

'Funding Father' man with a plan

By Alan Wallace

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Richard A. Viguerie thinks it's time for the conservative movement to finish what it started — and outlines how it can do so in his new book, “Takeover: The 100-Year War for the Soul of the GOP and How Conservatives Can Finally Win It” (WND Books).

The movement he speaks of is the coalition of economic, defense/anti-communist and social conservatives that failed to elect Barry Goldwater president in 1964 but succeeded with Ronald Reagan's 1980 White House win. That coalition was aided greatly by Viguerie's pioneering use of direct mail for political marketing and fundraising, which earned him the nickname “Funding Father.”

He's enthusiastic about the latest addition to that coalition: the tea party's limited-government constitutional conservatives. One measure of their importance for Viguerie's vision is the person chosen to write the book's foreword: Jenny Beth Martin, Tea Party Patriots president and co-founder.

Viguerie traces what's wrong with Republicans to 1912, when Teddy Roosevelt, pursuing the “progressive” agenda of his day, split the GOP. At that point, he says, the elites in the GOP establishment adopted a “Big Government Republicanism” philosophy — and since then, conservatives have been battling to take the party back.

Viguerie covers the first half of “The 100-Year War” of the book's title in its first chapter, “Teddy Roosevelt Through Barry Goldwater.” Most of the book is devoted to what he considers the conservative movement's ups, downs, heroes and villains since 1964.

Having brought his narrative to the present day, Viguerie looks ahead in the book's last two chapters by presenting ideas to change the Republican Party for the better — two that were entries in a “Liberty Prize” contest run by Viguerie's Conservative HQ website, submitted by tea party leaders and an Arizona GOP precinct committeeman, plus his own.

Viguerie's blueprint is detailed and reflective of his expertise and experience. He draws on his marketing and political savvy to present a timeline covering vision, goals, strategy and tactics designed to achieve a conservative triumph by 2017.

With Republicans determined to maintain their House majority and regain a Senate majority in this year's midterm elections and win back the White House in 2016, "Takeover" offers insight into the political thinking of the party's conservative core.

FDR'S WAR PREP, FREEDOM WRITINGS & HELPFUL HINTS

"No End Save Victory: How FDR Led the Nation into War" by David Kaiser (Basic Books) — The author has taught history at Carnegie Mellon, Harvard and the Naval War College. He considers the 18 months or so prior to Pearl Harbor the most critical period of FDR's presidency and draws on military archives, Cabinet members' diaries, decoded Japanese cables and contemporary press accounts to recount that time. He contends FDR had a better grasp of Japanese and German threats than did many of his top military officers. And the public, still wary of conflict from World War I, tended to view those threats as regional, not global. FDR even was told, in September 1940, that U.S. arms, ammunition and manpower wouldn't be sufficient for major overseas operations until April 1942. But after France's June 1940 fall, he pushed measures through Congress that vastly expanded the Army and Navy and ramped up production of war materiel, ensuring America would be ready to fight once Dec. 7, 1941, came.

"Realizing Freedom: Libertarian Theory, History, and Practice" by Tom G. Palmer (Cato Institute) — Available as a paperback or as an e-book, this is an expanded edition of a book first published in 2009. Its author is a Cato Institute scholar known for his work on such issues as multiculturalism, democracy, limited government and globalization. He also has been a teacher, a journalist and an activist who smuggled photocopiers and fax machines into the Soviet Union, promoted freedom in such hostile environments as China and Iraq, and organized anti-draft, anti-censorship and anti-tax movements. Billed by the publisher as a collection of his best writings, the book continues his lifelong focus on what freedom is and how freedom relates to justice, law, peace and prosperity. This edition adds material that reflects lessons he has learned since the original was published, including his experiences with other libertarians worldwide during extensive international travel.

"The Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting Ahead: Do's and Don'ts of Right Behavior, Tough Thinking, Clear Writing, and Living a Good Life" by Charles Murray (Crown Business) — The American Enterprise Institute scholar whose books include 1994's "The Bell Curve" (with Richard J. Herrnstein) and 2012's "Coming Apart" offers practical career and life advice in this concise volume. It's geared toward those making the transition from college to the real world but could give those entering college a leg up, too, making it an ideal gift for this spring's graduates. Among Murray's urgings: Eliminate use of "like," "reaching out" and "sharing"; don't be a suck-up; and get rid of tattoos, piercings and strange hair colors. He also covers handling workplace dilemmas including bad bosses and urges all young people to leave home and get real jobs (as opposed to internships), put themselves in scary situations and — for reasons with which he concludes the book — view "Groundhog Day" repeatedly.