

Gordon's Mark on Manne

Henry Manne

In the fall of 1962 I had just begun teaching at George Washington University Law School. I had become friendly with a student of mine who was also the editor-in-chief of the School's law review. I strongly urged him to let me review Buchanan and Tullock's *Calculus of Consent*, which I had read the summer before. He was as dubious as I was enthusiastic about the propriety of reviewing this work in a law review. But I overpowered him.

I believe that this was the only review of the *Calculus of Consent* in any American Law Review. Certainly it was the first, and that is a matter of which I have always be inordinately proud. The interested intellectual historian of Public Choice could read that review to see how prescient I was in suggesting myriad ways in which this theory would be useful to legal scholars, especially in Constitutional Law, a field that had to wait many years before the applicability of Public Choice theory was recognized there. I must, in the interest of honest disclosure, acknowledge that this review did not do one thing to help spread interest in Public Choice theory in American law schools. I do not believe that it was ever noticed by any practicing legal scholar.

I made sure, however, that it was noticed by a very significant non-practicing legal scholar by the name of Gordon Tullock. I believe that not ten minutes elapsed between his receiving and reading this review and his calling me for a personal meeting. Perhaps very laudatory reviews were rare, or perhaps Gordon saw me as a possible connection back to legal academia, which he had so wisely eschewed. That next week I drove down to Charlottesville and began one of the most enjoyable, rewarding, and happiest friendships of my lifetime.

It was probably in the year following that I first was invited to deliver a paper to the graduate students working with Buchanan and Tullock in Charlottesville. To this day I am astounded at how much intellectual firepower was collected in that room and how many students - who still occasionally recall this to me as their first introduction of Public Choice's use in law (mine was mainly corporation law) - went on to great academic and governmental careers. I was well aware that I had come into the acquaintance of this small group, not at its very inception, but fairly early on in the development of the camaraderie of the Public Choice field, which is still so evident and so valuable to anyone working in the field.

But Gordon's influence on my career did not end with introducing me to that next generation of scholars. He invited me to give a paper at the second of the meetings of the Non-Market Decision Making group, held at a state lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Others attending and listening to my paper (and receiving my rapt attention in turn) included Bill Riker, John Rawls, and Anthony Downs, just to mention a few of the luminaries, as well as the usual suspects from Charlottesville. It was not until some years later that I came to appreciate what a remarkable event that had been, surely a critical turning point in the development of modern Public Choice theory and yet another feather in Gordon's hat.

My paper seemed to have been well received, but I was not aware quite how well until a few years later I was offered a chair in Political Science at the University of Rochester. This had apparently been engineered by the president, Alan Wallis, and an admirer of mine from the Blue Ridge conference, Bill Riker. I was not even aware when I was first contacted of the distinctiveness of that department. Riker and I became very close friends, but we always understood, and frequently commented on, who it was who brought us together and indeed had unleashed an intellectual tsunami that changed many lives - and all for the better.

I will not go into the role of Gordon and Jim in my becoming the dean of the George Mason University School of Law. Suffice it to say that without them, that law school, as it exists today, would not have been possible.

So Gordon played a very important role in my life, both professionally and personally. And both parts have been far more productive and enjoyable because of his presence. Thanks, Gordon, and, in the face of this sincere appreciation, please do not say anything sarcastic. No, that's wrong. Why would I want him any different?