

**GORDON TULLOCK**

**THE FIRST**

**80**

**YEARS**

**February 16, 2002**

The Center for Study of Public Choice

and

Department of Economics

wishes to express their

sincere appreciation

to the

Heritage Foundation

Cato Institute

and

Mercatus Center

for their generous financial

support of this celebration

Celebration of Gordon Tullock's 80th Birthday  
at Tivoli's Restaurant, Arlington Virginia

## **A Celebration to Honor Gordon Tullock**

Saturday, February 16, 2002

Tivoli's Restaurant  
1700 N. Moore Street  
Arlington, VA

Lecture

**Tullock the Scholar**  
William Niskanen  
Charles Rowley

Reception

**Tullock the Teacher**  
James C. Miller  
David Barnes  
William (Rob) Nelson  
Charles Holt

Dinner

**Tullock the Man**  
Nicholas Tideman  
Charlie Goetz  
Mark Crain

Mary Lou Gunderson

## **Gordon Tullock**

### **The Origins of a Scholar**

Gordon Tullock was born in Rockford, Illinois on February 13, 1922 to George and Helen Tullock. His father was of Scottish ancestry and his mother was Pennsylvania Dutch. His higher education was obtained at the University of Chicago and its law school. Gordon began his under-graduate education at the University of Chicago in 1940, and after three years of *undistinguished* military service (Tullock's word), received his Doctorate of Law degree from the University of Chicago Law School in 1947. The University of Chicago allowed two years of undergraduate courses to be combined with four years of formal law. Tullock completed this program in five years. The baccalaureate degree which required payment of a five-dollar fee would have been awarded after two years at the law school, but Tullock's *decision not to pay* this small sum created the basis for endless speculation regarding his credentials as well as fueling the myth of the self-taught economist.

Tullock's short legal career was initiated and completed with a small but expensive downtown Chicago law firm. Tullock handled what he described as two rather simple cases. One case he won when he should not have won. The other he lost when he should have won. In both cases the expected probability of success was so low that he was dispatched with little instruction by the senior members of the firm. To make matters a bit worse, in the case he won, the client had been told by a senior attorney not to pursue the case and the senior attorney thought that Tullock had done something improper. In the case he lost, Tullock not only lost, but was reproached by the court.

The combination of these two cases led Tullock to believe that he would be better off in another profession. He had passed the Foreign Service examination before completing law school, so after five months as a law clerk, Tullock decided to build upon his interests in foreign affairs by pursuing a career in the diplomatic service. After a two-month initiation course at the Foreign Service Institute (part of the U. S. Department of State) in Washington, D.C., he received an assignment as vice consul at Tientsin, China, where, in his own words, was in charge of "odds and ends." In this assignment his report and cable writing duties further acquainted him with economics.

Tullock's transition from the State Department to an academic career was influenced by the associations he had forged while at the University of Chicago. Colin Campbell was one of the first people to recognize Tullock's scholarly potential. Tullock first met Campbell one Christmas when Campbell, then a doctoral student in economics at the University of Chicago, was visiting his fiancée, whose brother was a friend of Tullock. Tullock's collaboration with Campbell produced

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three papers, two on Chinese monetary history (Tullock and Campbell 1954, Tullock 1956) and the other on the Korean monetary system (Tullock and Campbell 1957). It is important to note that Tullock's work with Campbell came into being because of Tullock's observations of events around him, and at this time Tullock was not theorizing himself in a formal way or developing his new approaches to economics.

In 1956, Tullock left the State Department to pursue several research and writing projects. One of these projects was for the Princeton Panel (a subsidiary of the Gallop organization). During this period, Tullock met Karl Popper and assisted him in writing the postscript to *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. Popper's influence was considerable on Tullock's views of how to conduct research. Consequently Tullock became an advocate of statistical testing although he never did the testing himself. Indeed, Tullock's two works, *The Organization of Inquiry* (1966) and *The Logic of the Law* (1971), advanced hypotheses which Tullock hoped would be tested by others.

In 1958 Tullock was awarded a research fellowship by the Thomas Jefferson Center for Studies in Political Economy and Social Philosophy at the University of Virginia. Tullock had first met G. Warren Nutter when both were members of the student debate team at the University of Chicago. Nutter introduced Tullock to James M. Buchanan at the annual meetings of the American Economic Association in Philadelphia in December 1957. Tullock gave Nutter and Buchanan copies of his manuscript on bureaucracy which both then read before they decided to offer Tullock the post-doctoral fellowship. From this association with Buchanan which began in Charlottesville, came *The Calculus of Consent*. Tullock went on to write many important articles and books. Further details of his distinguished career are listed below:

#### Professional Positions:

1947	Practiced law for four months.
1947-1956	Various Far East positions in Foreign Service
1956-1958	Research and Writing Various Projects
1958-1959	Post Doctoral Fellow, University of Virginia
1959-1962	Asst. & Assoc. Professor, University of South Carolina
1962-1967	Associate Professor, University of Virginia
1967-1968	Professor of Economics and Pol. Science, Rice University
1968-1972	Professor of Economics and Public Choice VPI&SU
1972-1983	University Distinguished Professor VPI&SU
1983-1987	Holbert R. Harris University Professor, GMU
1987	Philip Morris Visiting Distinguished Scholar, Baruch Univ.
1987-1999	Karl Eller Prof. of Econ. and Political Science, U. of Arizona
Fall 1999	Professor of Law and Economics, GMU

#### Honors:

- 1982 First recipient of the Leslie T. Wilkins Award, presented for "The Outstanding Book in the Field of Criminology and Criminal Justice," by the Criminal Justice Research Center, Albany, New York.
- 1985 Honorary Doctorate of Letters, Basel University
- 1992 Honorary Doctor of Law, University of Chicago
- 1993 Adam Smith Award, Association of Private Enterprise Education, Washington, D.C. in April.
- 1993 An award dinner to honor the *Works of Gordon Tullock* was held at the conference of the Western Economic Association at Lake Tahoe in June.
- 1996 Member of the American Political Science Review Hall of Fame
- 1996 Award for *Outstanding Contributions in the Field of Law & Economics* by George Mason University Law School.
- 1998 Distinguished Fellow, American Economics Association

#### Offices Held:

- President, Public Choice Society
- Founder and Editor, *Public Choice Journal*
- President, Southern Economic Association
- President, Western Economic Association
- Secretary, Public Choice Society
- Member, Board of Directors American Political Science Association
- Founder and President, Henry Simons Society
- Academic Advisor, Hong Kong Center for Economic Research
- Founder, *International Journal of Bioeconomics*
- President, International Bioeconomics
- President, Atlantic Economic Society
- President, Association of Private Enterprise Education

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