

## Editorial and Appreciation for Fred D. Miller, Jr.

It is with great joy that *Reason Papers* presents a *Festschrift* for Fred D. Miller, Jr. He is not only one of the original members of the *Reason Papers* Advisory Board since the journal's founding in 1974—a position he still holds—but he also contributed an article to that first volume. The publication of this issue seeks to honor the centrality of Miller's supportive role throughout the nearly fifty years that *Reason Papers* has existed as well as his excellence as a scholar, mentor, and colleague.

This volume is somewhat unusual for a *Festschrift* in including a symposium with new commentary on an article Miller first published thirty years ago in addition to the usual collection of full-length original articles. The driving force behind this symposium is a suggestion made in 2017 by Irfan Khawaja to resurrect an important debate about Kantian metaphysics in order to do justice to a difficult-to-locate article Miller contributed to that debate. The debate originally occurred between George Walsh and Fred Miller at a session of the Ayn Rand Society held at an American Philosophical Association Meeting on December 29, 1992. After that debate, Walsh's paper was published in *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies*,<sup>1</sup> and then both Walsh's and Miller's papers were published in *Objectivity*.<sup>2</sup> The journal *Objectivity* ceased operations many years ago, the volume the debate appeared in is not available online, and hard copies are rare to find. Miller's article has thus been largely inaccessible until its appearance

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<sup>1</sup> George V. Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000), pp. 69–103.

<sup>2</sup> George V. Walsh, "Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant," *Objectivity* 3, no. 1 (2001), pp. 1–27; Fred D. Miller, Jr., "Comments on George Walsh, 'Ayn Rand and the Metaphysics of Kant'," *Objectivity* 3, no. 1 (2001), pp. 28–37.

in the present volume. Stephen Boydston, one of the commentators in our symposium and the former Editor-in-Chief of *Objectivity*, graciously allowed *Reason Papers* to reprint Miller's article.

Since earning his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Washington in 1971, Miller has published over one hundred articles, primarily about Aristotle's and Plato's political, moral, and metaphysical thought. His groundbreaking interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*—*Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics* (1995)—established him as one of the most highly regarded scholars of ancient Greek philosophy. Miller is also co-editor of *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics* (1991); *Freedom, Reason, and the Polis: Essays in Ancient Greek Political Philosophy* (2007); *Reason and Analysis in Ancient Greek Philosophy: Essays in Honor of David Keyt* (2012); and *A History of the Philosophy of Law from the Ancient Greeks to the Scholastics* (2nd ed. 2012). In recognition of his service to the profession, he was elected President of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy for 1998–2004.

While Miller has made major contributions to ancient philosophy, he has also been active in many other areas of philosophy—from business ethics and metaphysics to rights theory and philosophy of law. As if all that wasn't enough, before popular culture and philosophy gained ascendancy as a field of study, he demonstrated vision and creativity in co-editing *Thought Probes* (2nd ed. 1989), a popular anthology and textbook on learning philosophy through science fiction.

This all-too-brief summary of Miller's voluminous philosophical achievements offers only a glimpse into who he is as a person. I first came to know him as a tireless, devoted, and supportive mentor with rigorous epistemological standards. He co-directed my doctoral dissertation in philosophy and guided me in my ancient Greek translation studies for ten years at Bowling Green State University, where he was a philosophy professor for forty years (1972–2012). Miller embodies the paradigm of Scholar-Mentor in equal measure, as pictured below:



**Cropped photo (L to R): Mahesh Ananth, Fred Miller, Carrie-Ann Biondi**  
(Ancient Greek Translation class, Bowling Green State University, 1998; image originally appeared in Social Philosophy and Policy Center, *1996–1998 Report*)

Mentors are often viewed as those who work on the sidelines to support their apprentices on the long journey toward mastery, stepping away as mentees test their wings to take flight. This characterization partially captures Miller’s mentorship. While he is too modest to put it this way, his own level of mastery as a scholar is so high that his work shines like the North Star, inspiring us to stretch ourselves to reach new heights. He thus guides his mentees as much by example as by support and feedback. Miller’s example, though, extends beyond his scholarship. His patience, thoughtfulness, integrity, and practical wisdom provide a model for how to live a flourishing life. Of the many life lessons and pearls of wisdom I have learned from him, one that has paid dividends a thousandfold is “progress not perfection.” Keeping that advice firmly in mind (as well as on a sticky note affixed to my computer during graduate school) has helped me to

keep moving forward more times than I can count—including on the present volume—to create a life well-stocked with value.

I also watched firsthand, while working as a copyediting assistant for the journal *Social Philosophy & Policy*, how Miller used his thirty-year tenure (1981–2012) as Executive Director of the Social Philosophy and Policy Center to support the work of hundreds of scholars across the disciplines through stimulating conferences held twice a year and visiting fellowships. He has a remarkable ability to bring together individuals who hold very different views to foster lively, civil, and productive discussion about controversial issues. This reveals Miller’s commitment to intellectual independence and academic freedom as well as the conditions of liberty that make them possible.

Although Miller retired from Bowling Green State University and has been an Emeritus Professor there since 2013, he has done the opposite of slowing down. Retirement has given him the time to translate and write detailed commentaries on Aristotle’s *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia* (2018) as well as pseudo-Alexander’s commentary on book Lambda of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (2021). Never one to let grass grow under his feet, Miller’s most recent project includes a compilation of sixteen revised essays that he has published over the past fifty years to include in a forthcoming volume entitled *Aristotelian Statecraft*.

From the content of Miller’s philosophical work to his devoted mentorship and expert discussion-facilitator skills, it is no wonder that he and his work have had a profound and lasting effect on many people. We can see that influence at play in the wonderful array of contributions to this *Festschrift*. Contributors range from former colleagues, students, and friends to those influenced by Miller’s work across a range of philosophical topics.

It takes the dedication, support, and hard work of many people to create a volume such as this one. I am grateful to all the enthusiastic contributors to this volume for their insightful original work and patience with my often-extensive copyediting suggestions, to Shawn Klein for allowing me to retake the journal’s helm for this special issue, to Irfan Khawaja for suggesting the symposium, to Stephen Boydston for allowing us to reprint Miller’s article from *Objectivity*, and to Arlene Bady and anonymous donors for their generous support in making possible a limited print run of this *Festschrift*. I offer a special note of appreciation for Pamela Phillips—a fellow former

graduate student of Miller's—who was a lifesaver at the eleventh hour with her experienced proofreading eye.

Honoring Fred Miller with a *Festschrift* after all he has done for his graduate students, his colleagues, and the philosophy profession seems both to fall short of what he deserves and to be the most fitting way to show our deep regard for him. *O Didaskalos*,<sup>3</sup> for all you have done for us, this volume of *Reason Papers* is for you.

Carrie-Ann Biondi  
Independent Scholar

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<sup>3</sup> Ancient Greek for “teacher.”