

Some Remembrances of Rose Friedman

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My words today about Rose Friedman really come from my wife, Allyn, and me jointly. Rose inspired both of us. We met her after we moved back to Stanford in the mid 1980s, and all of our interactions with her and with Milton were in California, mainly at the Hoover Institution, at Stanford University, and in San Francisco. They joined us for dinner at our house at Stanford on certain occasions, like the visit of Don Brash of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand in October 1999, just 10 years ago this month. But more frequently we got together for dinner in San Francisco.

We remember the drill well. We would drive to their apartment on Taylor Street, park in the lot in front, take the elevator to their apartment, and start talking over cocktails. Rose usually served some nice simple hors d'oeuvres such as mixed nuts. A silly little thing Allyn remembers, from one of the more recent visits, is Rose showing us the new "TV Ears" they got to watch television. You would put them into your ears and you could hear the TV without it blasting away and bothering other people in the room. Now I also have a little hearing problem, and Allyn had been trying to deal with the TV blasting problem for a while. So driving back home that night Allyn said, "John, if Milton can wear these things so can you." So the next thing I know, "TV Ears" show up in our house, and, you know, they work pretty well.

After drinks in their apartment we would go down to the garage, get into their car, and drive to their favorite San Francisco restaurant—North Beach. I would usually make some comment about the MV=PY license plate on their car as we piled in. Then, at the North Beach restaurant, we would sit at the table wedged into a little space next to the door. We would usually order sand dabs, and then chat about life, mainly about inspirational stories from their amazing life. We especially enjoyed Rose telling stories about the filming of "Free to Choose," deciding who would do the production, and then going all over the world to film the different episodes.

At the memorial for Milton three years ago, Allyn and Rose were talking. Allyn said how I liked to tell students about the MV=PY license plates when I introduced the quantity equation in my classes—undergraduate and graduate. Rose told Allyn "We should get those plates for John". Well several months later, Cindy Sparks called and said she had these plates. "Did I still want them?" she asked. Of course, I said and in a few weeks they showed up to my great delight.

Of course, we were influenced by Rose in other, deeper, ways. Rose was a strong advocate of economic freedom, and Allyn and I noticed her persistent support for what Milton was doing to promote economic freedom. Bob Chitester talks about the Chicago Five—Rose, Milton, George Stigler, Aaron Director, and Allen Wallis—and how they all supported Milton as he was the most outspoken of all. In our experience Rose certainly was supportive like that. To have gone out in the early days and talked to people in such candid and stark terms about the advantages of free markets must have been difficult. I can just hear Rose encouraging Milton. Others might have said: "Do you have to stick your neck out so much, Milton? Can't you be more mainstream? What about our family?" And perhaps it was difficult with a young family. To us this is the inspiration from Rose that we will never forget. She was gregarious, strong, and loving.