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## [William F. Buckley Jr. dies](#) [3]

William F. Buckley Jr., widely considered to be the father of the modern conservative movement, died on February 27, 2008, at the age of 82 in Stamford, Connecticut, according to *The New York Times's* [obituary](#) [4] (February 27, 2008). Born in New York City in 1925, Buckley served in the Army from 1944 to 1946 before entering Yale University, from which he graduated in 1950. In 1955, Buckley founded the magazine *National Review*, which helped to define the conservative movement. In 1965, he ran for mayor of New York City on the Conservative Party ticket, winning 13.4% of the vote. The next year, he began to host the public affairs program *Firing Line*, airing first on WOR-TV and later on PBS; the program ran for thirty-three years and 1504 episodes. A prolific author, Buckley was first famous for his 1951 indictment of Yale's faculty, *God and Man at Yale*, and his 1954 coauthored defense of Senator Joseph McCarthy, *McCarthy and His Enemies*; among his other books are a string of spy novels featuring CIA agent Blackford Oakes. Buckley also wrote copiously for *National Review* and in his syndicated column "On the Right." He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1991.

With respect to the creationism/evolution controversy, Buckley will be best remembered for his participation in a 1997 *Firing Line* [debate](#) [5] with the title "Resolved: The Evolutionists Should Acknowledge Creation," conducted at Seton Hall University in South Hall, New Jersey, on December 4, 1997, and moderated by Michael Kinsley. Buckley joined Phillip E. Johnson, Michael J. Behe, and David Berlinski in arguing for the affirmative, while Kenneth R. Miller, Michael Ruse, NCSE's executive director Eugenie C. Scott, and Barry Lynn argued for the negative. In his opening statement, Buckley retreated from the debate's title, saying, "Not everyone on the affirmative side embraces creation. What we contend is that everyone should acknowledge creation as an alternative explanation for cosmic and biological happenings now thought by so many as naturalist in providence and momentum," but continued, "my colleagues and I judge that the evidence for the naturalist theory of evolution is not merely insubstantial, it is fanciful." As the debate proceeded, however, it remained unclear what

Buckley's objections to evolution were and what indeed he thought evolution was; both Ruse and Lynn were unsuccessful in attempting to elicit a clear explanation from him.

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