



Mortimer Jerome Adler
December 28, 1902 - June 28, 2001

Manifestly, dying is nothing to a really great and brave man.

—Mark Twain

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Condolences from friends, members, and colleagues:

Max,

What a wonderful tribute to Mortimer. Thanks so much for sending it to me. We are all going to miss Mortimer, but at least we all still have good friends that appreciate him.

Nina Houghton

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The death of Mortimer Adler marks the end of an era he had a large part in defining. Chesterton said that one of the advantages of faith is that it prevents one from being a child of his time. The timeliness of Mortimer Adler's enormous contribution lay largely in his marching to a different drummer than the one who set the tempo for the academic lockstep. His dialectical skills were honed to a fine point by his keen sense of alternatives and in the end he always cut to the quick. Like Chesterton's conversion, Adler's seemed the affirmation of a fait accompli.

May his rest in peace.

Ralph McInerney

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Now that he has died we are indeed all sadder, but also wiser for his having lived.

**Paul Harrison, South Australia
Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of The Great Ideas**

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When Dr. Adler eulogized his colleagues, an activity he engaged in more frequently as he outlived them, he would try to summarize what it was that they stood for.

What Dr. Adler stood for, above all, was that human beings are rational animals, and that philosophy provides genuine knowledge of the way things are. These never were fashionable views in his lifetime, and became less so; all who love truth must be grateful to him for holding the banner aloft.

There is no field of philosophy to which he did not make a substantial contribution over almost eight decades. His greatest contribution, I think, was in educational philosophy: I believe he was the greatest philosopher of education who ever lived, in any culture. I hope to post more on Adler as a philosopher shortly.

He was the first contemporary philosopher whose works I read at length, and I heard his St. John's lectures, sitting front row center, for four years running. I don't really consider myself an Adlerian - I have too many differences with him on too many fundamental issues - but his influence on my thinking has been so profound that I can't even imagine how I would go about thinking about philosophical issues if I hadn't encountered him.

He is with Aristotle and Aquinas now. I know they are telling him, as the voice is said to have told Aquinas, "Thou hast done well by us, Mortimer."

**Jay Gold, Senior Fellow
Center for the Study of The Great Ideas**

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Dear Max:

A couple of things are worth asking, I think, when a great man passes from the earth: What did he do and where did

he go? The first answer is obvious. The world will be lessened by his absence and it is sad it will take history books before he gets his rightful due as perhaps the single greatest intellect, maybe of all time.

The other is less certain. I have long been keenly interested in his struggle with faith. Born a Jew, converted to Christianity [Episcopal] then to a praying Catholic, seeking grace from his Creator. Yet, his God book reasoned -- correctly I believe -- that a Creator could not not exist, and he purposely did it as a pagan. Philosophy since the beginning of time has battled the same issue endlessly, because it is central to one's acceptance of the "why" of human existence. Knowing him personally these past years and hearing his own words as he personalized for us his private views on this giant human enigma, I am comfortable that he is now where he prayed to be, with a smile on his intellectual face, finally all-knowing and pleased that his enormous contributions benefit those left behind. I am happy for you, Mortimer. Be well and I thank you for everything, old friend.

Love,

Roland Caldwell

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To the family and loved ones of Mortimer J. Adler:

Doctor Adler changed my life in such a dramatic way, it is difficult to express how much I will miss him. I promise to carry on his commitment to clear thinking and striving to not just live, but live well as he did.

Pete Thigpen

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We at Encyclopaedia Britannica are saddened by the passing of Mortimer Adler. He was deeply involved with Britannica for more than 50 years, and our debt to him is incalculable.

Nearly all of our products from the 1940s to the 1990s bore the mark of his unique and pugnacious intelligence, and those of us who worked with him were grateful for the privilege. We, and America, have lost an uncompromising champion for the life of the mind. We will miss him.

Mary Carvlin

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Dear Max,

Thank you for the opportunity to send condolences to Dr. Adler's family, friends and admirers. I thought the quotation you sent, by Mark Van Doren, was quite insightful, and true. Things revolved around Dr. Adler. He was that man of whom Gandhi spoke who once having taken his ground is no longer moved, but moves the entire world.

Mortimer began digging in his heels when he discovered the truth embodied in the Great Conversation of Western civilization, about which his great and loyal friend Bob Hutchins wrote so much, particularly that portion by Aristotle. By the time he discovered and absorbed St. Thomas Aquinas, he was immovable. The world of philosophy began to be pulled in a new direction, its orbit began to shift. At that new center of gravity, influencing the rest stood Mortimer J. Adler.

My own life eventually began to be swayed by Mortimer's pull, and the more of him I read, the greater the pull. Finally, my work, and the work of everyone involved in promoting Dr. Adler's insights in the homeschooling movement through Classical Homeschooling magazine, the Great Books Academy and the Angelicum Academy, revolved around his work. We are all deeply indebted to him.

Just last year Dr. Adler was awarded the 2000 A.D. Classical Homeschooling Socratic Fellowship award - the first recipient. The bust of Socrates finally arrived from Greece about a month ago and was sent to Mortimer then. I trust he

had the chance to read it. But even if somehow he did not, he is now enjoying the genuine article - fellowship with the real Socrates, and with the God about whom he wrote so well, and Whom he knew more clearly and approached ever more nearly, even to the end of his long and marvelously fruitful life. God bless the soul of Mortimer J. Adler.

Patrick Carmack, President Great Books Academy

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Dear Max,

“Call not a man happy until he is dead,” said Solon.

Allow me: here was a happy man.

My thoughts are with you and all Members who shared the privilege of knowing Dr. Adler personally. If I could evoke Mark Van Doren’s recently quoted letter and say what doubtless goes without saying: Mortimer was “absolutely” irreplaceable. Of course he is far from totally lost to us; this is due in great measure to the work of the Center.

I suspect I’m not alone when I say that his passing has caused in me an inner stirring I might not have expected so soon after the fact: it feels an awful lot like celebration. Why, just yesterday I had my nose in *The Difference of Man...* and *The Problem of Species* - chasing endnotes to their dens with a newly found vigor.

Looked at another way, you might say I feel like a slothful schoolboy who’s been rapped on the knuckles by a demanding yet benevolent/beloved headmaster for falling asleep in class. The boy is at first disoriented, then quickly wants to do right by the teacher. “Mortimer’s gone? What? Impossible! Where are my books? What have I been doing? What have I been thinking about?!”

I’m more excited than ever to be associated with the Center: *the* resource for, and access to, the on-going interpretation

of his work, and I'm grateful to be awakened once again (painful precipitating event notwithstanding) from my moral and intellectual slumbers.

Affectionately yours,

Mark Brawner

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"On The Passing of a Truly Great Man"

It is with a great deal of sadness that I hear of the passing into eternity of a great man, a distinguished thinker, and that unique person who shall forever be known as the "philosopher of the common man" and "everybody's philosopher."

Here was a man who wrestled with the enduring problems of philosophy and conquered the really important ones. He thought about what a happy man had to be -- and he was one from all appearances.

We all owe him a debt of gratitude if for nothing else but bringing to our attention the "great conversation" that took place across the centuries among thinkers who thought the greatest thoughts about the greatest ideas.

The development of the "Syntopicon" and the promotion of the Great Books of the Western World alone will attest to his legacy and the debt we all owe this man.

What more can be said but that he lived his life according to his convictions -- we should be so lucky. Mortimer Adler shall surely be missed, but he made his mark, he was mentor to many of us, and we shall never forget him.

We at The Radical Academy have been proud to host The Mortimer J. Adler Archives and promise to continue his work of bringing his philosophy and philosophic insight to the attention of everyone, because, as he so often said,

“Philosophy is Everybody’s Business.” What a testament, what an epitaph, for a man who so richly improved our intellectual lives.

Rest in peace, Mortimer. You have done all of us philosophers proud.

