

**A Memorial for E. Victor Milione
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Let me start with a quotation: “He was a Socrates-like figure—not long on publications, but with an *extremely penetrating* style of discussion. He was always polite, but firm. He *never* let you get away with *anything*.” While this was written of another man, it seemed apt in talking about Victor Milione. Gentle, but firm. Never let you get away with anything.

Now, my role here today, as a former President of the Earhart Foundation, is to talk about the close connection between Victor Milione and the Earhart Foundation, a relationship—and a friendship—that started over *fifty* years ago. The person who *should* be here—who *would have* been here, had he been physically able—is my predecessor, Richard Ware. Richard, just last month, lost his wife Beverly. He has multiple medical problems, and nearing 90, was unable to come. “Vic would understand,” he said. But Richard and I have talked at length recently, and he asked that I deliver, for him, some of the thoughts he would like to have been able to deliver in person—in honor of what he calls “Milione’s overwhelmingly powerful contribution to freedom.”

So here, for a while, is Dick Ware speaking:

I first knew of ISI when it was embedded in Leonard Read’s FEE. When Read and Frank Chodorov came to a parting of the ways, ISI moved to the greater Philadelphia area—as I recall, into a “pretty unpretentious building.” In those early years, Vic and I quickly came to know each other—to know each other really well. We knew right off that between us was a great compatibility—we were just “comfortable” with each other. As a result, much of our early relationship was able to grow and took place over the telephone. We had many, many, and quite regular, phone conversations. Now, with any such call it was imperative that one be prepared to listen. Not that Vic did all the talking, mind you, but those conversations would just grow and develop—often lasting an hour or more. Vic enjoyed those talks. So did I.

In those early years ISI was operating on a tiny budget, and the money was hard to come by. There were times when Vic was unable to meet payroll. When that happened, he simply took no salary. It was this kind of selflessness and determination that held ISI together back then. I recall that Earhart once made a grant to ISI for a sort of operating reserve. But ISI was operating on a shoestring—in the extreme. I always suspected that, over the years, the operating reserve got dipped into a little bit at a time just in order to keep things afloat. But keep things afloat he did.

Given all the circumstances at the time, and the constant pressures on him, I think it was incredible that ISI survived. But it *did* survive—thanks to the tenacity, the determination, and the personal selflessness of Victor Milione.

One of the more gratifying things to my mind grew out of what was originally an Earhart Foundation project at FEE, for a student fellowship program. Leonard Read was really not especially interested in the idea, and the results were pretty disappointing, quite frankly. However when ISI left FEE and when Milione took over its leadership, the two of us began talking about that particular effort—what its potential might have been, and where it had gone wrong. Vic and I felt that, properly constructed, such a program *could* work, and that it could have a great impact *in the long run*. (Vic was always in it “for the long run.”) Out of our extended phone conversations came the Richard M. Weaver Fellowship Program at ISI. This program (still very much going—and from the very beginning right down to today consistently supported by Earhart) has turned out to be a marvelous success. Rather than taking in applications from just anyone—“over the transom,” so to speak (as had been the case at FEE)—applicants were restricted to those who were already members of ISI—a self-selected universe. And rather than reviewing the applications “in house” (as at FEE), Vic established a selection committee of outstanding—truly stellar—individuals. The alumni of the Weaver Fellowship Program are living testimony to the extraordinary success of this initiative.

There is so much more I *could* talk of, but let me close with a couple of observations of a much more personal nature. Vic was a kind and compassionate man—he was passionate and *compassionate*. He had a strong sense of loyalty to his colleagues and to his close friends. He showed toward them what I would call a “loving concern.” When, in the first term of the Nixon administration, I served in the Defense Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, the pressures on me were pretty substantial and unrelenting. Often my time was simply not my own. A number of times I just needed a break. Vic and his beautiful Mali would insist that, when I could, I come to Philadelphia for a “short weekend” with them—just the three of us. Those “short weekends” helped me preserve my sanity more than once, and to this day the memory of those oh-so-warm times are with me still. Then, later, in the Reagan years, Vic and I served together on the Board of Foreign Scholarships (the Board responsible for overseeing the Fulbright Program). I was Chairman and he was one of my most stalwart supporters in our efforts to see to it that the program was run as apolitically as possible.

When Vic’s wonderful, wonderful Mali died, Vic was at loose ends. He would call me for consolation, and as we had over the many years, we

would talk and talk. It helped, I know. Then, when my Beverly developed full-blown Alzheimer's Disease, and was so very slowly fading away, Vic was always there—for me—understanding and consoling.

The two of us were much more than *just* colleagues in the ranks of those who fought for freedom in those early days. We were *close personal friends*. Almost family. Brothers.

Those were Dick Ware's thoughts as passed along to me.

Let me now close with an observation of my own. Although I had *heard* of him for many years, I didn't actually meet Vic until the mid 1980s, a good fifteen years after my father had died. When Vic and I met, he must have decided I was at least O.K. He took me aside and confided in me, "David, I loved your father." Vic had known Dad when Dad was President of Earhart Foundation in the early years. I think I said something stupid like, "I know my father was fond of you too, Vic." In his polite, but firm way he took me by the elbow and fixed me with his stare and repeated—this time with emphasis: "David, I *loved* your father." In the fullness of time I came to realize that here was a man who inspired love in others. *I* certainly came to love him—as did so many others who labored with him over the years. He had a warmth and a generosity of spirit that flowed like a river toward those of whom he was very fond.

With his beloved Mali having gone on ahead, Vic himself has now followed her to that "far, far better place." May God grant him that eternal rest which he so richly deserves. May light perpetual shine upon him. May he rest in peace.