

**A Memorial for E. Victor Milione  
Arlington, Virginia, April 11, 2008**

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Everyone knows the basic facts: Vic Milione was born in 1924 in Penfield, Pennsylvania, and graduated from St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia. You also know that he led the Intercollegiate Studies Institute from 1953 until 1988.

Let me fill in some of the blanks.

Bill Buckley recounted on November 29, 1988, at the thirty-fifth anniversary dinner of ISI at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington that Frank Chodorov had appointed him as the first President of ISI and then, as Buckley said, "I got a note from him [Chodorov], a note that sticks easily to the memory. It said, 'Dear Bill, You're fired. I've decided a Jew will do better [in fundraising] as President of ISI so I have appointed myself. Love, Frank.'"

Chodorov reigned for a very short while before he fell ill and gave the organization a fresh President. As Buckley said, "not Jewish, to be sure, which may be why ISI is always broke.... In any case, Victor Milione set out in his quiet way to be of service to a half century of young men and women."

When Vic, along with Frank Chodorov, decided that ISI should not give up its independence and come under the wing of FEE, they moved the organization's headquarters to the Public Ledger Building in downtown Philadelphia. I was a frequent visitor there to Vic and Commodore Don Lipsett in my graduate student days at the Wharton School. It was there that Vic, over long lunches, introduced me to some great thinkers and big ideas and to the most certain cure for anyone who is tending toward an overindulgence of alcohol—that is, a large straight Campari, without even much ice, before lunch.

Others have talked about Vic's ability to quote everyone from Aristotle to H.L. Mencken, with Ortega y Gasset as one of his favorites.

In a 1993 personal commentary in the *Intercollegiate Review* on his tenure at ISI, entitled "Ideas in Action: Forty Years of Educating for Liberty," Vic Milione mentioned the significant philanthropists who supported ISI in the early days, going back to J. Howard Pew and Alex McKenna through Harry Bradley of the Allen Bradley Company and Dick Scaife, still well known to many. As my colleague, John Von Kannon, points out, Vic knew more philanthropists and yet was able to raise less money from them than just about anyone else in the Conservative Movement. In fact, one of Von Kannon's first rules of raising funds is that "the donor, no matter how ignorant, is always right!" Vic never accepted that one!

I was to learn the implications of this first-hand in 1965 when my Richard M. Weaver Fellowship, in the amount of \$3,000 plus tuition, as an “occasional student” (a term which my children always found amusing) at the London School of Economics was always late in arriving. Actually, this forced me to go to work for Ralph Harris at the IEA for five pounds a day in order to make sure I knew where my next few meals would be coming from. Thus, Vic Milione was responsible for starting me down the path of think tanks and public policy issues! (Before he turned me over to the tender mercies of our colleague, Dick Allen.)

He was always itching for a good argument and it was great fun to be a fly on the wall when he and Henry Salvatori took off after each other!

Vic was fond of quoting Tocqueville, who said that “Every fresh generation is a new people” and the “time for the experiment is never past.” Vic was a cheery friend, but certainly not the congenial optimist. He was fond of quoting Sorokin in his *Crisis of Our Age* (1942) who believed that the crisis was extraordinary.

But then again in his reflections in the *Intercollegiate Review*, Vic noted that one of his closest intellectual friends and idols was Richard Weaver. A careful reading of *Ideas Have Consequences* by Weaver will remind us all that things started going downhill with the Renaissance—and the decline has been accelerating ever since!

Vic’s commitment for the long-term to the perennial issues was real and unending. While in recent years he had moved to Virginia to be close to his son, Lou, and his family, the notion that he was somehow now resident in exurbia near the nation’s capitol, was a bit off-putting to him.

To Vic, life, and particularly the life of the mind, was so much more than politics and policy. It was ideas and the permanent things, and that again is part of the tradition that he conveyed to all of us.

“All that is needed is integrity, consistency and perseverance.” Vic Milione personified all three, and how we all cherish his memory, and how we all miss him.