**Jonathan Dolhenty
The Center for Applied Philosophy**

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Dear Max,

It has taken me a few days to be able to express little more than deep sorrow over the passing of Mortimer Adler. It is such a tremendous loss, even though we were graced with nearly a century of Dr. Adler and his work. And even though he has left us a vast intellectual legacy.

Please accept my family’s condolences, Max. For many of us, Mortimer Adler was an intellectual, literary friend, someone who helped us think well about the great ideas and read carefully the great books. But for you, I am sure, he was much more. He was a close personal friend and mentor. No doubt you will greatly miss him.

Please know that the Brumley family’s prayers are with Mortimer Adler, his family and his friends such as yourself. May Dr. Adler’s work and that of the Center for the Study of the Great Ideas continue to prosper in the years to come.

Mark Brumley

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Dear Max,

You must be feeling the Maestro’s absence the most, as you are his philosophical son, my good wishes to you for spreading his knowledge.

In friendship,

Swami Gurupremananda

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Dear Max,

Thank you for the announcement. Please pass my condolences to his family.

Ken Wareham

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Dear Max,

“An epoch is marked by the passing of Mortimer Adler. He succeeded both in realizing the “Summa Dialectica” that was always his ideal, and in articulating a philosophy that is accessible to anyone who cares to live an intelligently directed life. His personal presence will be missed. His thought and speech is secured in his written works and recorded on audio-video media, but his influence extends into the lives of millions who have never even heard his name.”

**Alan Iliff, Senior Fellow
Center for the Study of The Great Ideas**

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Max,

My prayers are with the Adler family and his colleagues and friends.

I am glad Mortimer is with God. That is truly is a happy thought, though we are sadder with him gone.

While we don't have him here anymore and we are poorer for that, we have his work -- his brilliance and his unrelenting, unique pursuit for the truth -- which we will

always have. Nothing can take that from us.

Sadness and mourning are appropriate for now. But I look forward to soon getting his perspective back out there again, very, very soon.

John Boleyn

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Dear Max,

He was one of the 20th century's handful of real philosophers.

We will miss him.

Peter Redpath

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Dear Max,

I'm a sorry to hear that Mortimer J. Adler has passed away.

Although, I'm happy he was able to live a such long, productive intellectual-life, a longer, more fuller life than most people achieve; it is still a great loss, not only to his family but to our civilization as a whole when such a person leaves the World's Stage.

In my opinion, last week, he was probably the wisest, best well-read thinker living on the planet Earth. He developed his mind intellectually to the fullest possible extent in the time allotted him. He had a more penetrating and profound understanding of many of the Great Ideas that shape and dominate our lives and civilization everyday than most other human beings alive today.

All of his very deep knowledge, understanding, and wisdom which he acquired throughout his life has left the World with him; except for a portion of his wisdom that he

was able to permanently record in the written word in his life-time for the enlightenment of future generations.

I hope that future historians in the coming centuries will identify him as one of the great intellectuals of the 20th century and the one who did the most to organize, preserve, and pass on the accumulated philosophical wisdom of the past to succeeding generations; whereby the human spirit of civilization was again re-energized to continue the exploration of the Great Ideas, in an attempt to expand and deepen our understanding of them, that began so long ago in the distant past.

The fruit of his labor will be greatly appreciated for generations to come, and will hopefully promote the improvement of the spiritual and moral well-being of the human race into the distant future.

He will be greatly missed. Hopefully, there will continue to be others to follow in his footsteps.

Sincerely,

Ivan Bilich

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Max:

I knew it would happen some day, but even so the news of his passing makes me very sad. I hope his writings will help others as much as they have me.

Sincerely,

Alan MacFarlane

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Oh Max, I am so sorry that Dr. Adler has died. He has left us. You more than I will feel the loss - and I do feel the loss. I am so thankful that you brought me to know him.

Maria O’Ryan

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Dear Mr. Weismann,

I checked my e-mailbox today and received the sad message of June 28. Words cannot express my deep sorrow at the passing away of Dr. Mortimer Adler, from whom I have learned so much about how to live a good and meaningful life. His life has been a truly glorious one and his death marks the finish of a truly great intellectual career.

I regret that I have not had the chance to shake Dr. Adler’s hand and say “Thank you” to him. His words of wisdom and his vivid image, however, will live on in my heart. The greatest philosopher of the twentieth century will forever be remembered.

Please send my condolences to Dr. Adler’s family.

Wing-Chiu Ng

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Dear Max:

At the age of 45 in 1983, after public schooling, two University degrees (Business and Law) and special R.C.M. Police training, it was crushing to learn that I was not very well educated. But thanks to Mortimer Adler this crushing was only a way of facing reality. With Mortimer's help, he led me out of the cave to see in all its glory, real education. But it did not stop there. He led me into the realm of God. By that I do not necessarily mean religion. He led me to the world of ideas, the world of the intellect and conceptual thought. In this non-temporal world he showed me that understanding is greater and higher than information or knowlwdge.

To Mortimer I owe my true inner existence and without him

I would only “tremble on the edge of nothingness.” With other Adler friends, I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to share seminar discussions of his books in his later years. Through Mortimer I am closer to the Totum bonum, because he is the Summum bonum of all teachers. The passing of his individuality from this physical cosmos at the age of 98 is still too soon.

**Frank Rodgers
Saint John, New Brunswick**

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Dear Max,

I am so saddened for your loss of your friend and mentor. It is very big issues that cross your path.

Sasha Cornett

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Max,

We were so sorry to hear about Dr. Adler. We will all miss him greatly; though I’m confident that he is even now receiving his great rewards and hearing “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

Sincerely,

Brenda and Max Alt

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Sorry to hear of Mortimer’s death. He lived a long productive life and hopefully a happy one. The thought that his life long endeavors will continue to be passed on through the Center undoubtedly was on his mind before passing away. I’ll bet he has a smile on his face.

Lucie Boyadjian

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Max,

I am so very sorry. I had fancied Dr. Adler as a sort of wise grandfather these last few years and will mourn him as such.

With Deepest Sympathy,

Sarah Barrett, Ajax, Canada

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Dear Max and the Adler Family:

This is very sad news indeed. Please accept my deepest sympathy and sorrow in the passing of this great man. He was a teacher and philosopher to the world. We were lucky to have him at all, and truly blessed to have him for so long. Long will the world remember him and forever will we benefit from his prolific works.

Mike Murphy, Ottawa

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Dear Max,

With much sadness I receive this news, I feel that Mortimer was a good friend always there to guide me through his books. Even though I never met him personally, I felt him very close to me as an intellectual mentor. I am sure his memory will guide us for the years to come with all his vigour and inspiration. Please receive my condolences and extend them to his family members.

Best regards,

Gonzalo Rodriguez, Venezuela

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Dear Max,

I want to offer my condolences to you, because I know he was your very good friend. I never had a chance to meet him, but I respect immensely all the work Mr. Adler's done. It's remarkable how much of the world I travel in and the people I know have been shaped in some way by his work-- at the Basic Program, the Foundation, St. John's, Paideia, Encyclopedia Britannica. It's a remarkable legacy.

Sincerely,

Mark Cwik, Great Books Foundation

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Max,

Thanks for calling back. Please include me in any information you distribute about arrangements for Mr. Adler's memorial service and such. As you know, many people here at Britannica knew him and will be saddened by the news of his death. Thank you very much.

Cordially,

Tom Panelas

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June 28th, 2001 -- The Day Philosophy Died

What a wonderful description!!

Irene Crowe, Crowe Foundation

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Dear Max,

We have lost an irreplaceable giant. You have lost a very dear friend and colleague and I extend my sympathies to you. I would hope that the epitaph, "The Day Philosophy Died," is wrong. That could only happen if his many "disciples" allow it. I believe he worked too hard and for too

long to share his vision for us to allow that vision to die with him. Toward that end, I would like to make a memorial contribution of \$100.00 to the Center in his name. Again, knowing your relationship with Dr. Adler, my prayers and sympathies are with you and all those close to him.

