt and meaningful notes and tributes. We've collected those and shared them with Ed's family and posted many of these tributes on [social media](#).

Ed's influence was significant, and his legacy lives on in the institutions he helped build and the individuals—all of us—whom he mentored, tutored, and inspired throughout his brilliant life. We look forward to sharing the details of an event celebrating Ed in the coming weeks.

Kevin Roberts

Prominent conservatives mourn the passing of Feulner and remember his deep personal and professional legacy.

Speaker Mike Johnson: "God bless the extraordinary legacy of Ed Feulner, and his singular influence upon the conservative movement. Praying tonight for his family and all who mourn his loss. "Onward. Always."

Former Vice President Mike Pence: "In the passing of Dr. Ed Feulner, the conservative movement has lost one of its true giants, and I have lost a mentor and cherished friend. Ed Feulner was many things: scholar, strategist, counselor to presidents, but above all, he was a great man and an

American statesman who devoted his life to the defense of our Nation's first principles, and he will be deeply missed..."

Sen. Mike Lee: "God bless Dr. Feulner's family, as well as his vast Heritage family across the decades, and may this giant of the conservative movement rest in peace. In a time when freedom fighters in Washington were almost extinct, he laid a foundation upon which countless American victories stand today."

Sen. Jim Banks: "Ed Feulner was a godfather of the conservative movement. He not only founded the Heritage Foundation but also the Republican Study Committee I was proud to lead when I was in the House. He was always a source of counsel and encouragement. RIP"

Gov. Brian Kemp: "Ed Feulner was a determined leader and pioneer who shaped the conservative movement across the country. We ask that Georgians join us in praying for Ed's loved ones during this difficult time."

Gov. Glenn Youngkin: "Saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Edwin J. Feulner, founder of The Heritage Foundation and fellow Virginian whose recent appointment to the Mount Vernon Board of Visitors reflected his deep love for our history and country. A former member of the George Mason University Board of Visitors and its Rector, he helped transform that institution into one of Virginia's largest and most respected universities and later served as a mentor to countless other board members as chair of our Virginia Commission for Higher Education Board Appointments. His longtime leadership of [@Heritage](#) not only made it the intellectual engine of the Reagan Revolution, but forged a visionary philosophy that continues to shape our nation's public policy. Suzanne and I extend our deepest condolences to his family, loved ones, and the entire Heritage community."

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise: "As the founder of [@RepublicanStudy](#) and longtime president of the Heritage Foundation, Ed Feulner was one of the architects who built the conservative movement in this country. I was fortunate enough to get to know Ed when I was RSC Chairman, and all of our Members benefitted from his wisdom and care for the organization. His legacy will have a lasting impact on our country, and my prayers are with his family as we all mourn his loss."

Rep. Jim Jordan: "Ed Feulner was an American patriot who loved his country. There are no words to describe how many people his visionary leadership impacted. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, and country."

Speaker Newt Gingrich: “Ed Feulner was a giant helping save and then reshape America. His leadership in the 1970s made Heritage the leading conservative think tank in the country. His close ties to candidate Ronald Reagan and his policy coordinator, Ed Meese, changed history through the publication of *Mandate for Leadership*, possibly the single most influential policy book in the modern era. Ed was a great human being, a good friend and Callista and both miss him and have Ed and his family in our prayers.”

賴清德Lai Ching-te, President of Taiwan: “Extending deepest condolences to all mourning the loss of Dr. Ed Feulner. Ed was an inspiring leader and a dear friend of Taiwan; we will always remember his steadfast support for the Taiwan–US partnership, as a lifelong champion of freedom. May he rest in peace.”

蔡英文Tsai Ing-wen, Former President of Taiwan: “I am deeply saddened by the loss of Dr. Edwin Feulner, founder of the Heritage Foundation. Ed was both a close friend to me & a steadfast friend to Taiwan, who contributed significantly to Taiwan-US ties. He will be greatly missed in Taiwan & by his many friends around the world.”

