

FROM: Press Office of Senator John F. Kennedy
505 Esso Building
261 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Library Copy

December 1, 1960

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON GOVERNOR G. MENNEN WILLIAMS

Gerhard Mennen Williams, born Detroit, Michigan, February 23, 1911

Education:

Liggett School
Detroit University School
Salisbury School (1929)
Princeton University - AB, Phi Beta Kappa 1933
University of Michigan School of Law - JD 1936

Married Nancy Quirk, June 26, 1937. Three children, Gery, Nancy and Wendy

Honorary Degrees:

Wilberforce University - 1951 - Doctor of Laws
Lawrence Institute of Technology - 1952 - Doctor of Humanities
Michigan State University - 1955 - Doctor of Laws
University of Liberia - 1958 - Doctor of Laws
University of Michigan - 1959 - Doctor of Laws
Aquinas College - 1959 - Doctor of Laws

Government Service:

Attorney, Social Security Board - 1936
Assistant Attorney General, State of Michigan - 1938
Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney General - 1939
Special Assistant U.S. Attorney General - 1940
Deputy Director OPA, Michigan - 1947
Elected Governor of Michigan 1943, inaugurated Governor January 1, 1949
and has served continuously six terms since.

Armed Forces:

Entered U.S. Navy 1942, served as intelligence officer on aircraft carrier in Pacific earning 10 battle stars. Discharged February 1946 with rank of Lt. Commander.

Political Activity:

Credited with providing spark which revitalized Democratic Party in Michigan and turned state from Republican to Democratic.
Vice Chairman of Democratic National Committee and Chairman of its Nationalities Division.
Member of Advisory Council, Democratic National Committee
Since 1960 national convention and Michigan primaries he has campaigned actively throughout Michigan and the United States in behalf of state and national ticket. Both won in Michigan including the reelection of a U.S. Senator, all seven incumbent congressmen, all members of the State Administrative Board and an incumbent Supreme Court Justice.

Projects Participation:

Arranged and financed: Mackinac Island Economic Conference - July 1959
Haven Hill Education Conference - Dec 1959

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Projects Participation (cont)

- Inglis House Conference, Disarmament and Peace - January 1960
- Kellogg Center Health Conference - April 1960
- Co-founder Governors' Conference on Civil Rights
- Chairman, Governors' Conference Committee on Mental Health
- Member, Governors' Conference Committees on Highway Safety, Civil Defense, and Executive Committee

Travel

- 1930 - Russia
- 1931 - Italy, Greece, France, Germany, Poland, Egypt
- 1933 - Italy, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, France and Holland
- 1955 - Israel, France, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Greece
- 1956 - Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico and Puerto Rico
- 1958 - Ghana and Liberia (an official guest of the Liberian government and received Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Liberia)
- 1959 - Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Poland and Switzerland
- 1960 - Brazil and Argentina (government tour)

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FEBRUARY 1, 1961

FOR THE PRESS

NO. 43

G. MENNEN WILLIAMS SWORN IN AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS

G. Mennen Williams, former Governor of Michigan, was sworn in today as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. He succeeds Joseph C. Satterthwaite, who is being reassigned.

Mr. Williams was born in Detroit February 23, 1911, the son of Henry P. and Elma Mennen Williams. He attended the Detroit University School and the Salisbury School of Connecticut, and received the A. B. degree from Princeton University in 1933. He was graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1936.

After two years as an attorney with the Social Security Board in Washington, Mr. Williams in 1938 became Assistant Attorney General for the State of Michigan. The next year he returned to Washington as executive assistant to the U. S. Attorney General, and in 1940-41 was special assistant to the Attorney General, criminal division.

He served as Deputy Director of the Office of Price Administration for Michigan in 1946-47, and as a member of the Michigan Liquor Control Commission in 1947-48. He was elected Governor of Michigan in November, 1948, and was reelected in 1950, 1952, 1954, 1956, and 1958.

Mr. Williams served in the U. S. Naval Reserve from 1942-46, rising from Lieutenant (jg) to Lieutenant Commander. He was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V", and participated in three Presidential Unit Citations. A member of the Detroit, Michigan and Federal Bar Associations, Mr. Williams has been awarded honorary degrees by Lawrence Institute of Technology, Wilberforce University, Michigan State University, University of Liberia, University of Michigan and Aquinas College.

Mr. Williams' appointment as Assistant Secretary was announced by President-elect Kennedy on December 1, 1960.

Mr. Williams is married to the former Nancy Lace Quirk of Ypsilanti. They have one son and two daughters.

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State--RD, Wash., D. C.

