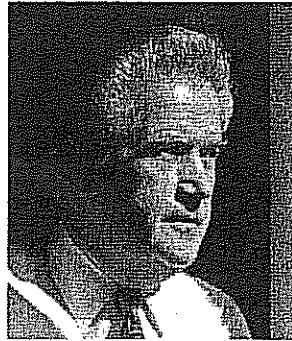


## BILL COYNE DIED NOV. 3rd

Former Pittsburgh City Council President and former U.S. Congressman Bill Coyne has died. He championed several shifts to land value tax, raising the rate from twice that of the building tax in 1978 to more than five times that rate before he left the City Council for the U.S. Congress. In Congress he worked with Walt Rybeck to do what he could for economic justice at the federal level, where he supported unpopular measures, like eliminating the mortgage deduction because that deduction only led to higher land prices and more debt.



Long time Pittsburgh land value tax activist Dan Sullivan remembers Bill Coyne as showing him that getting good information was more important than getting supporters. He asked Dan to thoroughly research the issue and find answers to every question that might come up. Coyne took his proposals, not only to those who would support them, but to those who opposed them, so they could see that he was sincerely interested in the public good and was not trying to benefit others at their expense. When Dan mentioned that some of the people would never support his proposal, he said, "They don't have to support it. I just want them to respect it." Many who paid more under land value tax at least didn't take it as a personal attack, but as a sincere attempt to improve the city.

Walt Rybeck, who worked as an aide to Congressman Coyne, says he was quiet, unassuming, shy of the spotlight, and down to earth. He carefully studied all sides of an issue before expressing opinions and was respectful of opponents as well as those who shared his views. These are not qualities often associated with politicians. Yet these qualities accurately described Congressman William J. Coyne.

Coyne had taken the lead in expanding land value taxation in Pittsburgh. Yet his instinct was to under-sell or soft-pedal its impact. He let others praise the city's business district revitalization under the tax changes he authored. He preferred to stress that the awful effects predicted by foes of higher land taxes simply never happened. Bill Coyne was highly respected by fellow members of Congress for his hard behind-the-scenes legislative work. He was as kind and thoughtful to constituents and staff as he was to the "stars" of the Washington scene. It was an honor to work with that rare good man.  
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