



## **Billionaire philanthropist and conservative activist David Koch has died. He was a big Smithsonian donor.**

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David Koch, conservative activist and billionaire philanthropist who made major contributions to the Smithsonian Institution and sat on the board of several Greater Washington nonprofits, has died at the age of 79.

“While we mourn the loss of our hero, we remember his iconic laughter, insatiable curiosity, and gentle heart,” Koch's family said in a statement Friday morning.

A cause of death was not given. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1992 and his health had declined recently, resulting in him leaving his business leadership roles.

David Koch retired a year ago from his responsibilities at Koch Industries, including roles as chairman and CEO. Also in that announcement, he said he was retiring from other organizations and getting out of politics.

Koch sat on the board of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, which recently debuted its renovated dinosaur and fossil hall exhibit named after him, "The David H. Koch Hall of Fossils — Deep Time." In 2012, Koch made a \$35 million contribution toward the total \$110 million cost of the renovation.

### **Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History**

Upon entering the renovated fossil hall, this mastodon skeleton is one of the first to greet guests.

The museum's exhibit on human evolution is also named after Koch, "The David H. Koch Hall of Human Origins." The Bloomberg Billionaires Index charts Koch's net worth at \$58.7 billion, making him the No. 8 wealthiest person in the world.

Koch was also on the boards of several D.C.-based nonprofit think tanks, including the Cato Institute, the Aspen Institute and the Americans for Prosperity Foundation, based in Arlington. David Koch and his brother Charles, through foundations, were major donors to George Mason University as the Virginia school expanded its various academic offerings, leading, in some cases, to controversy.

In 2006, Koch committed \$20 million to support Johns Hopkins University's cancer research building.