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In Memoriam: Leonard T. Recker

SINCE THE TIME of Gutenberg and of the monks who gave it its picturesque names, the printing trade has been distinguished by the scholars who carried it on. Typical of them was Leonard T. Recker, who died on December 25, 1983. But in his compassion, his leadership and his devotion to the building of a free society, Leonard Recker was a unique individual, beloved by all who knew him.

The Georgist movement, dedicated to achieving the freedom of the individual in a democratic, capitalist society is profoundly indebted to Leonard Recker and his brother, Gene, and, indeed to two generations of the Recker family who have seen to it that the facilities of the printing craft were fully available to it.

Leonard was vice president of the John S. Swift Co., one of the first photo-offset printing firms. He shared with me and with Robert Clancy, president of the Henry George Institute, a distinction: we were individually tutored by Oscar H. Geiger at his home when he was founding the Henry George School of Social Science in New York in 1932. To provide the school a headquarters, Leonard agreed to pay a full year's rent for it and so, in 1934, the school was opened at 211 West 79th Street. Leonard joined the school's board of trustees and became its treasurer.

Leonard also joined the board of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, which helped to assure the school's continuance after Oscar died in 1935. He served both organizations for many years, supporting them not only with his funds but with his expert knowledge of the printing craft. This was especially appreciated by his fellow directors at the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, its now retired executive director, Violetta G. Peterson (Mrs. Malcolm Graham), and her successor, Dr. Oscar B. Johannsen.

I remember when I tried (unsuccessfully) to revive George's periodical as *The New Standard* back in the 30s, the first person to whom I turned for financial support was Leonard. He agreed at once with a joyous response. Then when I revived the old *Freeman* as a monthly, Leonard found a printer we could afford, the Finnish daily published in Brooklyn, *Utisset*. And when this *Journal* was founded, it was Leonard who recruited for us Jacques Cattell to produce it, and Wallace Kibbee, one of the country's four greatest type designers, to design it.

Through work like his, through dedication like his, a greatly improved future society is made possible. As the foundation's executive committee said in a resolution on January 10, 1984, his passing "is an irreparable loss to the Georgist movement."

W.L.