

## INTRODUCTION

MR. HARRIS: Good morning. I'm Fred Harris, a professor of political science at the University of New Mexico, chairman of the board of trustees of the Milton S. Eisenhower foundation, which is the private sector follow-on, the keeper of the flame of the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, the Kerner commission on which I served.

And the Milton S. Eisenhower commission, the Violence commission, on whose staff Alan Curtis served, among others.

And we are, today on the 75th anniversary of the birth of Monsignor Geno Baroni, we are sponsoring -- the Eisenhower foundation is -- this conference, or seminar, on as it's called a "public morality framework for American policy and conventional wisdom." We appreciate all of you coming, and our participants in this first as well.

Now I'd like to call on Dr. Curtis, Dr. Alan Curtis, who's the president of the Eisenhower foundation, to welcome you.

MR. CURTIS: Thank you, Fred. Good morning, everyone.

As Fred said, the Foundation is a continuation of the Kerner Antiviolence commissions of the late 1960s. And the violence commission concluded, among other things, that most great empires have declined not so much from external threat but from internal decay.

Father Geno Charles Baroni, the late Father Baroni, who would have been 75 years old today, and who was Assistant Secretary for Neighborhood Development at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in the late seventies, was a constant force against that internal decay of America.

And this forum really is on Geno Baroni's legacy, and how it applies to America's problems today. Geno said that every budget is a moral budget. He said that every social and economic program is a moral program. And so we are going to examine in this conference the meaning of public morality, and how public morality might become a free work for a sensing policy, at a time when poverty has increased four years in a row. At a time when school segregation continues to increase. At a time when inequality is increasing. At a time when we look at what's happening in New Orleans. At a time when America is repeating the mistakes of the British and French empires in the middle east.

Geno Baroni was also a coalition builder, a bridge builder. He especially was known in the late seventies for creating coalitions among ethnic minority groups; Irish, Italians, and Poles, among others, and minority populations; African-American, Latinos, among others.

Those coalitions that Geno was so successful at building up were blasted apart in the racial politics of the 1980s. And in today's world, with so many divisions in Washington, so many divisions around the globe, there's a great need to get back to coalition-building, and so we have asked our speakers to think about how that can be done.

Father Baroni founded both secular and faith-based nonprofit organizations, to work in the inner cities, to develop neighborhoods and communities. Today, there's a great deal of discussion about faith-based. It's a fashionable term. We still don't really know that much about what it means, and we still don't know that much about the relative

effectiveness of faith-based organizations versus secular organizations. And so at these meetings, were going to address that issue, as well.

I've just touched on just a few of the facets of Geno Baroni, the public morality issue, the coalition-building, the faith-based versus secular issue. But there was so much more about this complicated man, so many other facets of his personality and of his interests, and his strategies, and of his goals. And we've encouraged our panelists to be creative in picking their own frameworks and their own perspectives on this great man.

There's a lot more to say. You can get a lot more background by going to [EisenhowerFoundation.org](http://EisenhowerFoundation.org). There's a lot more to say about the personality of Geno Baroni. Larry O'Rourke, his biographer, will do that. So, I will just conclude by saying, "Happy birthday, Geno. We all love you."