

## EDITOR'S NOTE

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### REMEMBERING SAM FRANCIS (1947-2005): PATRIOT, COLLEAGUE, AND FRIEND

Several months have passed since the loss of Sam Francis earlier this year due to complications following an operation for an aortal aneurysm, but his passing remains an unforgettable shock. After the surgery, Sam's condition seemed to be improving day by day. His unexpected death on February 15 comes as not only a tragic personal loss to his family and friends but as a major setback to our movement. We've lost not only a tremendously gifted and talented scholar and writer but a man who stuck to the principles he advocated, regardless of personal cost. Among those principles was the conviction that to defend America and the West one must champion the flesh-and-blood people who have created them, not merely a body of ideas. For standing by that principle, Sam was fired from the *Washington Times*, although his two national awards for editorial writing are the only ones that have ever been conferred on a writer for the *Times*.

Following Sam's dismissal, the nervous Nellies of the conservative establishment quickly distanced themselves from him. While Sam continued to be published here and there, the "respectable" right demonstrated once again that for all its trumpeting against "political correctness," there are none so politically correct as conservatives. To cite just one instance, the editor in chief and former co-owner of *Human Events* made it a point to excise Sam's name whenever it was mentioned in an article, although Sam had once been a valued contributor. For speaking candidly and forcefully about race, ethnicity, and culture — subjects taboo for establishment conservatives — Sam had become persona non grata to the conservative establishment. (There are notable exceptions, such as Pat Buchanan and Howard Phillips, who both attended Sam's funeral.)

The day before he fell ill in late January, Sam called me at home to discuss pending book reviews and other projects for *TOQ*. Sam deeply valued his position as the book review editor for this journal; it was clear to anyone who knew Sam well that he considered *TOQ* one of the most important, and rewarding, of his many endeavors for our cause. In planning reviews and articles for *TOQ*, we would meet periodically after work to discuss journal-related matters and general political gossip over dinner at the Fish Market in

Old Town Alexandria. Sam knew innumerable personalities on the near and far right and had countless entertaining stories in his memory banks.

The sad irony of Sam's untimely death is that he had never seemed healthier. He had given up smoking several years ago, and more recently had lost over one hundred pounds on the Atkins diet. Before that, Sam had come to rely on a cane to get around, and disliked walking great distances. But after his weight loss on Atkins, he preferred to walk the half dozen blocks from his office to the Fish Market. After dinner, we would visit Olsson's Books and Records nearby in Old Town and peruse the used book collection on the second floor. Sam read avidly and widely. Over the years he had amassed a huge library, as well as a vast erudition often sadly lacking among the owners of impressive book collections. Sam had an encyclopedic knowledge of Western history, from the Greeks to the present, and was deeply versed in English literature, including science fiction, horror, and the occult, and could discourse learnedly on authors from Herodotus to Lovecraft.

Sam's ability to influence the conservative political landscape, from shaping the intellectual trajectory of paleoconservatism and cultivating a nationalist political perspective to addressing racial and ethnic issues that conservatives have long abandoned, is virtually irreplaceable. He was a beacon of common-sense, wisdom, and insight as well as a great intellect. Sam's focus, drive, and commitment to his responsibilities as editor, syndicated columnist, and author were beyond exemplary. He was always punctual, never missing a deadline for *TOQ*. Sam's friend Pat Buchanan once called him "the Clausewitz of the right," while radical leftist Leonard Zeskind dubbed him "the philosopher-general of middle American white nationalism." These appellations express Sam's role, aspirations, and achievement in fighting for truth, freedom, and the weal of our people. Sam's devotion to that struggle, more than any excommunication, separates him forever from the conservative movement, whose best ideals he served faithfully for decades. We at *TOQ* believe that, in his work for our publication, this good and gifted colleague was best able to deploy his considerable talents in the cause that he so steadfastly served.

A future issue of *TOQ* will be devoted to various aspects of Sam's literary work, cultural interests, and political ideas. Reprinted below are the comments rendered by Rep. Duncan on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

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*Rep. John J. Duncan, Jr. (R.-Tenn.), paid tribute to Sam Francis on the floor of the House of Representatives:*

March 9, 2005

United States House of Representatives

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fellow Tennessean, but a man whom I never had the privilege of meeting. Samuel Francis was a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist and a leading voice of traditional conservatism. He passed away several days ago, just after the Congress had gone into recess, at the too-young age of 57 from complications after heart surgery.

No two people, not even husbands and wives or best friends, agree on everything; and I did not always agree with Sam Francis. But I admired his courage. He was politically incorrect on almost everything, which made him right on most things, but also very controversial. He was a leading critic of neo-conservatives, Big Government conservatives who really are not very conservative at all.

Raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Dr. Francis had a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins and master's and Ph.D. degrees from the University of North Carolina. Sam Francis did not believe in world government and multiculturalism. He was a patriotic American who put his own country first and was a brilliant and brave writer.

– *The Honorable John J Duncan, Jr.*