

IN MEMORY

On Thursday, July 16, 2020 we lost a great economist and a true trailblazer, Dr. Mason Gaffney, Ph.D. The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation honors a life well lived. We will remember him best for the originality of his thoughts, and the unbridled passion he had for bucking the traditional economics mindset – fueled by his faith and his belief in the philosophies of Henry George. Gaffney’s numerous, unparalleled contributions, including *The Mason Gaffney Reader* and *After the Crash: Designing a Depression Free Economy*, have fundamentally shaped the way so many see our world.

Known for his weathered Stetson, genteel swagger, and comprehensive understanding of American terrain, Gaffney rode outside the herd of mainstream economists for the better part of the last century, arguing that the discipline’s traditional emphasis on capital and commerce was and is a tragic mistake. The way he saw the story, the land and its resources are the central protagonists, the landowner plays a naive villain, and the sales tax hangs around like a hungry wolf. Armed with this perspective, and a journalist’s way with words, he wrote more than 150 articles on subjects from market crashes to the future of cities to the perils of military spending—all marked by analyses that were often decades ahead of his contemporaries.

Gaffney was a bright student who grew up in New York, South Dakota, and Chicago. He was inspired by reading Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty* in high school. He began his college career at Harvard, but was disappointed by the economics department there. Gaffney later transferred to Reed College, and received his doctoral degree from University of California, Berkeley, having completed a dissertation entitled, “Land Speculation as an Obstacle to the Ideal Allocation of Land.”



While Gaffney spent his life pointing out the errors of his profession, he continued to reassure us that the solution to our problems has always been there—in the earth beneath our feet. RSF will continue educating on our earth’s resources in his honor.

Gaffney inspired many and drew them to the Georgist movement by something he wrote or said. He helps us understand that “ethical economics” is NOT an oxymoron.

To read RSF Board Members Wyn Achenbaum and Nic Tideman's tribute to Dr. Mason Gaffney in its entirety, visit:

<https://schalkenbach.org/robert-schalkenbach-fdn-tribute-to-mason-gaffney-1/>