

Distinguished Service: The Life of Wisconsin Governor Walter J. Kohler, Jr.

Thomas C. Reeves

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Distinguished Service: The Life of Wisconsin Governor Walter J. Kohler, Jr. Thomas C. Reeves Walter J. Kohler, Jr. was one of Wisconsin's best governors. Elected three times, he played a role in the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower to the presidency in 1952 and was known to be an administration favorite. Kohler's challenge was to unite moderate Republicans, who backed Ike, with a Far Right that fervently supported Senator Joe McCarthy. His inability to please both wings of the Republican Party eventually cost him an election race for the United States Senate. In 1957 he was unexpectedly defeated by William Proxmire, a long-time Democratic Party rival and indefatigable campaigner. But Kohler was more than a politician. His biography involves the highly unusual story of the Kohler Company in Wisconsin, site, at the same time, of one of the most enlightened managerial policies ever attempted and the longest labor dispute in American history. Kohler's story sheds light on the life and times of the upper class in the 1920s and 1930s, reveals his heroic role in the Second World War, and provides path breaking insight into his talent for effective and prosperous business activity. A very private man with several secrets, Kohler said little about his past. Now, for the first time, we have the definitive biography, based in part on hitherto closed family documents, photos, and interviews with friends and acquaintances. It is a book that should find a large audience of serious readers.



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