

## A man who made a difference

By [Richard W. Rahn](#)

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Martin Anderson, well regarded economist and an adviser to three presidents, passed away yesterday. Anderson will go down in history as a significant contributor to both the theory and practice of public policy, as a result of his many influential books and the important posts that he held.

Yet, his best known contribution may be as the person who definitively destroyed the false narrative that President Reagan was not all that bright and did not have a wide range of knowledge and an inquiring mind.

For those too young to remember, Reagan was often portrayed as a dumb movie actor from Hollywood by all too many in the mainstream media, from the time that he served as Governor of California through his presidency. His many successes were often attributed to luck or his staff.

The truth was quite the opposite as those who worked with him well knew. Yet many in the liberal press refused to give up on the false narrative until Martin Anderson, who had been a senior policy adviser for President Reagan, co-authored with his wife Annelise, "Reagan, In His Own Hand: The Writings of Ronald Reagan That Reveal His Revolutionary Vision for America" in 2001.

President Reagan had done frequent radio commentaries from the time he retired as Governor of California until he ran for President. He wrote the commentaries by hand on yellow legal pads – no speech writers, no research staff, no spell or grammar check. What these hand written notes revealed was a remarkably literate man, with a wide ranging and substantive knowledge of history, political theory, foreign policy, national defense, and economic policy. Reagan's reputation had been steadily rising from the time he left the presidency, but took another large jump when the Andersons published their book.

I first met Marty through his wife when she and I were both doctoral students in the same program at Columbia University. Anderson was a young, but already a well-known professor of finance there. He earned the first Ph.D. from MIT ever granted in Industrial Management by any

university. We both shared a passion for public policy and free market economics, but unfortunately for me we never directly worked together, even though our paths occasionally crossed.

His first book, "The Federal Bulldozer: A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal" (1964), made a major impact on my thinking, as he was one of the first to show the perverse outcomes of many public policies of the time. Anderson spent most of his career at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, with occasional absences to serve as an adviser to Presidents and on various boards and commissions. His work had a constructive influence on serious students of public policy.

He was truly a scholar and a gentlemen who was loyal to the men he served, particularly President Reagan.

*Richard W. Rahn is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and chairman of the Institute for Global Economic Growth.*