A sincere friend,

Dan Krudop

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And now Socrates has met a new friend.

My condolences,

Eric Stiegman-farmer, Illinois

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Dear Max,

Please accept my profound condolences on the loss of your friend and mentor, Dr. Mortimer Adler.

Dr. Adler's gift was his ability to reach people through his writing, to challenge their thinking, and to plant the seeds of change. His most important lesson to me was teaching me to critically evaluate the priorities of my life and---by engaging in a dialogue with the sages of the past---to fashion a life that was more fulfilled and, yes, happy. Dr. Adler took upon himself the role of Everyman and showed that it is possible to accomplish this goal straightforwardly, not by revolutions, but by emphasizing and putting into practice those ideas that we already know to be essential to our well-being. May his memory always be for blessing.

Regards,

Hillel Lofaso

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Dear Family of Mortimer Adler and Max Weismann,

I am very sad at the passing of Dr. Adler. He was a very fine man and did inexpressible good for the people of the world. His legacy of education and moral living will endure the ages, as excellence always does. I know that still, every day, I will learn more from him, and from his students, about how to live and to think.

Please accept my condolences for your loss.

Jeffrey S. Burg, Esq.

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He was a truly great philosopher and I will miss him.

Kathryn Ludrick

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“MJA—A Personal Thanks”

In the early eighties, a good friend, told me I absolutely had to read How to Read a Book. From there I went to one of the old editions of the ten-year reading plan (which I’ve started countless times).

While Mortimer Adler bears no responsibility for the half-baked autodidact I’ve become, he deserves the credit for making me believe I should learn more, and that I would benefit from trying. He was right.

Fifty years from now some other young sailor, also perhaps based on a casual conversation over a glass of whiskey, might start the same process and it will still be Mortimer Alder’s classroom that he attends first. It will still be open for business and the texts will still be as fresh as they were a hundred years ago, or a thousand. I wonder, as often as he discussed learning from dead teachers in How to Read a Book, how Dr. Adler felt about his own tenure on that worthy faculty.

I expect he will be one of the better ones.

Agim Zabeli

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And now I see I must extend my condolences. I hope he's having a great conversation with Thomas Aquinas.

Terry Berres

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Max and all,

Has not the world lost its last and best philosopher? Let us awake and sing his praises. No one will begin to touch him until our Lord Jesus returns with His wisdom.

Myrna Moe

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My sympathy to you personally and to the Center on the loss of a great person.

Carol Robertson

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"Down To Earth"

Trying to understand the Great Books is overwhelming -- really difficult -- yet over the years, a liberating voice has consistently reminded me to turn to Adler for help, in that he brought many of those folks down to Earth and helped shed light on what otherwise would have remained obscure, at least to me.

One is tempted to envy the great conversation Mr. Adler is currently caught up in -- no doubt with one of his heroes.

Sincerely,

Bob Sale

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Dear Max,

I send my deepest condolences. I am weeping for his loss.

Courage!

Marji Meyer, School of Abraham

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Dear Max,

**I extend my deepest condolences to you and to his family.
What a great loss to mankind.**

Susan Gelb

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Dear Max,

Please accept my condolences for the loss of your friend.

Sincerely,

John Hasbrouck

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Max--

I feel really bad about Mr. Adler's death and yet inspired that he lived so long and was so productive in thought and writing all the way to the end. I'm also inspired to try to keep up the good fight. Thank you and my sincere condolences to you as a great friend.

Dave Stickrod

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Dear Max:

I hadn't heard of Dr. Adler's death until I rec'd your email. He was a major influence in my life and education. As per the definition of "happiness" that he taught us, that condition to be evaluated only at the end of a man's life, we can now say that he did enjoy such state; he had a good life.

Wayne Becker

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Max, my thoughts are with you:

Dr. Adler's many works had the most lasting and inspirational effect, of any books that I ever read, on my pursuit of learning and thinking about what constitutes knowledge. My interest in reading, talking about, and collecting thousands of good and great works arose largely from digesting *How to Read a Book* (1940, 1972). Surely even Aristotle would have said of Dr. Mortimer Jerome Adler that he, in the context of the entirety of his life, had been a truly good man, a great man, and had led an honorable and productive life. His influence shall be felt for generations and beyond. Rather than Philosophy having died on June 28, 2001, perhaps, it will just pause for a profound moment of silence and gratitude, and once again rise and thrive in Dr. Adler's extensive audience. We will not be attempting to live in the past; the past will be alive in us.

Pausing for that moment of gratitude,

J. Donald Allen

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Dear Max:

When I received your letter concerning the passing of Dr. Adler, my heart ached and I found myself shedding tears for a man I never met—but had always hoped to meet. Very few

men have affected my life like Mortimer Adler through his writings and through the Center. Outside of the Bible there is no one I quoted as much as Mortimer Adler. I will look at the picture of him that hangs over my desk differently now.

Hopefully June 28th will not be the day philosophy died because of all the seeds he planted and will continue to plant through the books and friends that survive him and through the Center.

My heart goes out to you especially. I know you probably feel the loss more than many others due to the special friendship you sustained with him.

Steven Lloyd

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This is so sad.

Though I never was privileged to meet him, I loved the person, Mortimer Adler. Because he loved us all. He gave us truth, clearly stated, and that is the rarest of gifts. I don't know what we'll do without him. If it were possible, I'd like him to have lived and taught us many more years. But I'm most thankful for what he has given us.

Terrence O'Neill

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For me, Mr. Adler is the man who had the idea of the GBWW, the Great Conversation, and the Syntopicon. Some people climb mountains because they are there. I am reading the GBWW because they are there. Mr. Adler built the Everest I choose to climb, without him, it would not exist.

While I personally never met the man, my life is enriched by him simply because he provided me with a mountain to climb.

Stephen Huff

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Max, please accept my heartfelt condolences on the passing of your friend. Mine is one of the countless young minds he helped broaden and sharpen. We all owe him deep respect and gratitude. Although I am near-destitute at the moment, I would like to pledge a contribution in his memory to the Center, which I will submit per your instructions as soon as I am able.

Stephen McClure

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My Tribute: MJA

In recent years I've derived much delight, motivation, and understanding from this great man; through the magic of the written word I will continue to.

Thank-you Mortimer!

Jack Walsh

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Dear Adler Family,

Please accept our condolences on the occasion of your loss. A great man has become, by grace, even greater. May God comfort you and your good family in every way.

God's grace to you,

Sheila, Bill, Sean, and Clare Hansen

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Oh Max, I knew this fated day would come but I had hoped not too soon. I know I haven't been around much lately but I read and save all the files you send.

What can I say about Dr. Adler that has not already been

said?

To me he was the paradigm of intelligent thought, a rare man, and irreplaceable. I read his books and am reading several of them at this time. I enjoy the rhythm of his writing, the lucidity of his thought, and most importantly his ideas. I wouldn't like to speculate where I would be without him to guide and protect me from the cruel world of incoherent thought. He is my guide and it is unlikely that anyone can replace him in that respect. Whenever I have an idea or engage in a dispute I always wonder what would Dr. Adler say? May Providence be kind enough to send us just one person half his stature so they we may not be the lame, blind, pitiful persons intellectually that we are without him.

I know some of what your relationship was with him via our long distant phone conversations.

Best of success and with deepest profound sympathy,

Ken Beacon

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Max,

I was sorry to learn of Mortimer's death. I know what he meant to you and I know that you will miss him dearly. The following is the e-mail that I sent to my friends regarding Mortimer. I wanted to share them with you. Thank you for all that you have done over the years. You have contributed to my education and I appreciate it.

As you all know, Mortimer Alder had a profound influence on my intellectual life. I discovered him by happenstance. While walking through a empty dormitory at Marquette University, I picked up a small paper back book entitled Great Ideas from the Great Books. It was a collection of letters to Mortimer. The letters raised important questions that I found rarely discussed in college, eg. What is justice? What is truth? What is equality and liberty? What is a liberal

arts education? and so on. To each question, Mortimer had written a succinct response which summarized western thought on the issues. Regardless whether one agreed with his response or whether one considered it too superficial, I always found his responses made me think more clearly about the issue.

