

David Koch: Billionaire Republican donor dies aged 79

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Billionaire David Koch, a major donor to the Republican party, has died aged 79. He had been suffering from cancer.

The former majority owner of Koch Industries was ranked by Forbes, jointly with brother Charles, as the 11th richest person in the world.

Koch wielded huge political influence, bankrolling conservative causes for small government, low regulation and climate change scepticism.

He was also a major donor to medical research, education and the arts.

The brothers' political network funnelled hundreds of millions of dollars to Republican candidate Mitt Romney's failed presidential bid in 2016, only to fall out with President Donald Trump over his immigration policy and tariffs.

In 2018 Koch stepped down from Koch Industries - which refines crude oil, produces fertiliser, and manufactures household products - citing his declining health.

He had been a philanthropist to the arts, especially ballet, and donated to New York's Lincoln Center and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center hospital.

He ran for vice-president as a Libertarian in 1980, calling for the abolishment of many federal government agencies.

According to Forbes, he is estimated to be worth \$42.4bn (£34.7bn).



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Image caption

The Koch brothers are despised among liberal Americans

The news of his death was confirmed in a statement from Charles Koch, who said that his brother was first diagnosed with prostate cancer 27 years ago and given only a few years to live.

"David liked to say that a combination of brilliant doctors, state-of-the-art medications and his own stubbornness kept the cancer at bay," Charles Koch wrote, adding that in those years he married his wife Julia Flesher and had three children.

He also described David as having a "giant personality and passion for life" and noted his "institution changing philanthropic commitments to hospitals, cancer research, education and the arts".

'Pushed Republicans to the right'

Analysis by Tara McKelvey, White House reporter

David Koch, who was born in Wichita, once said: "Hell, everybody from Kansas is a Republican."

In fact, there are plenty of Democrats in Kansas. But he was right about this - conservatism permeates the state. Kansas is a place where people believe in the individual spirit, free trade and free markets - and like to rail against Washington.

A libertarian, Koch fostered his economic ideas on a national level through organisations such as Americans for Prosperity, a right-wing advocacy group.

Over several decades, he helped to reshape conservatism in the US, pushing the Republican party to the right and inspiring leaders of the Tea Party movement who eventually helped to elect Trump.

A wealthy man who invested in both science (a dinosaur gallery at the American Museum of Natural History is named after him) and in libertarian, Kansas-bred economic ideas, Koch has had a profound impact on conservative thought in this country.

The company founded by Charles and David Koch - the second largest privately owned business in the US - has interests ranging from pipelines to paper towels.

According to the Koch Industries website, they have more than 120,000 employees between all their businesses and subsidiaries.

They have previously put money into groups denying climate change and attacking unions and workers' rights.

The brothers' political clout made them bogeymen for many on the political left.

But the Kochs have also pushed for criminal justice reform and made large donations to the American Civil Liberties Union.

美國共和黨金主 億萬富豪 大衛 科克 過世，享年79歲

億萬富豪 大衛 科克 在經歷漫長癌症的煎熬後，甫過世，享年79歲，他是美國共和黨的重量級經費贊助人。

大衛 科克和他的哥哥查理斯 科克兩人的財富合計，根據富比士雜誌的排名，是排名全球第11大的首富。

科克兄弟運用贊助保守派的理念 - 小型政府，低度規範，質疑氣候變遷理論，匯集了巨大的政治影響力。

大衛也是對於醫藥研究，教育，還有藝術方面的重要捐贈者。

他和他哥哥透過各種管道捐贈美元數百萬來贊助米特·羅姆尼，在2016年爭取共和黨的總統候選人提名，但未成功，而後和美國總統川普在移民政策，以及關稅事務上翻臉。

大衛在2018年，因為健康不佳而從科克工業集團(涵蓋石油煉製，肥料，以及家庭用品生產)管理層中退下。

大衛一直對於藝術，尤其是芭蕾舞藝術提供贊助，也捐款給紐約的林肯中心，以及紀念斯隆-凱特琳癌症中心醫院。

他在1980年以自由主義派的候選人身份參與副總統競選，主張刪除相當數量的聯邦政府機構。

根據富比士雜誌的估計，他的財富有美金42.4億(合英鎊24.7億)。

大衛科克過世的消息經由查理斯科克的聲明證實，查理斯說大衛在27年前即被檢查出有攝護腺癌，而且只能存活幾年。

查理斯表示“大衛提起他擁有幾位卓越的醫生團隊，高超的療程，還有自己的韌性，讓癌症被壓制住”，查理斯接著表示，大衛就是在那些年裏，娶了茱莉亞·佛萊絲，兩人育有三名子女。

查理斯進一步描述大衛擁有“高超的人格，嚮往生活的熱忱”，還有他“擁有的事業轉向慈善捐贈給醫院，癌症研究，教育，以及藝術事業”

“促使美國共和黨向右靠傾”

BBC美國白宮記者 塔拉·麥克維的分析報告

大衛·科克在堪薩斯州的威奇托出生，他曾說過“他媽的，從堪薩斯出身的每一個人都是共和黨人”。

事實上，在堪薩斯州，有不少民主黨人。但是他在這一論點是對的 - 保守主義滲入整個州裏面。在堪薩斯州，人們相信個人精神，自由貿易，自由市場 - 而且喜歡和華盛頓搞對頭。

作為一個自由主義派人士，大衛·科克透過他的鼓吹右派主義的機構如“繁榮美國”把他的經濟信念推高到全國性的境界。

在過去的幾十年裏面，他協助重新塑造美國的保守主義，推動共和黨右傾，激發如茶黨運動的領袖去協助，最後終於把川普送進了白宮。

作為一名富人，他同時投資科學(讓美國自然史博物館裏面的一個關於恐龍的單位以他命名)，還有投資於自由主義(堪薩斯自產的經濟理念)。大衛·科克在美國的保守思想裏面有深遠的影響。

由查理斯及大衛創立的公司是美國第二大的私人企業，他們的投資涵蓋油管運輸線到擦手紙巾製造。

根據科克工業集團的網站顯示，他們在整個事業以及分支機構擁有超過12萬名員工。

他們之前提供金錢贊助給一些組織，來否認氣候變遷的存在，還有攻擊工會，攻擊工人權利。

科克兄弟在政治上的影響力，讓他們被許多左傾人士視為惡魔。

但是科克兄弟也致力推動犯罪司法改革，也贊助大筆金錢贊助給美國公民權利聯盟。