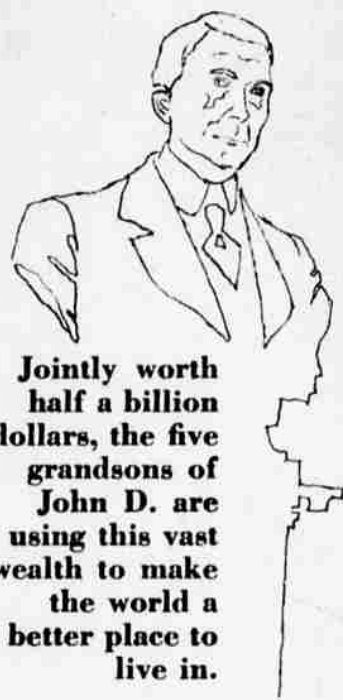




Jointly worth half a billion dollars, the five grandsons of John D. are using this vast wealth to make the world a better place to live in.

Photo by Philippe Halsman

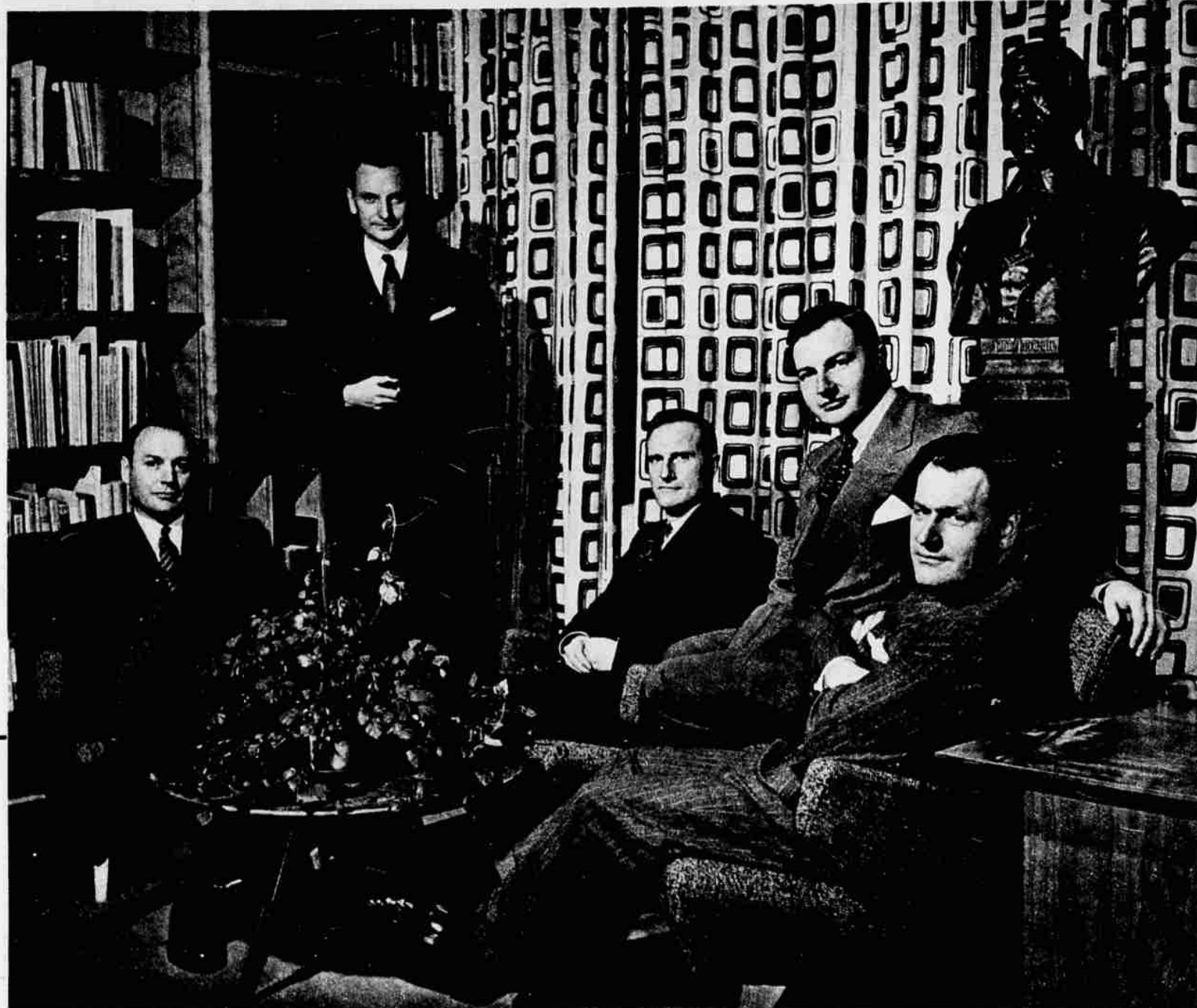
by Theodore Irwin

UP ON THE 56th floor of the Rockefeller Center's main edifice, the square-jawed, broad-shouldered, hyper-energetic millionaire gazed thoughtfully out the window of his small, ultramodern office at the New York panorama spread out below.

"I'm completely unconscious of being a Rockefeller," he said to me. "People may think we're different, but my brothers and I maintain that we're all human beings."

That remark, as I chatted the other day with Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller, struck me as the key to the riddle of the most extraordinary brothers of their generation. Born under a silver sword, the five grandsons—John D., 3rd, Nelson, Winthrop, Laurance, and David—of the world's first billionaire, once considered a money-making ogre, have emerged from under the shadow of their family name to stand on their own feet as citizens dedicated to the social good.

Instead of dissipating their wealth as play boys, the high-minded, third-generation Rockefellers have extended their personal power into almost every facet of life—cultural, scientific, religious, economic, and political. They've sponsored scores of projects ranging from neighborhood improvement to alcoholism, educational testing, and peaceful atomic development.



To pool their thinking, which often goes in five directions at once, Rockefeller brothers meet monthly in their New York headquarters. This unusual photo of the five men together shows (l. to r.) Winthrop, 45, Laurance, 47, John, 52, David, 42, and Nelson, 50.

"The responsibilities of wealth are more important than ever," Nelson told me. "As individuals with a tremendous opportunity, my brothers and I exercise our initiative in assuming those special responsibilities to make an original contribution. That, we feel, should be the stewardship of wealth today."

The remarkable diversity of the Rockefeller team's achievements was recently demonstrated by their far-reaching, half-million-dollar Special Studies project. Exploring the problems and opportunities confronting this country in the next 10-15 years, it develops objectives and concepts based on our heritage. To apply the nation's best brains to these problems, the Rockefeller boys recruited 250 leading authorities in all fields.

The first trail-blazing report last January, on military security, proposed basic changes which promptly became sig-