After law school, when I returned to Conyers, I purchased and read actively his classic *How to Read a Book*. I read it so much that the binder tore apart. In fact, this morning I consulted it for its list of great books. Later one day by happenstance while waiting at home, I heard someone talking on the public radio about education--what was wrong and what needed to be done. I was so impressed with his comments that I recorded the remainder of his remarks without even knowing who I was recording. I still have that tape in my library. I soon learned it was Mortimer. Consequently I read with great interest and benefit *The Paideia Proposal* and *The Paideia Problems and Possibilities*.

I also began reading his other works--*Six Great Ideas*, *How to Speak/How to Listen*, *A Guideline to Learning*, *A Vision of the Future*, his books on God, religion, philosophy, morality etc. By doing so I learned about the Aspen Institute. In 1988 for my 40th birthday gift to myself, I went to the two week session of the Executive Seminar at the Aspen Institute. I participated in a seminar with Mortimer on education. As a result of that experience, my wife and I became certified in leading Junior Great Books Discussions. For about two years, we conducted great books discussions with our three daughters. Some of my fondest memories of my children were their questions and comments during those family discussions. In 1991, I returned to the Aspen Institute for the two week session on Justice and Society. The session was moderated by Harry Blackmun. It launched a self study of jurisprudence which gave me far greater insight into law and justice than any other course that I had taken, including the Harvard University Law School class on jurisprudence. Last night in a letter to a friend, I quoted the phrase, "don't allow our possessions to possess us" which I

first read when preparing for the Aspen Institute in 1988.

Several years ago I joined the Center for Great Ideas which, under the able leadership of Max Weismann, continues to address the same issues that Mortimer addressed all of his adult life. Over a year ago I along with Leon Leonard started an adult great books discussion group. We have a mascot of a monkey reading a book and wearing glasses. He always sits in the middle of the table while we discuss the reading. We fondly call him “Mortimer” in part to honor Mortimer and in part to remind us not to take ourselves too seriously. The discussions and readings have been titillating, but even more important the participants have become jewels in my collection of friends. Two weeks ago in my toast at my daughters wedding, I referenced Mortimer Adler. Thus, as you can see, Mortimer Adler has profoundly effected my life.

The attached picture of Mortimer is quite moving. I have some similar pictures of him ambling around the Aspen Institute when I was there. But I must disagree respectfully with the title The Day Philosophy Died For you see, Mortimer gave me the gift of philosophy and his gift still lives in me and the thousands (dare I say millions) of others to whom he gave the gift of philosophy. Yes, the philosopher died as we all must die. But his philosophy will live on as long as we read and reflect and meet and discuss the great ideas of the western world. Although I am saddened by his death, I am more resolved than ever to carry on his belief that “philosophy is everybody’s business”. It is my business and it is yours. Please join me in this life long endeavor.

Best wishes.

Forrest Jack Lance, Esq.

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Dear Max,**

Mortimer J. Adler was a mentor and a dear friend. I was very

privileged to have spent many hours (with my late husband, Al) at the Roundtable either in Aspen or on Wye Island over the course of 12 years. Mortimer cared and wanted his students to learn; he WAS a teacher. Hopefully, his students will carry on the tradition.

Mortimer taught me the value of education, and I ran for our school board and won! I am now president, and plan to run again. I am also attending a Princeton led seminar on “Religion and the Arts” at Tanglewood Music Festival, and the theme deals with “taste.” Remember, Mortimer discussed “taste!” We will, over time, use those valuable moments in discussion, and when we remember Mortimer’s “NO, NO, NO” we will also remember lessons about truth, justice, equality, God, and love.

Mortimer may no longer be with us, but his spirit is present in videos, and his books and in our lives. What a treasure, but most of all, we who knew him will spread the word. He HAS touched our souls.

I send my love to his wonderful sons. I also send my love to all the dear friends who, like myself, are grieving for a great man.

Barbara Hathcock

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“Thank you Dr. Adler !!!”

**Responding to “June 28, 2001 -- The Day Philosophy Died”
As I poured myself a cup of coffee this morning, I saw the words “Great Books” through the blue plastic which covered my Chicago Tribune. Great Books on the front page of the Tribune--why? I immediately opened up the paper and was saddened to hear Mortimer Jerome Adler had died.**

I then thought about how much he has influenced me through his life’s work. Almost every week I refer to at least one of these: Syntopicon, Propeadia, or How to Read a

Book. Almost every week for fifteen years I have been involved in one of the following programs: Aspen Institute, Great Books Foundation, Center for the Study of Great Ideas, or Basic Program of Liberal Education.

I have been greatly influenced by him; I am a better person because of him; and I will continue growing because of the availability of his life's work. I am most appreciative.

The Chicago Tribune provided a small biography of Mortimer Adler. I was surprised to find out he had been married to two different women for over 30 years each. Not many men have done that--even once. But then again, few men have accomplished as much as Mortimer Adler.

Kevin S. Borgard

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Max,

I am so sorry. . .

Seth Guggenheim

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Max:

My heartfelt condolences to you upon the death of your longtime friend and colleague. We will surely miss him and his wisdom.

Sincerely,

Hans VanderKnyff

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Hi Max,

I am so sad to hear about Dr. Adler's death. He introduced me to the Great Books, and he died just at the time I was

reading the Phaedo. Coincidental yet appropriate.

The Center will continue with you as the Philosopher in residence now. The best way to honor Dr. Adler now is to keep reading and thinking!

Stuart Smith

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Dear Max,

I've just received your email. I know that Mr. Adler would appreciate the fact that my second response was to pray for him. The first was that the world is very much smaller. His intellectual breadth and clarity, and his commitment to teaching, were unique. It's a consolation that the Center exists, but there is no other, despite his great age. We need him more than ever. I know that you know how dear to me he was.

Susan Moore, Australia

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May I express my sorrow over the passing of Mortimer Adler. He planted the seeds of inquiry about justice, liberty, and freedom which will ensure the continuation of our American society.

Carol Kleber

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Max

Please accept my deepest sympathies on the death of your mentor and friend. This is the end of an era, but I know the world is a better place because Adler was here and that you are enriched by your association with him.

Kay Davis

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Dear Max

The hardest part of life is losing a good and dear friend. I cannot know the feeling in your heart with this loss. All I can say is that I know the feeling and understand the pain at loss of a close companion. Please accept my deepest condolences and convey them to Dr. Alder's family. The world has lost a great man, but all of us who have read and listened to this great man, now carry him with us in our hearts forever.

Sincerely

Bob Snow

PS: Max I am but a simple man who has struggled along the path of life. Dr. Adler's books and thoughts have illuminated that once darkened path. He has lifted my mind, my heart and my spirit along my journey. Dr. Adler is truly the Father of Philosophy for the common man.

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Max,

I have long wished that I could remember the name of the teacher who, nearly forty years ago, put a ditto copy of a chapter from "How To Read A Book" into my hands, changing the trajectory of my life forever, and that of my children, and now my grandchildren. I owe to Mortimer Adler the love of truth, rigor, philosophy, and literature that have defined "me" throughout my adulthood. Outside my parents, no one has so profoundly shaped the course of my thought and action; frankly, no one has come close. I feel his influence in my life daily.

Greg Givan

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Max,

Dr. Mortimer Adler's passing away is indeed a great loss. Please accept my deepest sympathy.

Victor Abello

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Max:

I wondered yesterday when I saw the message about Dr. Adler but did not have any information about him. Today there was a lengthy article about him in the Washington Post which confirmed my suppositions. I am truly sorry about his passing, but am deeply convinced that his "Philosophy Is Everybody's Business" has now been extended to another world past our planet and he is communicating this news with his usual candor and skill. I have such high regard for him just from reading his works so far -- certainly expect to continue reading the rest -- and from my one graduate student experience of listening to him at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D. C. when he spoke so glowingly about the advent of The Great Books series. I shall never forget how impressed I was -- and still am with his vision and his accomplishments. Congratulations to you too for extending his vision and influence.

