

Jack Behrman: A Memorial by Jean Boddewyn

You really have to be an old AIB Fellow to remember Jack Behrman in an intimate manner since he was not one to chit-chat. One of his favorite hobbies was fishing for hours alone. He once told me that this was where he got his best ideas. However, if you got him indignant about some stupidity – the fetishist attention paid to GDP numbers, for instance – you would get quite an earful spoken in Southern English, which was a gem too.

Rosalie Tung met him early on in her career, together with other founding fathers of the AIB (John Fayerweather, Richard Robinson, Phil Grub and John Dunning). Mira Wilkins admired him for his long and productive life. She added that this year's toll also included Ed Safarian (1924-2016), the Canadian economist who was not nominated for AIB Fellowship although his contributions were major if hotly disputed because his Canadian viewpoint on FDI clashed with U.S. ones. She added that "it seems extra-ordinary that seven years have passed since John Dunning died" in 2009 at the relatively young age of 82.

Rob Grosse, Jack Behrman's doctoral student quite a while ago, reported on September 14: "I talked with Jack [who passed away on August 19] during the summer, and he wrote to me in early August after [his wife] Louise died, saying that he was in poor health. I called him a couple of weeks ago but did not get through. Now I see why. I am really saddened by this loss." Thank you, Rob, for those heartfelt feelings expressed at the end of a long and strong friendship!

José de la Torre wrote that "I knew Jack a little and liked him a lot. When John Daniels and I did some research on the early years of the AIB doctoral dissertation award, we got stuck on some names and references from old AIB Board meeting minutes. I called Jack at his North Carolina home and had a wonderful discussion with him. His mind was perfectly sharp and he had all of his traditional wit about him. I am very sorry to hear of his passing, but 94 years are in themselves a major accomplishment. He lived his life fully and contributed to many worthy causes and policies. It was an honor to have known him."

By the way, Mira Wilkins was in Bergen, Norway where on 25 August of this year, she gave the keynote address at the first World Congress on Business History. I have been unable so far to get a copy of her presentation on "The Historical Impact of Multinational Enterprise on the Modern World Economy." Sounds good though!