



Veteran Conservative Leader Howard Phillips Dies at 72

Born in 1941 and raised in the Boston area, Howard Phillips (shown) graduated from Harvard University in 1962. Always a conservative activist, he won election twice as Harvard's student council president. A Jewish convert to the Christian Reconstruction movement, he and wife Peggy (née Blanchard, a lifelong Catholic) raised six children and were fortunate to enjoy many grandchildren.



A lifelong activist for conservative causes, Phillips rose from precinct worker to campaign manager, congressional aide, chairman of the Boston-area GOP, and assistant to the GOP's national chairman. A determined and knowledgeable student of the U.S. Constitution, he delivered many speeches about America's "law of the land" to numerous groups, including The John Birch Society.

In 1973, during the Nixon administration, he won appointment as the director of the Lyndon Johnson-created Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). When President Nixon reneged on a pledge to abolish OEO funding of leftist causes, Phillips resigned from the OEO in disgust. In 1974, he quit the Republican Party and unsuccessfully sought the Massachusetts Democratic Party's nomination for a seat in the U.S. Senate in 1978.

In the 1980s, during the Reagan administration, Howard sought to have left-leaning James A. Baker III removed as presidential chief of staff. Baker was eventually removed from that post, but won appointment as treasury secretary, hardly a victory for conservative principles.

Seeing little hope that either the Democratic or Republican party would abide by constitutional limitations, Howard formed the U.S. Taxpayers Party in 1992. The party changed its name to Constitution Party in 1999. He won nomination as the party's presidential candidate three times, winning 184,650 votes for president in 1996, the highest total ever achieved by the party but far short of winning any electoral votes.

He also formed the Conservative Caucus in 1974 and used its outreach to oppose the Panama Canal giveaway, the SALT II treaty, the federal funding of leftist causes, and much more. Along with numerous others, he campaigned successfully for passage of California's Proposition 187 to terminate taxpayer-funded benefits for illegal immigrants, a completely sensible measure that won approval by Californians but was later overturned by a federal court. He also coordinated raising private sector help for anti-communist groups in Central America and sub-Saharan Africa.

One of Howard's most successful campaigns emerged from a luncheon meeting with this writer. When plans to merge Canada, the United States, and Mexico became known, he and I decided to form the Coalition To Block the North American Union. In a matter of days, three others joined with us to form the five-person leadership group: Eagle Forum President Phyllis Schlafly, author Jerome Corsi, and American Policy Committee Leader Tom DeWeese. Phillips then gathered endorsements for this effort from scores of other conservatives. The partisans working for the merger have still not succeeded in forming their North American Union.



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on April 22, 2013

Over the years, Howard Phillips participated in the formation of the Moral Majority and the American Life League, and was a founding member of the Council for National Policy (CNP), an alternative to the Council on Foreign Relations. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the late Congressman Larry McDonald, one of the original leaders of the CNP. He produced the weekly "Issues and Strategy Bulletin" designed to alert concerned Americans about various moves being planned or undertaken by federal officials and hosted a weekly cable television program called "Conservative Roundtable." Hundreds of these TV programs can be viewed at the [Conservative Roundtable channel at YouTube](#).

The recipient of many awards, Phillips treasured being named Alumnus of Year by Young Americans for Freedom (he was one of its founders in 1960) and receiving an Eagle Forum award for his leadership in pro-family causes. His enthusiasm for *The New American* magazine was boundless. Whenever we met, he would greet me with, "Your magazine is the best in this entire country."

Suffering over the past year from Frontotemporal Dementia and Alzheimer's disease, Howard Phillips passed away at his home in northern Virginia on April 20. R.I.P.

Photo of Howard Phillips during a radio interview while the Constitution Party candidate for president in 2000: AP Images



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