Teddy Handfield

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On the fundamental matters of God and immortality, I am at loggerheads with Mortimer J. Adler. But as concerns philosophical method and the goals of education, I am his ardent admirer.

Very early in his career, after coming across Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, Adler became enamored by the dialectical method of examining all contending positions. In fact his first book *Dialectics* was on this topic, in which he projected a great *Summa Dialectica* of philosophy. In his long life, he managed to execute a great deal of this *Summa* in his

Syntopicon, the *Idea of Freedom*, and in *The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes*, as well as in other works.

There were only a few outstanding dialectical philosophers in the world, and he was one of them.

**Andrew Chrucky, Senior Fellow
Center fo the Study of The Great Ideas**

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Max,

When expecting and wanting someone to live forever, it's a shock when he doesn't. However, perhaps your heading, "The Day Philosophy Died," is, because of Dr. Adler's work, not going to be true. It is certainly emptier without him, but he left lots of ways to keep him in mind and to continue to learn from him, and I intend to.

Best regards,

Janet Miller

=====

Max,

Our sincere condolences to you.

The Day Philosophy Died was simple and eloquent.

Mortimer taught us all that philosophy is everybody's business -- and he taught us exceedingly well. He was an outstanding teacher who left us a wealth of great books, indexes and the Center to teach us. In my mind, you are the living legacy of Adler's efforts -- and a most excellent teacher.

I am eager to continue to learn from you, as I discover what I ought to seek in life and how I should seek it. Mortimer must be proud that you have so many serious students and that the Center is truly the resource for interpreting his

work.

If I can be of any assistance I am an e-mail away.

And now, we trust Mortimer Jerome Adler enjoys the beatific vision.

John and Wendy Segvich

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Dear Mr. Weismann:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the career of Dr. Adler.

Mortimer Adler, together with his antagonist John Dewey, was one of the two or three most influential teachers of the twentieth century. He came to occupy the tenured chair of national teacher laureate, or spokesman for philosophy to the American people, and as such he had a very good effect on education and changed many lives for the better. There are droves of modernists and deconstructionists who aspire to occupy his now-empty chair, and we are very fortunate that they have so far not been able to fill it.

He made three generations of Americans believe that philosophy is benevolent, democratic, pious, and concerned with promoting good citizenship. That is why my parents in the 1950's bought a set of "his" Great Books and stored them in a prominent place in the living room of the house where I spent my childhood, and those books changed my life, and I am deeply grateful to him for that.

Yours sadly,

Robert L. Stone

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Dear Max,

Your sad news of the death of Dr. Mortimer J. Adler was heartrending at best. At first one is tongue-tied. The thoughts from Mark Van Doren were uniquely apposite. Truly, Dr. Adler is irreplaceable in his physical being but never in his intellectual insight and vast creation of books and other beacons of enlightenment, which will truly remain as a light for the nations and all questing souls like him. His Great Books and the Syntopicon are irreplaceable contributions to the humanities. The Center for the Study of Great Ideas has provided continuing enlightenment to all his devoted followers and, I sincerely hope, will continue.

As I have mentioned to you previously, I first saw Dr. Adler in 1939 when I attended a Wisconsin Teachers Association convention in Milwaukee at what is now called MATC, addressing the group on the importance of teaching and learning how to read a book as illuminated bestseller of the same title. I chose to cover that event for my Journalism reporting class and have never forgotten his challenging discussion. So dynamic was he that the discomfited audience was continually murmuring in disagreement. At times, I feared there would be a mass walkout by the group. How exhilarating then and now!

I immediately prayed for his peace and eternal happiness. Such, so to speak, were his precious gifts to us and now is his.

With my heartfelt condolences,

Don Thielke

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Max,

My sincere condolences. I am sure you were very close to MJA and will miss him greatly.

Cordially,

Lyle Sykora

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Mortimer Adler dominated philosophy in the twentieth century. I am fortunate to have known him and his work, even as little as I have. We will all miss him greatly.

Richard Case

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Dear Max,

Mr. Adler and The Great Books have been my sole source of education since my mid-twenties. I'm no star pupil - but he has helped me take 'the road less traveled' and the journey has been wonderful. I am sure his spirit will continue to guide us all.

Graeme Connors, Australia

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It is with a sense of personal loss that we hear of the mortal death of Dr. Adler. A serious loss to the world of clear thinking and responsible living. His works will live well beyond his enormous life span.

He was a good man. He was a good and happy man. To those of us who read him and followed him, that is an achievement we all strive for. This goal is one he advocated as an ultimate earthly goal.

He will be remembered as a renowned philosopher, as well he should, but he was also a theologian of the first order. His faith in God ultimately led him to hold beliefs where he felt most comfortable and compatible.

While we all feel a personal loss, there is need to rejoice that he is now in a place where he felt the ultimate Good resides. He is visiting his old friends; Aristotle, Plato, Augustine and Aquinas. Which now is the master and which the student?

Most of us never met Dr. Adler, yet we all can say we loved him. This thing, love, is a mighty thing. It is boundless and must come from somewhere way above us all.

So, sweep up the deserts and suck up the seas. Pack up the land and throw away the rocks. Box up the moon and store the sun. Hold them in place for one who might come along like him. It won't be in our lifetime. The world has lost a good and decent man and heaven's gain is our loss. Goodbye old friend, and yet, hello.

Requiescat in pacem.

Bob Heller

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Dear Max,

With much sadness did I read your e-mail message about the Day Philosophy Died.

By reading the subject title in my inbox, I already he felt that Dr. Mortimer Jerome Adler have passed on. I already missed him, especially after I saw the attached picture of him leaving with his laptop and cane. I first knew about Dr. Adler in 1968 when I purchased the Great Books.

Please, convey my condolence to his family.

Charles Albert

=====
Dear Max Weismann,

Please accept my sympathies for the death of your colleague and friend.

Adler's gifts were many: an exciting, dynamic and deeply convinced lecturer whose logic was irrefutable, a clarifying

expositor of text, whether to the practicing philosopher or the common man, an innovative educator whose principles nevertheless held loyally to a tradition. Yet I believe that his greatest gift to us and his greatest achievement was the Syntopicon, a dialectical analysis of the greatest ideas of the greatest minds. Aristotle wrote the theoretical rules of dialectic, but he practiced it little in his writings. Plato practiced a peculiar type of dialectic in which a teaching rhetoric played a large part. Adler may have been the only pure dialectician par excellence in our intellectual history. The Syntopicon has yet to be explored, understood and sequenced. That would be Adler's heritage. To implement it could be the beginning of a philosophy more universal and communicable than mankind has yet achieved.

My best wishes for the continuation of your important work.

Journet Kahn

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Max,

I'm working at the moment in Australia, and just heard of Mortimer Adler's death. Some people have influence. Adler was more. To generations of seekers like me he was a homing beam. For decades he provoked my ascendance to a higher, more thoughtful way of thinking. Now, I hope my prayers will help, in some small way, lift him.

Respectfully,

George W. Dudley, Behavioral Sciences Research Press

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Max,

I feel that I have lost more than a family member and that I am inadequate to express condolence.

Since your announcement, I've not been able to pass one waking hour without thinking about the man whose writings have provided me so much assurance for the past thirty years now. I cannot imagine anyone feeling anything but love for such a man. These are the same feelings one cannot avoid for the spirit literally bursting from the writings of men like Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Maimonides, and many others.

I am sure that it is more than that for you as well as for all the members of Dr. Adler's family.

