

The logo for the Richard King Mellon Foundation, featuring the text "Richard King Mellon Foundation" in white serif font on an orange square background.

Richard  
King  
Mellon  
Foundation

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RICHARD KING MELLON FOUNDATION  
REMEMBERS THE LATE RICHARD P. MELLON

PITTSBURGH (Aug 5, 2020) - Richard P. Mellon, who passed away July 27 at age 81, served nearly half a century on the board of the Richard King Mellon Foundation and more than a quarter-century as its Chairman before his retirement 10 years ago.

Richard P. Mellon was many things to the younger Mellon family members who serve today as Foundation trustees and trustee emeritus. Two trustees knew him as their father; one as his older brother; and, five as their uncle.

But all the Foundation's trustees remembered Richard P. Mellon, the eldest son of the eponymous Foundation's founder, as a role model - a modest leader whose example continues to shape their work today, particularly through his passionate commitment to land conservation; his strategic focus on scientific and medical research as a means to catapult growth in Southwestern Pennsylvania; and the ready eagerness with which he pursued the important work of giving money away.

"His kindness and generosity were the hallmarks of his leadership at the Richard King Mellon Foundation," the family said in [his obituary](#). "'He was a true gentleman with a great sense of humor ...."

"My brother was a very good delegator, but with keen oversight," said Seward Prosser Mellon. "He let people do their jobs."

At the time of Richard P. Mellon's retirement, the Board passed a resolution crediting him with guiding the Foundation to its national leadership in U.S. land conservation - an achievement that is largely unknown, reflective of Richard P. Mellon's modesty.

"He really cared about conservation before it became a popular cause," said Prosser Mellon. "He just loved the outdoors!"

"Any objective study of U.S. land conservation would rank Richard P. Mellon as one of the great conservationists in U.S. history," said Foundation Director and Trustee Sam Reiman. "The Foundation, under the leadership of Richard P. Mellon and his brother Seward Prosser Mellon,

and continuing now under the current board, has conserved more acres of land than any private organization in U.S. history. These are some of the most environmentally precious lands in our nation, touching every state. But one would be unlikely to hear those simple facts from Richard P. Mellon. His goals were grand but he pursued them with quiet modesty, rigor, and kindness.”

Mellon served on the Foundation board for 45 years, from 1963 to 2009, including as Board Chair from 1981 to 2009. He then continued to serve until his death as an active Emeritus Trustee. Richard P. Mellon and his brother, Seward Prosser Mellon, who succeeded Richard P. Mellon as Foundation chair, rank as the longest-serving trustees in the Foundation’s 73-year history.

In his work leading the Foundation, Richard P. Mellon’s commitment to conservation was outpaced only by his passion for Southwestern Pennsylvania, where the Foundation’s charitable giving is concentrated. In its resolution upon Richard P. Mellon’s retirement, his fellow trustees said Richard P. Mellon was “instrumental in the Foundation’s support and promotion of medical, scientific and technology research that has formed the basis for the renaissance of the Southwestern Pennsylvania region.”

Richard P. Mellon also was dedicated to the separate R.K. Mellon Family Foundation, to support his beloved Ligonier and other important causes. He gave generously to the Valley School of Ligonier, and led the purchase of the famous saddle pistols that George Washington carried during the American Revolution, a gift to General Washington from the Marquis de Lafayette. The pistols are now on permanent display at the Fort Ligonier Museum.

Said Director and Trustee Reiman: “Richard P. Mellon was steadfast in stewarding his father’s perpetual philanthropic mission for the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and as a result, that noble mission has remained unchanged for 73 years. Yet Richard P. Mellon also should be remembered as an innovator who pursued new and creative ways to achieve that unchanged mission. Southwestern Pennsylvania and the nation have benefitted greatly from his ability to do both.”

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*Founded in 1947, the Richard King Mellon Foundation is the largest foundation in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Foundation’s 2019 endowment was \$2.7 billion and its Trustees in 2019 awarded 172 grants totaling \$129 million, focused on the Foundation’s strategic priorities: economic development, education, environmental conservation and human services.*