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## **IN MEMORIAM: LARRY DARBY**

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Larry Franklin Darby was most widely known and respected for his fertile mind, and his many intellectual contributions, which I will briefly touch on. But beyond his great intellect was Larry the man. He was a complex man from simple roots in rural Indiana. He touched the hearts of those who knew him and made an impact on society as a whole. His intellectual contributions have positively affected public policy and the science of economics. Larry believed in facts and not rhetoric, and was extremely interested in how public policy affected consumer welfare. He strongly believed that markets were imperfect, as was government intervention, and always sought to find that balance to maximize consumer welfare. He believed in empirical evidence and cost benefit analysis. He often wondered how people could not understand the common sense of economics and the importance of the facts.

Larry graduated from Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana, and earned his Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University. He began his career as a professor at Temple University, moving in 1975 to Washington D.C. to concentrate on policy analysis. There he served as Chief Economist with the White House Office of Telecommunications. He went on to head the Economic Division of the Federal Communications Commission, and then was Chief of its Common Carrier Bureau, where he was an advocate of deregulating the telecommunications industry. He left telecommunications briefly to serve as Executive Director of a joint Congressional Commission on trucking deregulation. He returned to telecommunications as Vice President of corporate finance for Shearson Lehman Brothers. He went on to form his own consulting firm, and helped to found and serve as Senior Fellow of The American Consumer Institute, an independent research group that studies the impact of government policies and regulations on market behavior and ultimately on consumers. Larry was the author of many articles about the intersection of public policy, market dynamics, and consumer well-being.

Even more important than these accomplishments was Larry as a human being. One of Larry's colleagues upon learning of his death asked those who knew Larry to say a few words about him. Many listed Larry's tremendous intellectual contributions. What struck me most and came as no surprise, however, was the tremendous outpouring of feelings about Larry the man. He was described as: "kind and thoughtful," "humble," "honest" "a class

act” “intellect, collegiality and good humor,” “truly a fine and decent person,” “disagreement never interfered with the basic tenets of civility, courtesy, warmth, and humanity that defined his life,” “warm, compassionate and passionate, intelligent, ethical and wise,” “good mentor and steadfast friend,” “unfailingly thoughtful, reasoned and interesting.” Concerning his time on Wall Street, “there would not be a part for him in either the old or new production of greed.” Many described his devotion to his family.

Concerning his intellectual contributions, Larry’s colleagues noted that he “cared about data, facts, statutes—all those things that get lost in many Washington debates,” “analysis with intelligence,” “formed an important part of the foundation of the FCC’s digital initiatives.... It was well done, well communicated, and helped lead to a successful evolution in visual technologies and services,” “a sharp, insightful, witty, substantive intellectual ally in the battle against info-socialism,” “able to explain patiently complex policies so that everyone could understand,” “no one has made a bigger contribution to the public interest, properly defined,” and “articulate opponent of net-neutrality regulation.”

Larry always believed that I was his graduate student, but in fact he left Temple before I came there. I often told him that I was not his graduate student, but winning an argument with Larry was rare, so I finally let him tell everyone that I was his graduate student. Now that I reflect upon it, Larry was right, because everyone who knew Larry learned something from him and thus we were all Larry’s students. To show how much I thought of Larry, we worked on many projects together and I never had a contract.

He was truly a gentlemen and a scholar, but he was more than that to the people who were lucky enough to know him. He was a true friend and is missed by many. The world was a better place because of Larry Franklin Darby.

Joe Fuhr