

# Marvin Goodfriend, Trump Nominee to the Federal Reserve, Dies at 69

By [Jeanna Smialek](#) Dec. 8, 2019

He was a conservative monetary economist and a Carnegie Mellon professor who took on policy roles. His nomination lapsed after he failed to win Senate support.



Marvin Goodfriend at the Senate Banking Committee hearing on his nomination to the Federal Reserve Board in January 2018. Jacquelyn Martin/Associated Press

Marvin Goodfriend, a leading conservative monetary economist and former nominee to the Federal Reserve Board, died on Thursday at his home in Pittsburgh. He was 69.

The cause was cancer, said Mara McFalls Falk, a spokeswoman for Carnegie Mellon University, where Professor Goodfriend taught economics. She said the cancer had recurred after being successfully treated in 2017.

Professor Goodfriend was an expert on central banking and monetary economics and had often been critical of the Fed's actions since the 2008 financial crisis. President Trump nominated him to the Fed's Board of Governors in [November 2017](#), but his nomination failed to win support among Democrats. And when Senator Rand Paul, a Kentucky Republican who is a longtime Fed critic, said he would not support Professor Goodfriend, the nomination was put on shaky ground. It eventually lapsed without a full Senate vote.

"I think it's very sad that he was a victim of the political discord in Washington," said Mark Gertler, an economist at New York University.

The seat Professor Goodfriend would have occupied is one of two on the central bank's seven-member board that remain vacant.

Even without confirmation, he had a wide impact in economics and monetary policy. He had been teaching at Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business since 2005. He spent 25 years before that working as an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, including as director of research.

"Marvin was an academic firmly grounded in the big, policy-relevant questions that needed to be answered," said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University who researched monetary policy in China with Professor Goodfriend.

Professor Goodfriend was a leading academic proponent of the view that the Fed should focus more intently on controlling prices, a popular position among some Republicans.

His insights were often applied directly to policy. He had stints as a visiting

scholar at various global monetary authorities, including the Bank of Japan and the European Central Bank. From 1984 to 1985 he was a senior staff economist for President Ronald Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers.

“He really excelled at bridging the divide between rigorous academic economics and policy-setting,” said Jeffrey Lacker, a former president of the Richmond Fed, who worked with Professor Goodfriend when both were on the staff there.

His research also helped to fundamentally shift the way academics understood central banking, Professor Gertler said. While macroeconomists had long focused on money supply, for instance, Professor Goodfriend pointed out that interest rates had been central to economic policy during Paul Volcker's tenure as chairman of the Fed. ([Mr. Volcker died on Monday.](#))

“He was an original thinker,” Professor Gertler said.

Professor Goodfriend made a case that central bank secrecy [could have benefits as well as drawbacks](#), and he did extensive research into [negative interest rates](#).

In the wake of the 2007-9 recession, he took a position that was outside the consensus [in warning](#) that the Fed might be courting high inflation with its monetary policies. Speaking to [House lawmakers](#) in 2017, he questioned the credibility of the Fed's inflation-targeting approach.

But Professor Goodfriend was ultimately loyal to the institution and its mission, Professor Gertler said. He was [a member](#) of the Shadow Open Market Committee, an independent group of influential academics who evaluated the policy choices and actions of the Fed's policy-setting committee.

“He has always been someone who wants to follow the idea he has — even if it's controversial,” his wife, Marsha Stroh Goodfriend, said. The two met

while working at the Richmond Fed 41 years ago and dated for nearly four decades before marrying in 2017, she said.

“Marvin was a big believer in public service,” she said.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his sister, Miriam Rapaport, and a stepson, William Shuler.

Marvin Seth Goodfriend was born on Nov. 6, 1950, in New York City to Dr. Sanford Goodfriend and Claire Baum. He grew up in New Rochelle, N.Y., and received a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Union College [in 1972](#) and a Ph.D. in economics from Brown University in 1980.

In between earning his two degrees, he spent time in Los Angeles playing in a [rock ’n’ roll](#) band, his wife said. He remained an avid jazz guitarist, she said, always on the lookout for someone with whom he could play alongside.

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