



William F. Buckley Jr.: The Maker of a Movement

Lee Edwards

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“If you want to understand not only the rise of the modern conservative movement but also how conservatives can regain their footing during these perilous times, you must read *William F. Buckley Jr.: The Maker of a Movement*. Lee Edwards, himself a conservative icon, describes in beautiful and concise prose the brilliance that was Buckley. The book, like Buckley, is fascinating, compelling, and edifying.”

—**Mark R. Levin**, bestselling author of *Liberty and Tyranny*, nationally syndicated radio host

“*Who*: William F. Buckley Jr. *What*: Changing American political and intellectual culture. *When*: 1925–2008. *Where*: Postwar Yale, China with Mao and Nixon, the NR conference room table. *How*: Lee Edwards, who knew the principles and lived the history, explains it all in this compact, complete synopsis.”

—**Richard Brookhiser**, author of *Right Time, Right Place: Coming of Age with William F. Buckley Jr. and the Conservative Movement*

The modern-day Renaissance man who forged the conservative movement

The polysyllabic vocabulary, the wit, the charm, the sailing adventures, the spy novels—all of these have become part of the William F. Buckley Jr. legend. But to consider only Buckley’s charisma and ceaseless energy is to miss that above all he was committed to advancing *ideas*.

Now, noted conservative historian Lee Edwards, who knew Bill Buckley for more than forty years, delivers a much-needed intellectual biography of the man has been called “arguably the most important public intellectual in the United States in the past half century.” In this concise and compelling book, Edwards reveals how Buckley did more than any other person to build the conservative movement. Once derided as a set of “irritable mental gestures,” conservatism became, under Buckley’s guidance, a political and intellectual force that transformed America.

As conservatives debate the ideas that should drive their movement, *William F. Buckley Jr.: The Maker of a Movement* reminds us of the principles that animated Buckley, as well as the thinkers who inspired him. The four most important intellectual influences on this great molder of American conservatism, Edwards shows, were libertarian author and social critic Albert Jay Nock, conservative political scientist Willmoore Kendall, former Soviet spy Whittaker Chambers, and realpolitik apostle James Burnham. Having dug deep into the voluminous Buckley papers, Edwards also illuminates the profound influence of Buckley’s close-knit family and his unwavering Catholic faith.

Edwards brilliantly captures the free spirit and unbounded energy of the conservative polymath, but he also shows that Buckley did not succeed merely on the strength of a winning personality. Rather, Buckley’s achievements were the result of a long series of quite deliberate political acts—many of them overlooked today.

William F. Buckley Jr.: The Maker of a Movement tells the incredible story of a man who could have been a playboy, sailing his yacht and skiing in Switzerland, but who chose to be the St. Paul of the conservative movement, carrying the message far and wide. Lee Edwards shows how and why it happened—and the remarkable results.

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