

IV. In Memoriam

Philip Valenti, 1949–2023

Philip Valenti, a historical investigator who made trailblazing contributions to the understanding of early American thought and U.S.-China relations, and a passionate political activist, passed away December 21, 2023.

He was born June 8, 1949 in Brooklyn, New York, the son of Carmello Valenti and Phyllis (Raia) Valenti. Raised in Brooklyn and Queens, New York, Phil is remembered as a sweet-tempered and studious boy who delighted in science. He shared with his mother the love of grand opera.

He graduated from Queens College, on the Dean's List, with a major in Mathematics.

In the 1970s, he joined the political-philosophical movement associated with Lyndon LaRouche. Phil composed high-spirited polemical literature for electoral efforts in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and other states, promoting programs for technological and social progress.



EIRNS

At a press conference called by State Rep. Harold James on the Justice Department's attack on Philadelphia's Afro-American mayor, John Street, Oct. 29, 2003.

In this context, he made outstanding original inquiries into the philosophical origins of the founding of the United States.

His works included:

“Leibniz, Papin, and the Steam Engine,” *Fusion*, Dec. 1979. The true story of the early 18th-Century invention of steam power, this article was later translated and published in German, Swedish and French.

[“The Anti-Newtonian Roots of the American Revolution.”](#) *Executive Intelligence Review*, Dec. 1, 1995. It demolished the myth that British liberalism inspired the Revolution. Here Phil demonstrated a combination of statecraft and morality, a grasp of scientific concepts and the bold confidence that ideas shaped history. An admirer of his



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Teaching youth in a cadre school class, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Nov. 1, 2002.

work said, “He cast a shadow”—meaning that he had left his mark, that he had changed our world for the better.

“Paul Laurence Dunbar: The Struggle for an American Classical Renaissance,” *New Federalist*, July 2, 2001. It made clear that racism in America can be overcome only when the right to a classical humanist form of education is enjoyed by every child.

“[The Leibniz Revolution in America.](#)” *Executive Intelligence Review*, August 13, 2004. The formative influence of German philosopher-statesman Gottfried Leibniz on Revolutionary America.

He transcribed, edited and published James Logan’s *Of the Duties of Man As They May Be Deduced from Nature* (1737) in 2013. The manuscript of this brilliant, humane treatise by the secretary of William Penn and the mentor of Benjamin Franklin was lost for 200 years. Quaker scholar Douglas Gwyn wrote,

Valenti’s 70-page introduction ... convincingly portrays Logan’s essay as a ... “declaration of independence” of American philosophical thought from the political affinities of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Isaac Newton, and the Royal Society.

(*Quaker History*, the journal of the Friends Historical Association, Fall 2013, p. 54.)

“The Orphan of Zhao—A Chinese Inspiration for the American Revolution?” *Confluent*, published in Paris by the Shanghai Theater Academy, Oct. 2016. It was a study of the great Chinese opera, showing the affinity of Confucian ideals with the founding spirit of the U.S.A., later translated for the Chinese language journal *Theater Studies*, May 2017.

From 2008 to 2015, Phil was the Host for the Centennial display at Philadelphia’s Please Touch Museum. Visiting families benefitted from the depth of his knowledge as he brought to life the developments be-

hind the museum’s intricate model of the U.S. 1876 Centennial Exposition. During this period, Phil addressed conferences on U.S. historical and philosophical ideas.

From 2015 to 2020, he was a public-interface manager in the National Museum of Mathematics



Courtesy photo

Phil Valenti brought to life the depth of his knowledge for museum visitors in Philadelphia and New York City.

in New York. He took great joy in explaining and teaching mathematical concepts to children and adults.

Phil is survived by his wife Xueping (“Jenny”) Wu; her daughter Lingshan Gong and son-in-law Chaunjun He; Phil’s cousins Francisco and Catherine Raia, Louie and Dina Habekost, and Leona Johnson; and by Phil’s friends and colleagues from his many years of unique contributions to our understanding of mankind’s high achievements.

—Anton Chaitkin