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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ BIOGRAPHY

Soapy: A Biography of G. Mennen Williams

Thomas J. Noer
University of Michigan Press (Sep 11, 2006)
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Singular Soapy: As a six-term Michigan governor, G. Mennen Williams, the scion of the Mennen toiletries empire, used his fortune to build a political career in which he promoted civil rights, education reform, and infrastructure improvements. A strong religious faith and a belief in the inherent goodness of people, however, didn't stop him from waging "some of the dirtiest political campaigns in America."

In *Soapy: A Biography of G. Mennen Williams* (University of Michigan Press, 16 photographs, 419 pages, softcover, $22.95, 978-0-472-03186-3), Thomas J. Noer, author of two books on African affairs and Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Carthage College, offers an engrossing account of this consummate politician/statesman. Williams remained steadfast to Franklin Roosevelt's vision of an expansionist government long after the nation drifted to the right. As Assistant Secretary for African Affairs under President Kennedy, he opposed colonialism and the vestiges of harsh white rule, a stance that endeared him to the indigenous African peoples.

Soapy Williams was a liberal lion and his story—as told in this first complete biography of him—is also the tale of liberalism at its pinnacle.
(August 18, 2009)

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