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French & American Leaders

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# In Memory of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

December 3, 2020

We are saddened to hear of the passing of former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. He was a key architect of European integration in the early 1970s and served as France's leader from 1974 to 1981.

President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing worked passionately to strengthen the French-American partnership and advance dialogue between both countries, and was a founding patron of the Foundation forty-four years ago. At a State Dinner on May 18, 1976, a toast to the creation of two sister Foundations in France and the United States was made between President d'Estaing and President Gerald Ford. For many years thereafter, President d'Estaing would go on to encourage the exchange of best practices from both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1981, his vision for the Young Leaders program grew to become the Foundation's flagship initiative. This worthy undertaking aimed at establishing lasting relationships between young French and American experts and thinkers within positions of leadership in their respective countries.

Cherished transatlantic exchanges, collaborations, and friendships have developed over the years by virtue of the Young Leaders program. We are honored to have President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing to thank for leading the French-American Foundation to play a central role in the transatlantic relationship. The current President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, and the US Secretary of State nominee, Tony Blinken, are both former Young Leaders.

The French-American Foundation extends its condolences to the Giscard d'Estaing family and loved ones, and especially to his son Louis, a member of the Executive Committee of the French-American Foundation in Paris.

*Photo credit: Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. President Valéry Giscard D'Estaing in Washington for a State Visit in 1975.*

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