

Sic transit gloria mundi: What remains of famous economists after their deaths?

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Abstract

Can famous economics scholars extend their prominence to the time after their deaths? This question is analyzed for the period 1925–2018 for Nobel Prize laureates. We find that Nobel Prize winners who die prematurely are more likely to experience a marked reduction of attention from their peers, as measured by citations. In contrast, death does not produce this effect for famous economists dying at old age. A few scholars who died prematurely are an exception to the downward trend in attention after death. Such exceptions include Clive Granger, Elinor Ostrom, and to some extent Leonid Kantorovich.