Ron Frerking

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Dear Max,

And don't we all appreciate the presence that is and was Mortimer Adler. I read it this a.m. in the L.A. Times, an extensive obit which I will send you. Then my 88 year old uncle called me, and we waxed philosophical for some time (he didn't think the obit did Mortimer justice) and we ended by me telling him the true story of the chauffeur switch. And Uncle Henry said to me "Daphne, some people are just jealous when they don't understand, or can't convey their thoughts"

Tho it was inevitable, it still a sad day. The universe has lost a philosopher king, no matter the appellations. My heart is with you and the others in this sad time.

Daphne Throne

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Dear Max,

I just wanted to let you know that he in fact was a great man but his work will live on through you and many others.

Lee Circone

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Dear Max:

I learned the news from your e-mail--and checked it on the internet (Washington Post has a fine obituary today).Up to his 98th year and active and brilliant to the end. As my parents used to say: "oif mir gesugt."

**Here's a small thought. If you post real audio on your site I could dig up some tapes of Mortimer's appearances on Extension 720 for you to make available on site. Meanwhile Mortimer discoursing on God (an excerpt of just five minutes or so) is available on our site:
www.wgnradio.com/shows/ex720/index.html.**

With best wishes,

Milt Rosenberg

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Max and everyone at the Center,

I am deeply grateful to have been exposed to the life and work of Dr. Adler and learned, with mixed emotions, off his passing away.

We thank you for the impact you've had on his life during these last days and for the impact you allowed him to have on yours.

Dr. Adler dwells no longer among us, yet he lives among us in ways only readers of his work can understand and appreciate.

Theophilus van Rensburg Lindzter, Stockholm

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Goodbye, Dr. Adler. You done good.

Bob d'Aigle

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Dear Max,

I am writing to express my condolences over the loss of your friend, Mortimer Adler. Life will not seem quite the same without him. You and he are in my thoughts and prayers.

Richard Nadolny

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He may be gone but nothing has died. The work lives on to infinity, adding inspiration and wholesome thoughts to the lives of those who care about advancing our humanity!

Angela M. Massiah

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Max,

Although I never met Mortimer Adler in person, he has taught me more than any other teacher. From his books I've learned about metaphysics, ethics, politics, psychology and theology. I started reading his books when I was in high school. The example he set of devotion to the intellectual life inspired me to earn my PhD in mathematics. His spiritual journey which ultimately led him to the Catholic Church, has in part moved me to begin the conversion process to Catholicism from the Episcopal church. I would be much less if not for him.

Michael S. Casey

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Dear Max Weismann, Friends, and Fellow Members:

It is with regret that I learned of the passing away of this great man who was Mortimer Adler. Great and yet simple as a pioneer in the introduction of the great conversation that

characterizes the intellectual life of the west.

Luiz Felipe Penna, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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Even though I never met Dr. Adler, I feel as though I know him through his writings and have come to regard him as a valued friend. He has made this world a better place and he will be sorely missed by me and the millions of others that he has touched.

Jim Reardon

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I am bitter that Dr. Adler did not receive the recognition he deserved. His book WHAT MAN HAS MADE OF MAN is the greatest book of the 20th century. The American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychoanalytical Association did not give him any awards. It is impossible to understand psychiatry, psychology, and psychoanalysis without Dr. Adler.

David Herman

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Dear Max,

Mortimer Adler greatly influenced my life by helping me in my effort to become more liberally educated in later life. These days I feel an emptiness in my heart as I mourn his passing. He was truly a great man and more than most continuously examined his life. I hope that his ideas continue to guide humankind.

Sincerely,

Tony Gasbarro

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Dear Max,

Our discussion group wishes to express our sorrow at the passing of Mortimer Adler. But at the same time, we celebrated his life last Saturday. We have started a Great Ideas discussion group, in parallel with Great Books discussion series. He gave us so much. We are taking his contribution of the Syntopicon and expanding our reach to the full 102 Great Ideas. What a journey!

Please express our condolences to his family.

Edward White, Leader

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During this time of great sorrow we learn how much people can really mean to us. There is no expression of sympathy that can ever be the expression of sympathy for a man who will always be treasured. My most deepest respects for a “Philosopher-King”.

Leamond Anthony Allen

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Dear Max,

Certainly, I add my name to the long list of persons deeply saddened by Mortimer Adler’s passing. Although I was never able to meet him in person, his books, essays and spoken words have had a profound impact on me for over thirty years. He challenged us to accept no conventional wisdoms that could not stand objective analysis, and he leaves behind a treasury of insights that future generations will continue to discover long after most of us have been forgotten. One of my great regrets is that I was never able to participate in one of great ideas discussions with Dr. Adler guiding and nurturing the exchange. The work and the need for the work to which he devoted so much of himself continues.

Ed Dodson

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Dear Max,

My heartfelt condolences on the loss of your good friend and mentor. For the past two months every time I received an e-mail from you I thought it might be a note that Dr. Adler had died, but even with that “preparation” it was a difficult moment for me when that word did come. How much more for you, for his family, and for the many others who were a part of his everyday life!

Mortimer Adler has been an important part of who I am and how I think for 20 years, and because of my own teaching and position in business, he has also impacted the lives of many others through me. I know that I am only one of many who can make such a statement, and I am comforted by the knowledge that Mortimer did so much good for so many people that the effects of his work will be felt far longer and in more ways than I can even imagine.

I’m also comforted to know that this life, as fruitful as it was for our teacher, was only a beginning for him. As I wrote in a song a few years ago, “Life isn’t over for a Christian gone home -- just this part of life has now ceased.” His teachings and his legacy will live on here, and his spirit will live on with the God he not only thought about but also loved.

May God’s peace be with you and with all who held Mortimer dear.

Lewis Greer

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Max,

We are so sorry to learn of the passing of such a great thinker, teacher, and philosopher. He will live on in the words he has put into print and onto audio and video tape

**and as such will be a continual inspiration for generations.
May his soul rest in peace.**

Tom Carstens

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**Mortimer Adler has enriched us all. His ideas and lessons
live on. We all owe him an enormous debt. We will repay it
by keeping alive his memory.**

**Stanley Goldstein, Chairman
Westchester Great Books Council**

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**Besides myself, Mortimer Adler was the only philosopher I
knew who believed in God. And, he could explain it in
such a way that faith did not seem ridiculous.**

Tom Johnson

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Dr. Adler's work changed my life. I'm eternally indebted.

I offer my regards and condolences to all who knew him.

Carl Noe

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**Just received the sad news. Dr. Adler was a great writer and
thinker. He will be missed, but his works will continue to
talk to us and provide the tools by which we can continue
our learning process.**

**Richard D. Melson, DRE Co-Chair
Dayton Education Council**

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**To me, Mortimer Adler was a kindred spirit, more so than
most. I discovered philosophy in my adult life, and in my
fascination with it I dreamed about writing and teaching**

and instilling in others a passion for wisdom and learning. When I discovered the writings of Mr. Adler, I found someone who deeply articulated what I would have said if I'd devoted all of my life to such study. I always wished I could have known Mr. Adler personally. I think we'd have had some great debates. Though I have no formal degree in philosophy, in Mortimer Adler I found a Great Mind through whose writings I felt affirmed for who I was and felt encouraged and validated and treated as though I, too, could be on a par with the greatest minds of history. Mr. Adler talked to me like I was a adult, never down as to an inferior. I hope that in my own small way I can continue the legacy he established.

Ken Ewing

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Dear Max,

Please extend my deepest sympathy to the family of our greatest teacher and mentor. We all join them in expressing our sorrow and loss of a one of a kind person, someone who made us grasp the true meaning of life and understand the enigmas of living. I must say that he had a truly "happy" fulfilled life.

Edilberto M. Bautista, M.D.

