
IN MEMORIAM

Paul Heyne, 1931-2000

After an illness that ran its course from diagnosis to death in just two months, Paul Heyne succumbed to cancer on March 9, 2000.

A gifted and dedicated teacher of economics, Heyne taught at Valparaiso University (1957-66), Southern Methodist University (1966-76), and the University of Washington (1976-2000). He had extraordinary success in giving students an appreciation of basic economic principles. His textbook, *The Economic Way of Thinking*, went through nine editions between 1973 and 1999. Unlike the authors of standard textbooks, Heyne eschewed encyclopedic coverage of the subject. In his view, “very little indeed of what might go into a complete and current compendium of economic theory is actually useful in enabling us to make sense of the real world and to evaluate policy proposals. Almost all the genuinely important things that economics has to teach are elementary concepts of relationship that people could almost figure out for themselves if they were willing to think carefully” (7th ed., p. x).

Heyne began his higher education as a divinity student at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, and he was ordained as a minister, but he never became a pastor. His Ph.D. at the University of Chicago was in Ethics and Society. Although he devoted most of his adult life to teaching economics, he retained a deep interest in questions of ethics. A champion of the free market, he nevertheless insisted that the free market, even at its best, is no more than a means to the attainment of more fundamental ends. “A well-coordinated and smoothly functioning society gives individuals more opportunity to choose; it does not guarantee that they will choose well. The economic way of thinking, especially in a democracy, is an important preliminary. But it is no more than that” (p. 607).

Following the East Bloc revolutions of 1989, Heyne took special pleasure in teaching economics to eastern European students, teachers, and business people. His textbook was translated into Russian, Hungarian, Czech, and Bulgarian. Amazon.com’s information about the book (retrieved on April 12, 2000) included a five-star customer review by a Muscovite: “If you need a textbook on economics and you do not know the theory, you *have* to read it before you get started. It’s also very useful for businessmen. I’ve read it in Russian.” With very good reason did The Templeton Honor Rolls For Education in a Free Society place the book on its honor roll of scholarly books and textbooks.

Besides his university teaching and his active lecturing for various foundations, Heyne devoted much time to religious, community, and family affairs. Many people around the world came to admire him, not only for his clear writing and engaging teaching but also for his generosity, his willingness to listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others, and his manifest decency as a human being. He was genuinely unique, and a host of friends mourn his untimely passing.

Despite his many activities, Heyne found time to assist *The Independent Review* in various ways during the past five years. He wrote two book reviews, the second of which appears in the present issue; he refereed submissions; and he gave valuable advice to the editor, who is a former colleague and a friend of many years who held him in the highest esteem.