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone: “Dr. Ed Feulner, founder of the Heritage Foundation and the U.S. conservative movement, was less well known as a serious and faithful Catholic from a devout Catholic family. I was proud to know him. My prayers for his widow Linda. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.”

GOP Chairman Whatley: “Ed Feulner was a giant in the conservative movement. For decades, he worked tirelessly to not only build the Heritage Foundation, but to mentor countless thinkers, members of Congress, and staff. Ed always said that “personnel is policy.” But those people are also now his great legacy. RIP.”

Hillsdale President and Heritage Board Member Larry P. Arnn: “We grieve today at Hillsdale for the loss of Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., builder of [@Heritage](#). Ed was a friend of mine for over 40 years. I watched his children grow up, and he watched mine. I watched his beloved Heritage Foundation become what he dreamed of in its early days: an organization of enduring substance, a bulwark against injustice at home and abroad.”

Heritage Board Member John Coleman: “I first met Dr. Feulner more than twenty years ago as a college intern, where he treated me with respect, even then. When I had the privilege of joining the board of that organization

a few years ago, Ed welcomed me with open arms, kind words, and his characteristic humor and wit. Ed loved America dearly. He loved ideas. He was well-traveled and a champion of freedom worldwide. He was a friend to presidents and interns alike.”

Steve Forbes: “Ed Feulner, founder of the Heritage Foundation, was a giant of our era! He quarter-backed the Reagan Agenda that revived the US in the 1980s—setting a new template for policy-changing think-tanks. Under his leadership, Heritage wielded enormous influence in shaping the issues of the day. Ed encouraged & inspired a lifetime of conservatives. I being one. It was a great honor when he asked me to join the Heritage Board on which I served with him for a number of years. Few individuals have had such an impact on the age in which they lived as Ed Feulner.”

Heritage Board Member Prof. Robert George: “I’m saddened to learn of the death of my friend Ed Feulner—truly a giant of the modern conservative movement. He was an institution builder who himself became an institution. Gracious and principled, he earned the respect of his adversaries as well as the devotion of his allies.”

Mark Levin: “I just heard about the passing of Ed Feulner. What a tremendous loss. Ed was a massively important leader behind modern day conservatism. I cannot adequately honor him here but will do so on radio Monday. May he RIP.”

ADF President and CEO Kristen Waggoner: “...Dr. Feulner built The Heritage Foundation from the ground up and revolutionized what a conservative think tank could become and achieve. During his 36 years as president, Heritage became not just a center for conservative thought but an active force shaping public policy. We at @ADFLegal owe much to that legacy. I’m also grateful for Dr. Feulner’s example of kindness, integrity, and principle as a leader...”

EPIC Founder and President Paul Winfree: “Ed Feulner was an incredible person who meant a lot to me and my professional life. He was always generous with me and perpetually optimistic. He will be missed by many. Add and multiply! Onward, Ed.”

EPPC President Ryan Anderson: “Ed Feulner was a prince of a man. So many of us owe him so much. May he rest in peace.”

SPN President and CEO Tracie Sharp: “Ed didn’t just transform think tankery—he revolutionized how ideas reach policymakers and change the

world. Working with Phil Truluck and John Von Kannon, he demonstrated that rigorous research, combined with strategic marketing, could shift entire policy debates. His mentorship taught me that true leadership means building institutions that outlast you, developing people who surpass you, and maintaining unwavering principles while adapting methods to maximize impact.”

America First Policy Institute: “With heavy hearts, the AFPI family learned of the passing of the founder of The Heritage Foundation, Edwin J. Feulner, whom Almighty God has seen fit to call home. It is impossible to measure the impact Dr. Feulner had on not only the political landscape of Washington, DC, but on the entire nation. He founded The @Heritage Foundation and went on to serve as its longest serving president, seeing it through incredible political change and capitalizing on countless opportunities to drive conservatism forward...”

Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation: “We mourn the passing of Dr. Edwin J. Feulner—a dear friend of President Reagan, founder of The @Heritage Foundation, and a towering figure in the conservative movement. As President Reagan once remarked: “Ed Feulner, you're a combination of many things: intellectual, administrator, politician, diplomat, but most of all, dreamer and darer. And for that, and for Heritage, all of us salute you.”

Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation: “A long-time Trustee and former Chairman, Dr. Feulner was instrumental in the founding and growth of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and was recognized with its highest award, the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom, in 2006. Dr. Eric Patterson, President and CEO of the Foundation, noted, ‘The passing of Dr. Ed Feulner is a tremendous loss for all of us who were inspired by his patriotism, enthusiasm, wise counsel, and strategic leadership. The global movement for liberty has been shaped by Dr. Feulner. We pledge to honor his memory by continuing this vital work.’”

Lawmakers, scholars, and leaders of the conservative movement around the world have commemorated Ed Feulner's many contributions to the country, from coalition building to policy influence.

Heritage Foundation Mourns the Loss of Its Founder, Ed Feulner | *The Heritage Foundation, Statement by Kevin Roberts and Barb Van Andel-Gaby*

"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."

'Onward!' My Boss Ed Feulner Built a Movement and Cared for People | *The Daily Signal*, Opinion by Derrick Morgan

"There is not a week that goes by that I do not quote him. He was a giant of the conservative movement, but I got to work with him day to day as his chief of staff while he was carefully stewarding and looking to hand over the institution he founded, The Heritage Foundation. While he built institutions and our movement, his most lasting legacy for me is how he treated people."

America's Future — and Conservatism's — Depends on Multiplication, Not Division | *National Review*, Opinion by Andy Olivastro and Bridget Weisenburger

"Ed saw the status quo of the 1970s and broke it by building and presiding over the think tank that impacts more public policy than any other. Ed saw the swamp had turned into a hot tub in the early 2000s and thus launched Heritage Action to hold public officials accountable and get good policy over the finish line. Always an innovator. Always a builder. Always for the American people."

Edwin Feulner, Heritage Foundation's 'George Washington,' Dies at 83 | *The New York Times*

"Edwin J. Feulner Jr., a former right-wing congressional aide who felt himself in the ideological "wilderness" in the 1970s, but who, as the co-founder of the Heritage Foundation and its leader for most of its existence, became one of the most influential figures of a resurgent conservative movement, died on Friday."

Ed Feulner's Fundamental Decency | *National Review*

"There are a lot of other things that can and will be said about him: He had real vision and real savvy, which are much rarer in Washington than they ought to be. He was also a coalition-builder, who always preferred addition to division in his political and policy projects. He had an exceptional grasp of how ideas are (and are not) connected to action in politics. And he had a knack for betting on the right people and giving them what they needed to

succeed...And he dearly loved what he built at Heritage and had a lot of respect for his successors there and a lot of confidence in them.”

Feulner remembered as man who built Washington’s conservative mind |
Washington Times

“It took someone with Edwin J. Feulner Jr.’s irrepressible optimism and unshakable confidence in the American experiment to launch a right-of-center think tank with the modern conservative movement at its nadir.”

A Tribute To Ed Feulner, Founding Father Of American Conservatism | *The Daily Wire, Opinion by Republican Study Committee Chairman Rep. August Pfluger*

“What made Ed truly exceptional wasn’t just his strategic brilliance. It was his unwavering optimism and absolute refusal to be discouraged. He lived by another favorite saying: “In Washington, there are no permanent victories and no permanent defeats.” This recognition that the fight for freedom requires constant vigilance drove everything he did. Ed embodied the best of American conservatism: principled without being rigid, strategic without being calculating, and always focused on mission over personal glory.”

Onward! A Personal Tribute To Ed Feulner (1941-2025) | *Forbes, Opinion by Alejandro Antonio Chafuen*

“I first heard of Ed as an immigrant from Argentina in the late 70s. For me Ed was an immense inspiration and later an extremely generous mentor and advisor.”

Heritage Members have written in throughout the week to express their sympathy and appreciation.

Heritage Member Kathy G., *Pueblo, CO*: “What a truly special man. I believe God raised him up to be the leader he was.”

Heritage Member Jack T., *Anaheim, CA*: “His great legacy will go down through the generations as exemplary of true American patriotism!”