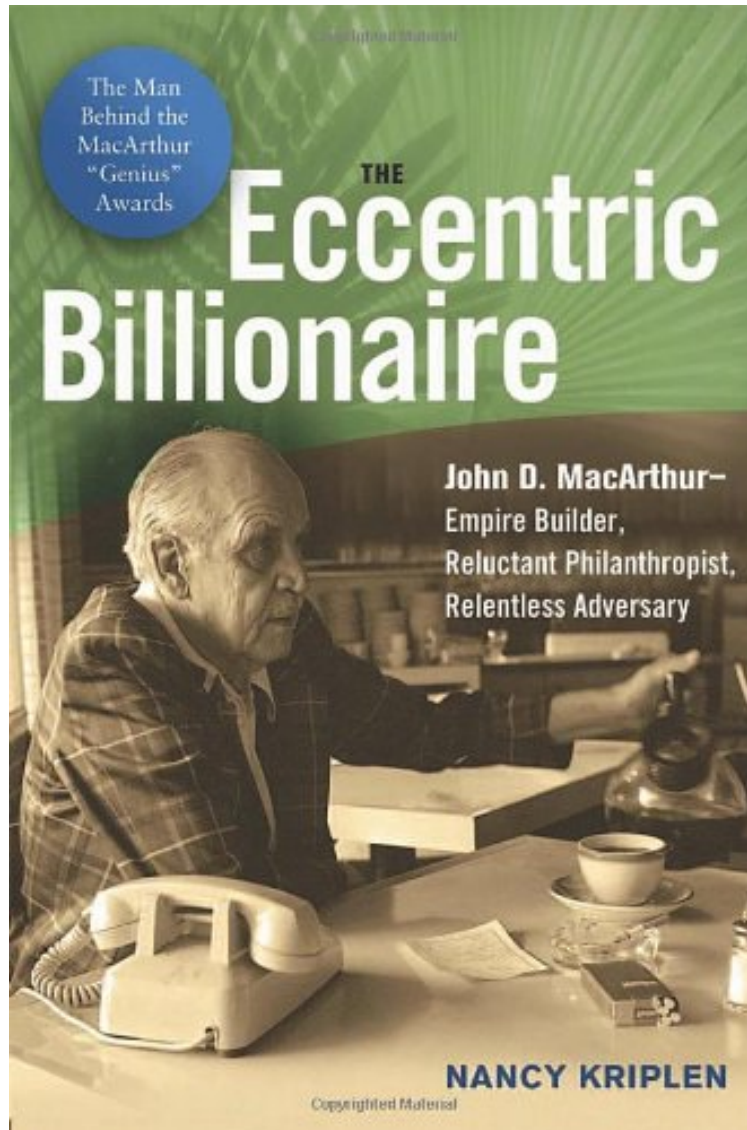


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## The Eccentric Billionaire: John D. MacArthur--Empire Builder, Reluctant Philanthropist, Relentless Adversary

Nancy Kriplen

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Nancy Kriplen : **The Eccentric Billionaire: John D. MacArthur--Empire Builder, Reluctant Philanthropist, Relentless Adversary** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Eccentric Billionaire: John D. MacArthur--Empire Builder, Reluctant Philanthropist, Relentless Adversary:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "Eccentric" is almost an understatementBy A. DolanAn unusual

man, John D. MacArthur. I knew the name, and the foundation, and Genius Award. Most interesting to learn that the foundation was in no way a reflection of the man or his interests. I wonder how he would have fared in today's world? 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five stars for MacArthur Park By Nan Fox I've been visiting MacArthur Park (Florida...) annually since the early '90s, it continues to be a great joy. One of the docents recently suggested we research Mr. MacArthur, so I read Ms. Kriplen's book. Learned that he was a bit of a scoundrel, not pure of heart (most moguls aren't) but we all benefit by his attempt to keep some of his profits/holdings out of the government's hands by donating this land. It occurred to me that maybe there is some benefit to government over-reaching after all! In their attempt to escape the bureaucratic clutches, tycoons turn over their land holdings to local parks, etc. Great and quick read, highly recommend. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Nancy does it again! By Growlerman How many times following a performance on PBS have you seen, "Produced through the generosity of The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation"? I never knew who they were or how he became a billionaire. Now I do, thanks to Nancy Kriplen and her well-written book! Follow MacArthur from Chicago to Palm Beach. Get to know this man, who was extremely frugal throughout his life, and whose legacy now enriches us all.

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. As sole owner of Bankers Life and Casualty, he also built a real estate empire that spanned the continent. Based on interviews with members of the MacArthur family as well as previously undiscovered letters and papers, this book reveals MacArthur's tumultuous private life, including his quickie divorce from his first wife and his Mexican marriage to Catherine, his brother's cute, clever teenage secretary who would help him on his climb to riches. The author also explores MacArthur's relationships with his family and friends, including his brother, the playwright Charles MacArthur, and sister-in-law, the great actress Helen Hayes. Extensively researched and beautifully written, "The Eccentric Billionaire" is a revealing look at a man whose influence has extended in ways he never dreamed.

From Publishers Weekly Starting with a bankrupt company in the depths of the Great Depression, John D. MacArthur and his wife, Catherine, built the hugely successful Bankers Life and Casualty through innovative policy design, aggressive sales and marketing, shrewd acquisitions, unconventional management and frequent battles with regulators to become pioneers in marketing health and long-term care insurance to lower-middle-class and elderly people. Beginning in the mid-1950s the MacArthurs met equal success in real estate development. As one of the world's first billionaires, John created the MacArthur Foundation, most famous for its genius awards. Journalist Kriplen's biography overlooks the business innovations for which the MacArthurs are known to place them in the context of their personal extended families. At its best describing John's relations and business associates, Kriplen's volume offers deft though shallow profiles of many individuals without losing the main story. The book will be of interest to readers already familiar with the MacArthurs' business savvy who yearn for gleanings into their personal background, and do not expect a tell-all. (Jan.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "In *The Eccentric Billionaire*, former Time business researcher Nancy Kriplen offers an incisive warts-and-all account of the business and personal life of John D. MacArthur." -- Fort Worth Star-Telegram "...a straightforward description of the sometimes difficult, always shrewd billionaire." -- Palm Beach Post "[A] lively biography.... She knows how to spin a yarn and never bogs down in details." -- Bloomberg News