

Parents Advocating School Accountability,
San Francisco
www.pasasf.org

Re: Possible Edison Schools savior's controversial ultra-right history

Roger Milliken, the 87-year-old textile mogul who has been reported as the possible savior who may provide beleaguered Edison Schools Inc. with enough funding to keep going for a few months, has a controversial history that includes John Birch membership, a virulent union-buster reputation and accusations by the Wall Street Journal of holding meetings where participants engaged in "anti-Mexican banter." He also reportedly banned Xerox copiers from his offices after the company sponsored a civil rights documentary.

Milliken has reportedly been a major contributor to Pat Buchanan and Newt Gingrich and a funder of a furtive, now-defunct private domestic intelligence agency, the Western Goals Foundation.

A series of excerpts and links follows. PASA has not confirmed them independently.

-- The largest source of Buchanan campaign funding, however, comes from the Greenville-Spartanburg- Anderson, South Carolina area, specifically from textile corporation Millikin and Co. FEC figures show that as of June 1, employees of the company, Buchanan's top contributor, had given him \$54,500. The family of owner Roger Millikin, labor-foe and longtime member of the ultra-conservative John Birch Society, had given Buchanan an additional \$18,700.

<http://www.opensecrets.org/newsletter/ce72/06thirdparties.asp>

-- The New Republic describes Milliken as "a man who once banned Xerox copiers from his offices because the company sponsored a documentary about civil rights."

-- The same article cites the Wall Street Journal on xenophobia and Latino jokes:

During the 1993 NAFTA battle, for instance, Nash organized the anti-NAFTA strategy sessions known as the "No-name Group," which included a Nader representative, congressional aides from the right and the left, and others fighting the legislation. The Wall Street Journal described the meetings as sometimes "xenophobic" gatherings where imported wine was banned and anti-Mexican banter was not unusual.

<http://www.thenewrepublic.com/011000/lizza011000.html>

-- Milliken's support for Newt Gingrich:

<http://hotwired.lycos.com/netizen/96/22/index2a.html>

-- Mother Jones on Milliken (1996)
Cotton King: Roger Milliken (#215)

Milliken envisions a Republican South and protection from foreign textile manufacturers

Roger Milliken: 80, Spartanburg, S.C. \$73,000. Party: R

By Amy Burke

A lifelong Republican, Roger Milliken was a charter contributor to Newt Gingrich's GOPAC, giving the political action committee \$255,000 from the mid-1980s to 1993. (His brother, Gerrish, donated an additional \$90,000.) Milliken also gave \$15,400 to Gingrich's campaign committee. According to John Nash, Milliken's Washington counsel, Milliken made the donations because he wanted "to build the Republican Party" and "make the Southern states Republican."

But Milliken also gave for practical reasons. As the head of Milliken & Co., a South Carolina-based textile giant, his primary goal was to obtain as much protection for his textiles as possible. Not surprisingly, he opposed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Although Gingrich ultimately backed his party's stand on GATT and NAFTA, he joined Milliken in urging Congress to establish quotas on textiles. (Gingrich also helped his sponsor by devoting 20 minutes of an Oct. 16, 1993 seminar, titled "Commitment to Quality," to Milliken & Co., and by showing an "educational" tape about the company during his televised college course.)

-- Not long after Congress approved NAFTA and GATT, however, Milliken began looking elsewhere for someone who'd support his views on trade. By 1993, according to a GOPAC spokesperson, he had stopped giving to GOPAC. (Nash denies a link, but acknowledges that "we've always been disappointed with the Republicans on this issue.")

In 1992, Milliken began funding Ross Perot, who shares his protectionist views. But in 1995, Milliken found an even more appealing politico: Pat Buchanan, who, Nash says, "is a traditional conservative like Mr. Milliken."

http://www.motherjones.com/congress/96mojo_400/milliken.html

More from Mother Jones:

At first glance, Pat Buchanan's campaign looks like the polar opposite of Forbes'. But it, too, reflected the preoccupations of one superdonor, Roger Milliken. The textile magnate -- an opponent of NAFTA, U.S. trade policy with China, and unions -- reportedly contributed at least \$250,000 to The American Cause, the nonprofit controlled by Buchanan and his sister before Buchanan entered the race. Milliken also reportedly donated almost \$2 million to the Coalition for the American Cause, which lobbied on trade issues and appears to have had close ties to The American Cause. He also contributed to Buchanan's campaign, along with some rather small textile companies and a couple of sizable chemical concerns.

http://www.mothejones.com/mother_jones/ND96/ferguson2_jump.html

More from Mother Jones:

Roger Milliken and family have reportedly given \$25,900 to Gingrich campaigns between 1985 and 1992 (Roll Call, 4/28/94).

Gingrich, a known free-trader, was instrumental last fall in delaying the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which Milliken strongly opposed.

While he eventually favored both GATT and the North American Free Trade Agreement, Gingrich supported a Milliken-favored bill in 1990 to limit imports of textiles, apparel, and shoes by imposing a global quota. The legislation was approved by Congress, but vetoed by then-President George Bush.

Gingrich devoted more than 20 minutes to Roger Milliken and Milliken Co. in an Oct. 16, 1993 seminar on "Commitment to Quality," never mentioning that both GOPAC and his campaign had received Milliken funds (Roll Call, 9/15/94).

During a college lecture last year Gingrich played a 3-minute videotape on Milliken & Co. which announced, "In carpeting, Milliken offers its customers a choice of over 1,000 colors and patterns in almost any lot size with a delivery schedule of just seven days." The course has been available on cable television to upwards of 26 million homes nationwide (Washington Post, 3/20/95).

-- Information on a Milliken beneficiary, the Western Goals Foundation:

The Western Goals Foundation was a private domestic intelligence agency which was founded by former Congressman Larry McDonald in 1979. (8) Prior to its dissolution, it was a nonmembership, nonpartisan organization which conducted educational outreach in addition to its intelligence activities. According to Western Goals, the group's objective was to "rebuild and strengthen the political, economic, and social structure of the U. S. and Western Civilization so as to make any merger with the totalitarian world impossible. "(11) As part of this effort, the group was formed in order to "fill the critical gap caused by the crippling of the FBI, the disabling of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC) and the destruction of crucial government files. "(8)

http://www.publiceye.org/research/Group_Watch/Entries-131.htm