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## **Rose D. Friedman dies; economist Milton Friedman's wife and collaborator**

**The widow of the Nobel winner co-wrote books with him and played a major role in promoting his ideas. She was believed to be 98.**

By Neil Irwin

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Rose D. Friedman, an economist who collaborated with her husband, Nobel laureate Milton Friedman, and helped bring their ideas about the virtues of free markets to the masses, died of a heart ailment Aug. 18 at her home in Davis, Calif.

She was thought to be 98, though the exact date of her birth is unknown. Her death was announced by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to promote school-choice programs such as vouchers.

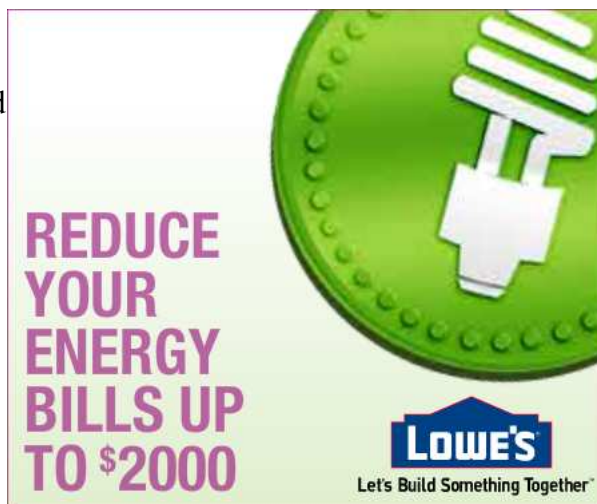
Friedman was coauthor of her husband's two most widely read books, "Capitalism and Freedom" (1962) and "Free to Choose," a 1980 book and public television series. They also collaborated on "Tyranny of the Status Quo" in 1984 and a 1998 joint memoir, "Two Lucky People."

Until [Milton Friedman's death in 2006](#) at 94, the two were rarely apart; they frequently held hands at academic conferences and in airports. She often had a more fiery public presence than the gentle style of her husband. Milton Friedman often said his wife was the only person who won arguments with him.

Milton Friedman won his [Nobel Prize in economics](#) in 1976 and was known for spreading his ideas in the popular press, including television appearances and a column in Newsweek magazine. But "Free to Choose" brought those ideas -- including that welfare programs undermine self-reliance, that drugs should be decriminalized, that states with low taxes and minimal regulation have more vibrant economies -- to a still wider audience. It was one of the best-selling books of 1980, and the video series was broadcast around the world.

"Rose played a much more significant role than most people understand," said Patrick Byrne, who has been co-chair of the Friedman Foundation with Rose Friedman. "I think she had a lot of the drive. She had a great deal to do with organizing and convincing Milton to do it. I think she was almost the motivating force in popularizing their ideas and bringing them to the public."

The book and series contributed to the intellectual foundations of the Reagan administration and of Republican congressional majorities in the 1990s. It also helped spur a broader movement of classical



liberalism, or libertarianism.

"It was the book that really kick-started the classical liberal movement in the United States," said Ed Crane, founder of the Cato Institute, a libertarian public policy organization. "It wasn't a conservative tract. It was about the dynamics of a free and open society. There are a lot of people who support limited government ideas who were inspired by 'Free to Choose.' "

Rose Director Friedman was born in what is now the Ukraine in 1910 or 1911, and her family moved to the United States when she was an infant. She grew up in Oregon and studied economics at Reed College in Portland, Ore., and then the University of Chicago, where she met Milton Friedman in 1932.

She completed all the requirements for a doctorate in economics except her dissertation and later worked for the National Resources Committee and Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. in Washington, D.C.

Her brother, Aaron Director, was also a leading economic thinker; he helped fuse the study of economics and law at the University of Chicago. [He died in 2004](#) at age 102.

Friedman's survivors include two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Irwin writes for the Washington Post.

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