

Arnott (1998, p. 110):

Vickrey, the scholar, is there in print. Vickrey, the man, is far more elusive. Some obituaries portrayed him as a cross between Albert Einstein and the Nutty Professor. He *was* brilliant, eccentric, and other-worldly. But he was no buffoon. He was a moral philosopher, deeply committed to the beneficial application of economics, whose eccentricities derived from a lack of concern for external appearances and material acquisition. He traveled alone above the fray with dignity. Despite his moral seriousness, he was gentle, kind, tolerant, and consistently good-natured. He was also remarkably good company, providing bonhomie and stimulating conversation which mixed wit, anecdote, erudition, trenchant observation, brilliant insight, and quirky ideas. Much of his charm came from his almost child-like innocence and optimism. Despite his disappointment that few of his policy proposals received serious attention, he never succumbed to bitterness or cynicism and to the end kept the faith that policies derived from benevolence and clear thinking would ultimately prevail. What were the roots of this faith? He was an active Quaker and a conscientious objector in World War II. Much more than this, however, we shall probably never know for he was an intensely private man.

Reference: Arnott, Richard. 1998. William Vickrey: Contributions to public policy. *International Tax and Public Finance* 5: 93–113.