

Mannkal Celebrates Milton Friedman's 100th Anniversary: Report

On Thursday 9th August 2012, Mannkal Economic Education Foundation hosted a movie screening and panel discussion event in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Milton Friedman.

The event was held at the University of Western Australia Business School from 5:30 – 7:30 pm and was attended by over 70 enthusiastic academics, business people and followers of Friedman's school of thought. At the opening of the event, Winthrop Professor Ken Clements, who personally studied under Friedman during his time at the Chicago School of Economics, formally welcomed the guests; followed by an introduction by Justin Bloomfield, president of UWA's business school student society ECOMS.



Ron Manners, Chairman of the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation, proceeded to welcome the guests and introduce a DVD montage of some of Friedman's most notable interviews and discussions which was very enlightening. Mr. Manners himself also had the pleasure of meeting

Friedman on several occasions which made for a fascinating reflection on Friedman and his career.

Following the montage screening, both Ken Clements and Ron Manners gave a more in depth presentation as to their own personal experiences with Milton Friedman and their views on some of his most famous works and values. This provided myself and the guests with some interesting first hand knowledge of the academic and gave the audience some intellectual food-for-thought which later triggered some great discussion. The most notable features of the discussions included reference to one of Friedman's interviews with Playboy magazine, with the original copy of the interview passed around the audience, as well as Professor Clements presentation that provided the audience with ten of Friedman's greatest characteristics.

The speakers then opened the panel discussion whereby audience members were able to ask questions and add comments regarding Friedman's life and work. The issues that were raised caused some interesting debate by intellectuals and business people alike, particularly around the issues of legalizing drug usage and prostitution, as well as the benefits of school choice

in the education system and the Friedman solution to lowering carbon emissions.

Following the panel discussion, food and drinks were provided and audience members were encouraged to continue the discussions with the two speakers. Nearly every member of the audience stayed after the formal part of the event to continue to reflect on Friedman's work and the atmosphere soon became bittersweet as the crowd sang Happy Birthday to Friedman and toasted to continuing to advocate for freer markets in both political and economic spheres.

Overall, the event was a great success – I feel that as a member of the audience I was able to gain both insight and a deeper understanding of Milton Friedman as a person as well as an academic. The discussions were able to transcend generations which also worked well; after speaking to audience members from those in their late teenage years to those past retirement age, I felt that everyone was able to take away some great ideas and concepts from the man who made such an impact on the global economy.

