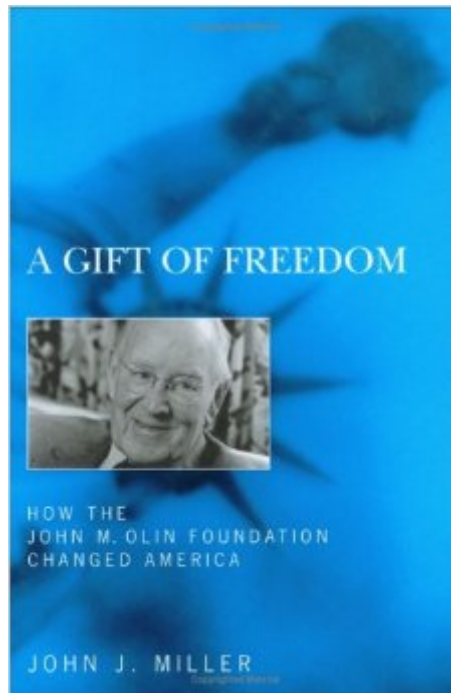


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A Gift Of Freedom: How The John M. Olin Foundation Changed America



Synopsis

In the 1970s, John M. Olin, one of the country's leading industrialists, decided to devote his fortune to saving American free enterprise. Over the next three decades, the John M. Olin Foundation funded the conservative movement as it emerged from the intellectual ghetto and occupied the halls of power. The foundation spent hundreds of millions of dollars fostering what its longtime president William E. Simon called the "counterintelligentsia" to offset liberal dominance of university faculties and the mainstream media and to make conservatism a significant cultural force. Among the counterintellectuals the foundation identified and supported at key stages of their careers were Charles Murray during his early work on welfare reform, Allan Bloom as he wrote *THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND*, and Francis Fukuyama as he was developing his "End of History" thesis. Using exclusive access to the John M. Olin Foundation's leading personalities as well as its extensive archives, John J. Miller tells the story of an intriguing man and his unique philanthropic vision. He gives fascinating insights into the foundation's role in helping the CIA fund anti-Communist organizations during the Cold War and its extensive help to Irving Kristol and others as they moved from left to right to found the neoconservative movement. He tells of the foundation's early and critical role in building institutions such as the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation, which served to transform conservative ideas into national policies. *A GIFT OF FREEDOM* shows how John M. Olin's "venture capital fund for the conservative movement" helped develop one of the leading forces in American politics and culture.

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Customer Reviews

This simply stunned me. It's as much an eye-opening experience I've had in a 3-4 years. An amazing journey - some new ground and some old, but all seen in a totally new light. Those who have followed the development of public policy intellectual thought over the past 2 decades are will recognize the supporting cast here: Allan Bloom, Tod Lindberg, John Chubb, Irving Kristol - and organizations - American Enterprise Institute, National Association of Scholars, Collegiate Network, American Council of Trustees and Alumni,.... One originally sees these and appreciates the struggles of the founders of these groups, the efforts, the results; one knows that the participants from like-minded organizations move in intersecting circles and meet each other in philosophical agreement. Yet it had never even occurred to me that all could be tied together so in a common bond of support through a single funder, via a dedicated team that methodically sought out and empowered each and all. And then the amazing story of Law and Economics, a discipline which I'd never heard named before (nor, probably, had my MBA professors). And yet, there it built up and spread across the country, providing a cutting edge of learned thought. Many of us think often of the Law's impact on our economics in the US - especially via a National minimum wage (which skews everyone's views of fair, localized, work-appropriate compensation). But the story of systematically introducing economics into our wayward law schools was a tale worthy of Tom Clancy! This truly was astounding work the Olin Board and Staff were engaged in. This spring brings much commentary from Francis Fukuyama on the war. Miller reveals that it was the John M.

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