nificant parts of the Eisenhower-McElroy plan for Pentagon reorganization. The second report in April dealt with the current recession and offered such recommendations as tax reforms and stepping up public works. Early in June, the Rockefeller study on international economic policy pointed to the changing world scene and our need to evolve new ideas. A few weeks later came the penetrating analysis of education and manpower, stressing the full development of individual capacities and the roles of parents and the church in shaping a child's character. This Fall, the project will issue roundup reports on "The Democratic Process" and "U. S. International Objectives."

These studies, the Rockefeller quintet believes, represent the essence of democracy. They feel that every citizen is concerned with the magnitude of our problems, anxious to get the facts interpreted so that

they can intelligently exercise their own judgment.

"People want to participate and understand and have a position on issues," says Nelson, who originally sparked the project because he felt America was drifting. "Our studies try to provide the conceptual frameworks they need. If my brothers and I can thus help in some measure, the effort will be justified."

Such idealism is common to all five of the Rockefellers. But beyond this, the family name, and a boundless energy, all similarity ends. Their personalities are so different that probably no one could identify them in a crowd as brothers. Each is a distinct individualist, with ideas and interests of his own. Each went to a different college—Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth—except John and Laurance, who chose Princeton.

John D., 3rd, at 52 the most conservative and gentlest, is tall, slender, pipe-smoking, and

withdrawn, works quietly and prefers others to take public credit for his accomplishments. In contrast, Nelson, 50, is wavy-haired, boyish-looking, an athletic extrovert with a buoyant, persuasive manner; most ambitious member of the clan, he has the common touch and likes dealing with people.

Laurance, the third eldest (he's 47) is lank and sharp-featured, the shrewdest of the brothers, with the most business acumen. He's a bold, hard-driving entrepreneur, an urbane intellectual sophisticate who calls himself "Bill" because he considers Laurance a "sissy" name. Winthrop is a handsome, hearty, 45-year-old giant, gregarious and convivial, who used to frequent cafe society and once teamed up with actress Mary Martin to win a dance contest. The youngest brother, David, is 42, an affable, moon-faced scholar who received his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago.