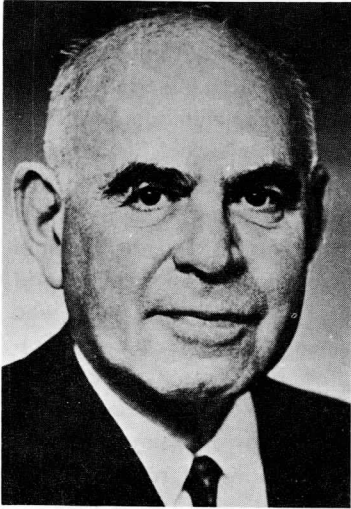


# HERBERT H. LEHMAN



## PROFILE

by MICHAEL FAIELLA—Hunter in the Bronx '68

On Herbert H. Lehman's 85th birthday, Paul H. Douglas called him "the best man I have ever known in political life and the noblest Senator of my generation." These words of praise, echoing the gratitude of the nation and the world, tell only half the story, however. Herbert Lehman's service to mankind, in both public and private life, spanned more than 60 years, years crowded with humanitarian activities.

Herbert Lehman was born of financially secure German immigrant parents in New York City in 1878. When, as a child, he took walks through New York's lower East Side with his father, he was horrified by the misery and squalor he saw there. Those sights so affected him that, upon graduating from Williams College in 1899, he joined the Henry Street Settlement, where as a volunteer he conducted a boys' club.

After working for several years with a textile manufacturing firm, Herbert Lehman became a partner in his family's banking house, Lehman Brothers. He had already joined a local Democratic club, and in 1910 he was a delegate to the Democratic state convention. In the same year he married Edith Altschul.

When World War I broke out in Europe, Herbert Lehman helped organize the Joint Distribution Committee for the relief of Jews in Europe. Upon America's entrance into the war, he became the Assistant Director of Purchase, Storage and Traffic of the U.S. Army. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, and rose from the rank of captain to colonel.

After the war he worked for various relief organizations while continuing his business and political life. In 1928 he was elected lieutenant-governor; and as Governor Roosevelt's "strong right arm" he led the fight to improve New York's hospitals for the mentally ill.

In 1932 Herbert Lehman was elected to the first of four successive terms as governor of New York. For the next ten years he strove ceaselessly to establish progressive programs in the state. During his administration an unemployment insurance fund was begun, an eight-hour workday for public employees was adopted, programs under Social Security were expanded, women earned the right to serve on juries, the first state public housing law was enacted and legislation was passed prohibiting discrimination. When he left office in 1942, there was a surplus in the state treasury.

Prior to World War II, Governor Lehman had helped refugees from Nazism with his own money and was an ardent interventionist. In 1942, at the request of President Roosevelt, he became head of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations in the State Department. From 1943 to 1946 he was director-general of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which spent billions of dollars helping relieve human misery in war-devastated countries.

In 1949, at the age of 71, Herbert Lehman was elected to the United States Senate. Until he retired in 1956 he was a tireless and fearless fighter for progressive causes. His opposition to Senator Joseph McCarthy, and his championing of the causes of civil rights, fair immigration laws, public housing and the United Nations made him widely known as the "conscience of the Senate."

Herbert Lehman served as a trustee of countless philanthropic and educational organizations, including the N.A.A.C.P., the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton and the Fund for the Republic. Probably the most famous instance of his well-known generosity was his gift of the Children's Zoo in Central Park.

He received more than 20 honorary degrees from American universities, and on the day of his death, December 5, 1963, he was to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom on which is inscribed: "Citizen and Statesman, he has used wisdom and compassion as the tools of government and has made politics the highest form of public service."

When Arthur Schlesinger came to Hunter College in the Bronx in December, 1967, to speak about Herbert Lehman, he said, "May we all take heart from his example and achievement. The problems of the moment no doubt seem towering and grave. But this country has met terrible problems before. There is no need for despair. 'I steer my bark,' said Jefferson, 'with Hope in the head, leaving Fear astern.' So Herbert Lehman steered his bark and so, I am sure, Lehman College will make its way through the storms and shoals of the future."

We are proud to bear the name Herbert H. Lehman College.