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My sincere condolences to the Adler family for their lost. Although professor Adler lived a full, productive, and rich life, the pain of losing someone as special as he cannot be easy. You knew Mr. Adler in a loving, emotional, and intellectual way. We, on the outside, knew him primarily in an intellectual way. However, that in itself was and continues to be a deep and overwhelming privilege. For he was our teacher, our mentor, and our example of how we should think and what we should be thinking about, if we are to live a good life. He was also what we secretly wished we could all be, a genius with a heart: a philanthropist in

mind and spirit. Two men are talking: one man says to the other, “Did Mortimer J. Adler live a good life, or a life filled with happiness?” The other man replies, “I don’t know, for on a great many occasions, he told the truth about truth, goodness, beauty, liberty, equality, and justice [just to name of few of the great ideas] and that delighted some people but made others angry. But what I do know is that it did not make me angry. On the contrary, he brought a great deal of happiness to me by so generously sharing his ideas, and I thank him for it.” The other man replied, “My [and millions more] sentiments exactly.”

Jerry Dampier

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It seems I have been through quite a few “life changes” lately. For the past week, I have seen my oldest son turn 18, and have helped him launch his new life in college. Upon my return from my son’s college orientation, I learned of the news of Dr. Adler’s death. Yet one more change. Not that my life and Dr. Adler’s were in any way directly connected. Our paths never crossed, but I harbored the hope that someday I would have the chance to meet and to thank the man most responsible for bringing clear focus to my life-long pursuit of happiness. That small hope is one that I will never realize. And for that I am saddened.

I am grateful not only for the mark that Mortimer left on my life, but for the mark he left on so many thousands of others during his almost 100 years of life. Those of us who have--through Dr. Adler’s tutelage--learned the joy and pain of struggling with the “Great Ideas” needed more than to discover this for ourselves. We needed others to discover it as well. Dr. Adler understood this better than anyone. He recognized that the pursuit of truth is inherently a social process. The spark of intellectual discovery requires dialogue and discussion, and not simply solitary contemplation. The Great Books, The Great Ideas, Great Books seminars, Paideia seminars--all of these monumental legacies--offer a foundation for building a thoughtful society

that is engaged not only in the “Great Conversation” of the past, but is engaged in an ongoing conversation in the present.

I have often marveled at how generously Dr. Adler poured his own thoughts onto the written page to share with everyone. His 70 years of publication are testimony to a life spent in constant pursuit of a better understanding of the ideas most important to all of us. No problem or question was too daunting for him. Does God exist? How do we think about war and peace? What is a good life? What is a good society? What is a good education? He tackled these questions with a commonsense perspective that stood in stark contrast to so much of the 20th century’s bewildering and esoteric academic meanderings. One of the most striking aspects of his life’s work in print is the portrait it paints of a man always learning and always changing his perspective on the great ideas. It is a model for us all.

Mortimer Adler ruffled more than a few feathers in his long career--often because he dared to question the bankrupt moral philosophy that he found around him. Not unlike Socrates. But, also like Socrates, Dr. Adler upset many because he was passionate--and sometimes arrogant. He was not an icon of philosophical and intellectual neutrality. He was a human being with human frailties who constantly pursued truth. And the pursuit of truth is often messy. That’s an important lesson for me. His life inspires me to step into the fray, to make mistakes, to take what faculties (good and bad) I have been endowed with--and pursue truth and wisdom. And for that, I thank him.

**John Sheehan, Board of Education
Douglas County School District, Castle Rock, CO**

**=====
I was deeply saddened to read that Mortimer had died. The difference in that man certainly made a difference in me. He was a ‘way shower” with his writings. When, in 1987, I checked out from the Denver Public library “The Difference**

in Man and the Difference It Makes” I had no idea my Great Books and moreover my Great Ideas reading and discussion groups were going to cause me to differ from what I was.

First, I was going to differ in my thinking. My emotions were checked and my reasoning was awakened. I became interested in reading the ancients. For the first time I understood the words over the University of Colorado’s Norlin Library that said, “He Who Knows Only His Own Generation, Always Remains A Child”.

Second, I was going to differ in my approach to my management job. My pursuit of know-how gave way to good judgment and good decision-making. In running the real estate acquisition department of a roadway project, my use of the concept “treat equals as equals and unequals as unequals in proportion to their inequality” became standard, yet difficult to apply. Understanding there are two kinds of minds, speculative and practical, became invaluable in dealing with people. Doing good, doing no harm and giving each other his due became a sensible way to manage a tollway construction project. Again not easy to apply, but grasping the concept of justice and always trying to determine “what is good” produced good results.

Third, I was going to differ in my desire to better understand ethics and politics. I stepped up my reading of the editorial pages and improved my ability to discern sound argument and sophistry. With this, I started to dislike opinion worshipping and like knowledge advancement.

Lastly, the difference in me has made a difference in my family, friends, habits and choices. All because I picked up one of Mortimer’s books and quickly got hooked on his clear thinking.

May his books be read thousands of years from now.

Brian D. Hansen

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What can one individual say about a man who has spent nearly a century carrying forward the tradition we are all heirs to? Modern Western civilization seems to be attempting to construct an international society like Caligula's Rome (or worse as a friend of mine recently declared). One could say that we have arrived at Machivelli's new moral continent and found that the living conditions are not very pleasant. The legacy left by Mortimer Adler will lead us back to the roots of our tradition and away from the disaster inflicted on us by the so-called Enlightenment. Thomas Aquinas regarded himself as a beginner as all good students should and so wrote for beginners. Mortimer Adler has done the same in our day and we owe him a great debt for his service. May he rest in peace and enjoy the vision of Our Lord forever.

Anthony Buckley

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Dear Max,

Having only got back to my computer today, I have belatedly caught up with your very sad news. As a very recent member of the Centre, and recent discoverer of Mortimer Adler's ideas, I am really only embarking on a voyage with his works. But I have already seen enough to understand what a singular figure he has been. From the ends of the earth here in New Zealand, can I also extend my deepest sympathies. His passing behoves the rest of us to try to continue his good works.

Yours sincerely

Allan Bracegirdle, Australia

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What a run! Dr. Adler lived "at the height of his time", running faithfully the course seemingly divinely given to

him. Ninety-eight years of encouraging people, the common people, to think. From Dialectic to How to Think About the Great Ideas, Dr. Adler never seemed to rest. Always thinking. Always teaching. Always encouraging.

I am saddened that I will never get to meet Dr. Adler and especially saddened for those who knew him well. But listen. We can still hear his voice, clearly, distinctly, forever mingled with the voices that carry on the Great Conversation. Well done, Dr. Adler. Well done!

Herminio Rivera

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Let's celebrate the life of Mortimer Adler, a generous scholar, a learned man who dedicated his life to sharing his knowledge and viewpoints with those less seasoned in the world of academics.

He led a noble life of the mind.

R.L. Friedman

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Mortimer Adler's Legacy

Mortimer J. Adler's death is a sad event but also an occasion to celebrate one of the great, progressive thinkers in American education. Dr. Adler's genius in advancing the idea that tradition is not the "dead hand of the past" but the fertile grounding for the life of the mind and ultimately for the commonweal is more germane than ever.

In an era in which education is being reduced to test-taking and meaningless numbers, his clarion call for humanistic education based on the innate desire to learn, and the possibility of genuine understanding, remains a hope and a challenge for educators. Those of us who were influenced and excited by his teaching should continue the work he began and advanced so well of bringing learners to explore,

understand and critique the expanding universe of the classics. †

Joseph P. Healey, Head - Ethical Culture Fieldston School

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As I enter my 60th year, I feel the influence that Mortimer Adler has had on my life. As an only child growing up in a Southern Baptist environment, I learned, by middle age, and with the help of Adler's books, how much I didn't know about the nature of man and his (I should say "my") relationship to the world. Adler helped put me in touch.

The strange thing is that I could have lived my life without it, as most people do. "It" is not a religious experience, and "it" is not a refutation of God. "It" has given me personal growth and a gradual onset of peace of mind. I believe this to be the "happy life" that Dr. Adler says we can have.

Thank you Mortimer Adler, and thank you to all the other great thinkers who preceded him. It is truly a GREAT CONVERSATION.

