

## Last Respects

October 15, 2021

Over the weekend, I said goodbye to two friends: Ronn Neff and Mike Gravel.

Ronald Nelson Neff passed away September 26th, at age 72, after “a prolonged illness,” wrote his longtime friend, Tom McPherson, at *The Last Ditch*, a libertarian/anarchist newsletter the two co-founded.

Neff, a well-respected editor of numerous books and publications throughout his career, was perhaps best known as managing editor of Joe Sobran’s newsletter from 1994 to 2007. Ronn also authored important libertarian essays, including “Polite Totalitarianism.”

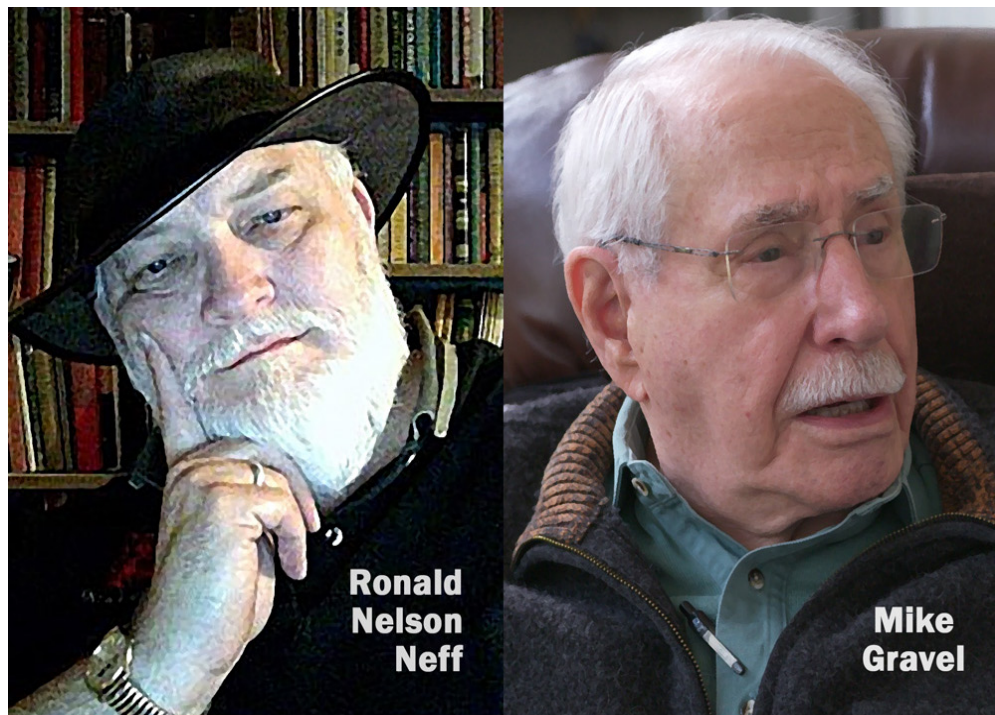
Jacob Hornberger, president of The Future of Freedom Foundation, remembered Neff as “one of the most

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committed, passionate, knowledgeable, and principled libertarians you’d ever meet.”

Ronn was that sort of Christian, too. Before ever meeting him, while I sat in prison for refusing to register for the military draft (1985), he and his wife began tithing each month to help my family. When our car broke down, Neff’s generosity made it possible for my wife and daughter to continue to travel the six hours to visit me.

Yes, there are people like that.



Mike Gravel died at his California home on June 26th from multiple myeloma. History may remember the 91-year-old best as the courageous Democratic U.S. Senator from Alaska who — five decades ago, during Vietnam — dared to read the Pentagon Papers into the congressional record and filibustered against the military draft.

In 2008, Gravel decided to advance his political causes by running for president somewhat unconventionally — seeking the Democratic Party’s nomination and later the Libertarian Party’s.

Then in 2020, at 90, he allowed a group of high school students to use his Twitter feed to run him for president in a “front-porch” campaign. A new documentary about the effort, *American Gadfly*, is being released later this year.

I first connected with Mike in the 1990s, when I was running U.S. Term Limits (another issue the two-term senator and I clicked on). Yet, what inspired me most about Gravel was his incredible zeal for direct democracy, for citizens having more say-so through initiative, referendum and recall.

Instead of the disdain for the public exhibited by so many Washington insiders, Senator Gravel had a profound respect for the people.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.