

The eccentric billionaire: John D. MacArthur-- empire builder, reluctant philanthropist, relentless adversary

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Abstrak

He was hated, feared, and admired. The country's second-richest man at the time of his death, John D. MacArthur (1897-1978) also became one of its great benefactors. Every year, some two dozen American writers, artists, intellectuals, and scientists receive as much as a half million dollars in grants known as the 'genius awards' from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. But MacArthur was not the benevolent figure you might expect. Stingier than J. Paul Getty, as money-obsessed as Howard Hughes, and as ruthless as Cornelius Vanderbilt, MacArthur was one of the most multi-layered men in business history. Now, in this first full biography of John D. MacArthur as he really was, Nancy Kriplen reveals the man behind the myth - the often vulgar, sometimes unethical, always ambitious rogue who would become one of America's wealthiest men. "The Eccentric Billionaire" chronicles how MacArthur amassed his fortune, rising from a poverty-saturated childhood as the son of a fire-and-brimstone preacher to become an insurance and real estate mogul.