

4-1961

Biographical Data - Erwin D. Canham

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Biographical Data

ERWIN D. CANHAM
Editor, Christian Science Monitor

Erwin D. (Dain) Canham, Editor of The Christian Science Monitor, is one of the nation's leading writers, radio commentators and public speakers, and one of the best-known American editors throughout the world.

Known to friends as "Spike", he is a practical idealist with a calm, friendly disposition and a mode of expression that carries scope, fluency and wit.

He has been a first-hand observer at many of the conferences and events which have shaped recent history; a member of international organizations and adviser to many leaders in public life. He holds honorary degrees from 18 colleges and universities. Yet he has a common touch that often causes him to be looked upon as a special friend by less articulate persons who know him largely through his regular weekly radio and television programs. Several years ago rebellious convicts in Boston's old Charlestown Prison asked for him as one of a group to enter a besieged cell block and help end a dangerous revolt.

Mr. Canham was born in Auburn, Maine, February 13, 1904, the son of a part-time farmer and weekly newspaper publisher.

With a printers-ink background he attended Bates College and took part in intercollegiate debates, including the first held in the United States with a team from Oxford. He received his B.A. degree from Bates in 1925, and in that same year became a reporter for the Monitor.

He took a three years leave of absence as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford starting in 1926, and received B.A. and M.A. degrees there. Between college terms he was assistant Monitor correspondent at League of Nations assembly sessions in Geneva. In 1930 he covered the London Naval Conference, and began service as the Monitor's Geneva correspondent; from 1932 to 1939 he was chief of the Monitor's Washington Bureau. Then he went to Boston as general news editor. In 1942 he became managing editor, and in 1945, editor.

Because of his wide contacts and experience, Mr. Canham has been appointed by American presidents to various commissions and boards. In the spring of 1948, Mr. Canham was vice-chairman of the U. S. delegation to the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information at Geneva, and the following year, he was named Alternate American Delegate to the United Nations General Assembly.

He is a member of the United States Advisory Commission on Information; member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (and past president); and member of the National Manpower Council. He is a Fellow (honorary) of Sigma Delta Chi, a professional journalists' fraternity, and a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Delta Sigma Rho, and the Association of American Rhodes Scholars.

In 1959 Mr. Canham was elected President of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. Upon termination of this office in May, 1960, he became Chairman of the Board.

Other affiliations include:

Director of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company
Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
Trustee of the Boston Public Library
Trustee of the Twentieth Century Fund
Trustee of Bates College
Member of Corporation of Simmons College
Member of Massachusetts Historical Society
Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Member of President Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals

Books:

Awakening: The World at Mid-Century, Longman, Green & Co.

1951. (Mr. Canham was assisted in its writing by several staff members of the Monitor);

New Frontiers for Freedom, Longmans, Green & Co., 1954;

Commitment to Freedom, The Story of The Christian Science Monitor, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1958;

Man's Great Future, Longmans, Green & Co., 1959.

(Edited by Mr. Canham - a condensation of material that appeared in the 50th Anniversary edition of the Monitor)

Mr. Canham is moderator of a television program, "Starring the Editors", a Boston newspaper panel appearing Sunday afternoons on WBZ-TV. He broadcasts a weekly analysis of world events over the nation-wide American Broadcasting Company network every Sunday evening. The program is rebroadcast for overseas listeners by shortwave Station WRUL.

Mr. Canham is married to the former Thelma Whitman Hart. They live in Boston. They have two daughters, Mrs. R. Shale Paul, of Alexandria, Va., and Miss Elizabeth, who lives at home.

April 1961