

## 2018 Distinguished Fellow Award

The 2018 HES Distinguished Fellow Award was presented to Israel Kirzner at the recent HES conference at Loyola University, Chicago. Several strong candidates were proposed by the membership this year. The nominating committee, formed by Robert Leonard, Jeff Biddle and Mauro Boianovsky (chair), unanimously agreed that the most deserving of these candidates was Israel Kirzner and recommended to the HES Executive Committee that he should be the recipient of the HES Distinguished Fellow Award in 2018. The nominating letter was submitted by Peter Boettke, together with supporting letters by Bruce Caldwell, Karen Vaughn and Mario Rizzo. Our recommendation resulted from our consideration of several aspects of Kirzner's work and career.

Born in 1930, Kirzner is well known as a leading scholar in the Austrian economic tradition. His work forcefully illustrates how the history of economics can be used as an important heuristic tool to cast light on current economic research. In that sense, Kirzner shares with members (e.g. Stigler, Robbins, Dobb, Viner, Galbraith, Schumpeter, Hayek, Patinkin and Sraffa) of what Craufurd Goodwin used to call the "Golden Age" of the history of economic thought (HET) a commitment to understanding economic problems through the use of HET as an analytical device instead of a separate sub-discipline. As put by Bruce Caldwell, precisely because he works within the Austrian tradition, Kirzner often draws on history to make comparisons between the view he endorses and those he criticizes, and often the criticisms are methodological. This shows especially in his main books *\*The Economic Point of View\** (1960), *\*Essay on Capital\** (1966) and *\*Competition and Entrepreneurship\** (1973).

The highlights of Kirzner's specific contributions to the history of economics are his 1994 edition of *\*Classics in Austrian Economics\** (which includes a number of essential translations) and several essays on Von Mises and particularly Carl Menger. As pointed out by Karen Vaughn, Kirzner has been instrumental not only in explaining Menger's ideas as the founder of Austrian economics, but also in encouraging a revival of interest in his writings. Moreover, as observed by Mario Rizzo, Kirzner is not just a historian of *\*Austrian \*economics* " for instance, in his works on the theories of profit and capital, Kirzner discusses carefully contributions by J.B. Clark, F.B. Hawley, F. Knight, I. Fisher, J. Schumpeter and others.

Kirzner has produced a body of work deeply imbued with a historical-philosophical sensibility. Although our recommendation is, of course, based on his scholarly contributions and not on his political views, it should be noted that Kirzner has shown that it is possible to combine political beliefs and scholarly scruple, and that this has been a source of inspiration for his followers, in whom we see that same attitude perpetuated.

Mauro Boianovsky (chair of the HES 2017-18 Distinguished Fellow Nominating Committee)