

Philadelphia Society Meeting

Tribute to Ben Rogge & Pierre Goodrich

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Good evening, my friends.

What an honor it is for me to stand before my fellow Philadelphia Society members once again, and to welcome one of the largest contingents of Society guests in our history, to what is also the largest fall meeting in our history! And especially as an Illini to pay tribute to a pair, to a group, no, to a gaggle of Hoosiers!

I'm sure that when we depart on Sunday, we will do so with high spirits and a renewed dedication to the blessings of liberty.

My purpose this evening, and our overall purpose for these next two days, is to focus on the institution we call The American Academy. On behalf of The Philadelphia Society, we do so tonight by offering honor and praise to two great fathers of our movement and champions of that Academy:

The first, one of our earliest members, is Dr. Benjamin Rogge, Distinguished Professor of Political Economy and Dean at Wabash College, from the late 1940s to his premature passing in 1980. Ben is recognized across America to this day for his wisdom and his unique ability to convey economics and political philosophy in the classroom, in publications, and even on film.

For those of you who remember, one of Ben's most noteworthy achievements was a brainchild called, "The Incredible Bread Machine." For those of you who don't remember it, find a copy and watch it; you won't be disappointed!

The second is Pierre Goodrich, the founder of the Liberty Fund. Of course, we also fondly remember Pierre as a great industrialist, honored Hoosier barrister, first citizen of Indianapolis, Sagamore of the Wabash, and a member of the Wabash College Class of 1916.

They say big things come in small packages.

Ben hailed from Hastings, Nebraska, population: 5,000.

Pierre hailed from Winchester, Indiana, population: 24,000.

Wabash College, the institution that brought them together, is located in Crawfordsville, 40 miles northwest of where we are seated this evening, which boasts a student population of just 900.

Ben and Pierre, along with the unconventional yet uncontested ideas they put forth, not only left their mark on Wabash but the entire stratosphere of higher education and so many of its students.

Together, the Rogge–Goodrich team became teacher and advisor to thousands of students and scholars at most of our great colleges and universities, as well as mentors to hundreds of influential conservative Americans over the past seventy years.

They never hesitated to present provocative solutions to public problems, like the continuing decline of higher education in America. Rogge and Goodrich believed that the right ideas can have the right consequences even when things appear hopeless.

They believed that the heavily subsidized experiment in achieving equality through mass education had resulted in making schools and colleges “a collection of non-students under the tutelage of non-teachers and the administration of the incompetent.”

In a slim volume titled *Education in a Free Society*, they proposed that government withdraw completely from education and leave the field to private enterprise.

As a result, they argued that:

Some schools would be operated by religious groups, some would be secular.

Some would serve the gifted students, some the slower students. Some schools would have a variegated student body, some a homogeneous student body.

Some would offer only liberal arts, some vocationally oriented materials, still others some mixture of the two.

The costs of education would be borne by the student or his family or perhaps some patron. Rogge and Goodrich argued that it would be better to have all schools operated for profit because it would ensure that they operate more efficiently and would relieve the burden borne by the taxpayer.

As for equality, the men were clear: “The only equality that is consistent with freedom is equality before the law.... All other forms and types of equalities can be brought into being (if at all) only through the use of force.”

Many people today carry the torch for “equality before the law” being the only true equality of freedom. Notable among them is my Heritage colleague, and our Society’s former President, former Attorney General Edwin Meese. Likewise, many in this room and among our membership since the beginning have lived their lives devoted to the “free market as the guarantor of all other freedoms.”

For instance, Goodrich and Rogge were closely affiliated with the Foundation for Economic Education and its founder, Leonard Read, and all three were loyal members of the Mont Pelerin Society.

Indiana in the fifties, sixties, and seventies was both the birthplace and the workplace of many of our most loyal Philadelphia Society members and friends.

Stan Evans became the youngest editor of a major daily newspaper here in Indianapolis – The Indianapolis Daily News – and was also a founder of the Young Americans for Freedom.

Albert M. Campbell, Esq., our Philadelphia Society Secretary’s esteemed father, was Pierre Goodrich’s law partner and a long time ISI trustee. A graduate of De Pauw, Wabash’s arch rival, Al resigned from the DePauw Board of Trustees thinking DePauw too liberal an institution, and began working for Wabash by launching Wabash’s deferred giving program in the mid 1960s.

Al and Ben became quite a team on the speaker’s circuit, one of the results being that five years later, Wabash had expanded its endowment by more \$65 million. And when George Roche became president of Hillsdale in the seventies, Uncle Albert and Ben Rogge became counselors to the Hillsdale Board’s incredible dream, which became the Hillsdale College we know today.

In 1955, Al wrote a letter to the Editor of Stan’s newspaper and stated: “Current writings and pronouncements of important people put great value on being in the middle of the road. Let

us back away from current controversial issues and partisan politics for a moment and try to view this problem with as much objectivity as possible.”

Al’s ‘objectivity’ was to advise his fellow Hoosiers to get out of the middle of the road and to recognize that “free enterprise under limited government is head and shoulders above any practical choice!” I like Al’s objectivity!

And, our late friend, Don Lipsett, Bill Campbell’s predecessor as Secretary of the Philadelphia Society and its founder, was a noted Hoosier. Don was the representative of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, working right here in Indianapolis.

We could go on. How many of you in this audience are Hoosiers? Would you stand please! I’ll bet you may not have known the importance of your own inheritance. Please be seated.

Now, let me ask all those in this room who knew Pierre Goodrich to stand. Now, those who knew Ben Rogge stand with them.

Let’s close with an applause recognizing them and the heritage these leaders and their Hoosier colleagues have passed on to us.