



Understanding Our Economy

Friedman's 100th Birthday: Time To Remember

(NAPS)—Vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry. Drive, walk, or public transit. Rent or own. In the United States, we make more choices every day than we realize.

In countries ruled by dictators or communist regimes, citizens have little choice where to live, what school to attend, or what job to pursue.

That's because those nations are not centered on freedom and free markets.



Milton Friedman, the foremost economist of the 20th century, believed that competition was the lifeblood of freedom and the best way to ensure a stable democracy, lifting the masses out of poverty. The Nobel laureate, whom *The New York Times* dubbed “the grandmaster of free market economic theory,” is recognized worldwide for his work.

When Friedman began his career at the University of Chicago, free markets looked like a lost cause. Half the world was in slavery and the other half was caught in a crisis of confidence in its central idea: government based on individual liberty. Friedman helped restore the free world's faith in liberty, sparking a global revolution that transformed international politics, economics, and, toward the end of his life, education.

Every summer, the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice hosts events to celebrate Friedman's birthday. In 2011, there were 85 events in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and six countries honoring Friedman's work as one of history's most influential thought leaders.

But this year there will be special emphasis, as July 31 marks what would have been Friedman's 100th birthday. A gala will be held in Chicago to celebrate Friedman and the influence of his life and work worldwide, welcoming dignitaries from around the globe.

In addition, to celebrate Friedman Legacy for Freedom Day on July 31, the Friedman Foundation plans to host 100 events across the country and around the world to celebrate and bring greater awareness to Friedman's influence.

The Foundation is offering grants to organizations or groups interested in hosting educational programs, breakfasts, lunches, or events to discuss Friedman's work.

For example, last year in Arizona, college students gathered to watch a segment of the “Free to Choose” public television series where Friedman discusses what's wrong with government-run school systems. In Idaho, charter school families and supporters enjoyed an ice cream social and movie viewing. And in Hong Kong, a free market think tank held a panel discussion with students, diplomats, financial and legal representatives about Friedman's influence as a monetarist and free market ambassador.

The Friedman Foundation encourages similar events to celebrate 100 years of one very influential economist and American—Milton Friedman.

To learn more about Friedman, the Friedman Legacy for Freedom Day, or to host an event in your community, go to EdChoice.org or submit an online registration by April 30 at EdChoice.org/FriedmanDay/Register.