**Dr. Max Morley, Music Professor
Stephen F. Austin State University**

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Dear Max Weismann

You are very much in my thoughts and prayers. Even I as an outsider cannot begin to fathom "losing" Mortimer Adler.

Sincerely,

Shirley Stinson, Professor Emerita University of Alberta

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Max

Mortimer's life was a huge statement. His impact lives on.

Many of us are still motivated to think, read, grow, become more human, and more Christian, as he taught. That influence should grow, from him, through all of us.

I expect all of us to be connected via these prayers.

Stay in touch. May all else be well.

Richard E. Dooley

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Dear Max:

Your exquisite choice of Mark Van Doren's letter to his son as tribute to Mortimer touched us deeply. To you, his true and devoted friend, we send our condolences with the request that you share them with his family.

Chuck and Peg Callard

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"Good night, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!" —Hamlet, Act V, ln.370

Tom Murray

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Dear Max,

Thanks for the opportunity to express my appreciation and condolences.

Often, I find myself wishing that I had "discovered" Mortimer J. Adler in my youth and not so late in life as I did, given the deep and positive way in which he has influenced who I am striving to become. However, I feel so fortunate that I did discover him in time, and that I was able to participate in a few seminars which he led.

At one seminar in Aspen, I sat with Dr. Adler around an

evening outdoor fire and discussed with him where I might best study ancient and medieval philosophy, during an upcoming sabbatical. I asked what books he would recommend I read. He said he would have to think about it. We did not talk for more than 5 -10 minutes. The very next morning, at my place around the seminar table, I found a note from Dr. Adler in which he identified the books which he would recommend. He was a truly remarkable man in many ways!! I shall miss him.

My deepest sympathy go to members of Dr. Adler's family on their profound loss.

I wanted to let you know that you are in my thoughts. What a great loss you have suffered, but what a great thing it is for us that Mortimer and you co-found the Center. Mortimer will live on!!!

June Kikuchi, Alberta

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Please extend my condolences to Dr. Adler's family, friends and colleagues. While I never met him, I certainly feel as if I knew him through his works. His desire for the best for everyone, a truly good life, was clearly seen and appreciated. I pray that he is now with God, and no longer has to just think about Him.

Bruce Buff

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Max,

What a great loss to the intellectual life of America. But what a great example of what the intellectual life can be at its very best. I am far richer for having read his work.

Graves E. Enck, University of Memphis

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Thank you Dr. Mortimer Adler for your great contribution to Civilization.

Now is a time for silence and reflection, but most of all a time for deep appreciation for your life and works. You taught several generations how to read with understanding as well as to think deeply.

I only wish I could listen in on the Great Conversations and Paideia Seminars you will be conducting with Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, et al. What divine Dialogues and infinite Shared Inquiries will fill your mind's eye and voice of wisdom?

Dr. J. Paul De Vierville

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I never met Dr. Adler. I've talked and argued with him countless times. I never looked into his eyes or shook his hand. But I have touched his mind. And that has made all the difference. I shall continue to seek his counsel till the day I die.

Todd McCune

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Dear Max,

A flame went out on June 28th, 2001.

If I can have the impact on a single life that Dr. Adler had on my life, I will leave this life a successful man.

I read a lot as a boy but I did not like high school. When I learned that college was different, I wanted to attend. When my university demanded that I name a major, my reply was "knowledge, truth."

I was a naive, orphan boy. Despite the wisdom I gained

about men and institutions from orphanage life and later Vietnam War service, I was naive enough to expect that university men were about the pursuit of knowledge, truth and wisdom. Instead, I found arrogance, pretense, career climbing, bureaucracy, narrow specialization, scientism, career networks and political agenda. To most professors, students are mere cannon fodder.

For a few years, I tried to stop pondering over the abstract questions. In spite of myself, I found I still wanted to know things, many things. Fortunately, Dr. Adler wrote several fascinating books, since that day in 1973, when I discovered a used copy of his classic book, “How to Read a Book.” What Dr. Adler said in that book lead to my decision to pursue a formal education.

Long after I had left university life and I had forgotten about Dr. Adler and his book, I discovered two other books by Dr. Adler, “Ten Philosophical Mistakes” and “The Four Dimensions of Philosophy.”

I was hooked. Here was a real philosopher telling me that the professors are wrong, that the ideas that I had about philosophy and knowledge were much closer to the mark than the notions my teachers had insisted were correct. I never looked back. After four degrees and several scholarships and years of serious reading, I knew that I still did not have the general education that I set out to obtain in 1973 I was spinning my wheels.

Here was a Former University of Chicago professor, a man who had dared to publicly disagree with John Dewey, telling me that I had the right general idea: I had expected my philosophy teachers to be versed in the thought of those who had come before them, beginning with the ancient thinkers. I thought that modern history professors like Sidney Hook and John P. Diggins, who discuss philosophy and knowledge so much, should have a better grasp of philosophy than they do.

In my forties, I finally knew how to pursue the education I wanted and here was Dr. Adler telling me that it is O.K. because real education is usually wasted on young men, that the classic schools consisted of students who were over the age of 35. I assembled a collection of Adler's books and certain books written by Hutchins, the Van Dorens, St. Ives, Jacques Maritain and even one by John Erskine. For several years, I was suspicious that my university studies were leading nowhere. For four years now, I am certain that I am on the right path, the path I sought, when I entered college in 1973.

For my years wondering about in the university spawned wasteland, many professors are responsible. For my past few years of learning, one man is responsible; He was Mortimer J. Adler. He will be missed.

Tim Bandy

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Max,

For someone like me who never knew Dr. Adler personally, he has been an absent teacher. So long as we have his books, he will continue to be an absent teacher to me and others.

He tried--hopefully successfully, only time will tell-- to pass on an important legacy.

Jim Poindexter

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Dear Max, Friends, Members, and Colleagues,

I am very sorry to hear of Mortimer Adler's death. I found his thinking and arguments interesting and fruitful for my own philosophical issues I am pursuing. Although I do not always agree with Adler and sometimes think better arguments could be found I nonetheless have found few

philosophers less addicted to ponderous and obscure verbiage. This is not to say philosophy is an easy pursuit needing clear definitions and employment of profound argument. Rather it is to say Adler had a way of cutting to the heart of the issues and laying the different positions out in a clear fashion.

Probably we all wish we could have consulted with Adler on issues we were struggling with. Often it was Max who helped us directly and for his help in the midst of Adler's last years we are grateful. I was fortunate that Max felt what I wrote to Adler concerning how Encyclopedia Britannica's problems in keeping Great Ideas publishing going were brought to his attention. Max was kind to relay that Adler felt I had some good ideas and he hoped the publisher would do something along the lines I suggested.

I suggest two ways we can honor Adler is to bring out two published works: one covering the lectures he gave in his church dealing with Christian philosophical tradition (this honors the faith he found late in life); the other is to collect as many of his essays as possible in one volume or several. For example many are not aware of his writings in The Great Ideas Today books. However I realize these are issues whoever Adler left is literary estate to will have to grapple with.

In an age when many philosophers, politicians, and others engaged in speaking untruth and even rank nonsense Adler often helped many to see through to the truth and be able to recognize when nonsense, however cleverly phrased or pleasing presented, was really worthless and unworthy ideas to be held by so noble a creature as us humans.

Above all this Adler's gift to instill in one the abilities needed to critically think an issue through was a prize worthy of mastering for our individual benefit in making us more humane and noble as humans.

Thanks be to God for the life and work of Mortimer Adler

**and those who have worked with this man to help us all.
Amen**

Ted M. Beverley

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Max,

My condolences to the Adler family. Dr. Adler can now look back to his time on earth as a “life well lived”, --as he defines happiness. And “the nation’s pedagogue” as W.F. Buckley called him -- of the 20th century, one might add.

Now it is to you, Max and the rest of us to carry the torch.

Phil Gelinas, Leader, The Great Ideas Discussion Group

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The Maestro, as I will always remember him.

Max Weismann
