

# 99% Wall Street protesters boo CEOs, but mourn Steve Jobs

**99% Wall Street protesters took time out to mourn the passing of billionaire Steve Jobs. Is 99% Wall Street movement inconsistent?**

By Schuyler Velasco, October 6, 2011



Activists stand in place to form a "99%," part of Occupy DC activities at Freedom Plaza in Washington, Oct. 6, 2011.

Some 99% Wall Street protesters mourned Steve Jobs, even though he had headed up a multibillion-dollar corporation.

Jacquelyn Martin/AP

They protest corporate greed and income inequality. They've highlighted so often how the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans have so much political influence that their rallying cry, written on signboards, has become "We are the 99%."

But just as the 99% Wall Street protesters – or Occupy Wall Street movement – was gaining momentum and attention across the United States, some of its participants took time out to mourn the passing of one of the wealthiest corporate icons of them all: Steve Jobs, worth an estimated \$7 billion, former CEO of Apple, the world's No. 2 most valuable corporation.

"Sad to announce the death of Steve Jobs," a Twitter account called @OPWallStreet tweeted Wednesday night, not long after Mr. Jobs's death was announced. "Much of Occupy Wall Street and the tech community respect you & will miss you."

"#OccupyWallStreet. RIP to a creative genius who helped make ALL these movements possible," tweeted @alphaleah.

So what gives? Do Jobs and Apple not count as part of America's corporate elite?

"Steve Jobs and Apple are complicated," says R. Luke Dubois, a professor of integrated digital media at the Polytechnic Institute of New York University in New York. "On one side, people are railing against corporate greed, and they're doing it on iPads from a company that trades at \$400 per share.... But the politics of Steve Jobs has always been to give the customer more tools to do

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what they want: to edit their own movies, make their own projects. And people in the developer community can write their own applications for the iPhone.”

Indeed, the quick spread and loose organizational structure of the “Occupy” movement (in more than 500 cities worldwide and counting) wouldn’t be possible without the products that Jobs made an integral part of everyday life.

“Apple’s technology in terms of being open and sharable was very well-timed in terms of social media, like Facebook and Twitter,” says Karen Sobel-Lojeski, a professor of technology and society at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, N.Y.

“Apple revolutionized the idea that your computing practice is constantly networked,” Dr. DuBois says. “If you have a smartphone, you can communicate with a lot more people with more ease, and that idea that the computer is this thing you can carry around with you in your everyday life is really core to that movement.... Apple has been super successful with allowing people to do that.”

Some detractors of the movement highlighted the irony.

“LOL at “**Occupy** Wall Street” protesters who tweet ‘RIP **Steve Jobs**’ from their smartphones,” tweeted @Kasloco, echoing the sentiments of many.

Some supporters complained that Jobs’s passing was stealing attention away from their own protests.

But, by and large, people didn’t see full-hearted support of Occupy Wall Street and the mourning of the billionaire head of a giant corporation as mutually exclusive, perhaps because of his public image.

“Jobs was such a beloved person in comparison with someone like Bill Gates because his passion for people, and having fun, and making lives better always came through in his products and message. That’s rare among billionaires, says Dr. Sobel-Lojeski.

“His personal narrative suggests he would be very sympathetic to this sort of thing: college dropout, really influenced by ‘60s counterculture,” adds DuBois “Also, the Occupy Wall Street generation are young enough that they haven’t really been without him. He’s this weird, omnipresent, benevolent figure. It’s like losing the pope or something.”