

KENNEDY Volume]
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XON Volume]

[MLL]

L.B. Jones

RANKIN, J(AMES) LEE

b. July 8, 1907; Hartington, Neb.
General Counsel, President's Commis-
sion to Investigate the Assassination of
President Kennedy (Warren Commis-
sion), December 1963-September 1964;
New York City Corporation Counsel,
January, 1966-June 1972.

Rankin received a law degree in 1930
from the University of Nebraska and then
joined a law firm in Lincoln, Neb., becom-
ing a partner in 1935. A Republican, he
managed Thomas E. Dewey's presidential
campaign in Nebraska in 1948 and headed a
state committee for Eisenhower in 1952.
From 1953 to 1956 Rankin served as assis-
tant attorney general in charge of the Jus-
tice Department's Office of Legal Counsel.
He was named solicitor general in August
1956 and over the next few years argued
important cases before the Supreme Court
involving membership in the Communist
Party and school desegregation in Little
Rock, Ark. When a Democratic administra-
tion took over in January 1961, Rankin en-
tered private practice in New York City.
[See EISENHOWER Volume]

In December 1963 Rankin was unanim-
ously selected by members of the Warren
Commission, investigating the assassination
of John F. Kennedy, as its general counsel.
Sworn in on Dec. 16, Rankin supervised
the investigation and the writing of the
Commission's final report. He assembled
much of the panel's staff, examined and
acted as the liaison between the Commis-
sion and other government agencies and
between Commission members and the
staff. The Warren Commission's report,
made public on Sept. 27, 1964, concluded
that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, had
killed President Kennedy. The report was
well received at the time, although many of
the Commission's findings were disputed
over the next decade by a series of new as-
sassination theories. Until the mid-1970s
the government made no move to reopen
the investigation. Then, in the wake of dis-
closures that the Central Intelligence
Agency (CIA) and FBI had kept certain in-
formation from the Commission, particu-

*From the
Commission*

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larly knowledge of CIA plots to assassinate
Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, several
senators began restudying the Kennedy as-
sassination, and there were calls for a new
investigation.

On Dec. 2, 1965 Mayor-elect John V.
Lindsay [*q.v.*] named Rankin New York
City corporation counsel; he took office on
Jan. 1, 1966. With more than 300 attorneys
working under him, Rankin was responsible
for all litigation the city had to prosecute or
defend, for giving legal opinions when
necessary on the validity of actions taken by
city departments and for supervising legisla-
tion for submission to the city council and
the state legislature. In December 1966
Lindsay also appointed Rankin head of a
17-member task force to draft a New York
City program for the upcoming state con-
stitutional convention. The task force's May
1967 report to the convention urged greatly
expanded home rule powers for all cities
and countries in the state. Rankin resigned
as corporation counsel in June 1972 to enter
private law practice with his son.

[CAB]

RAUH, JOSEPH L(OUIS)

b. Jan. 3, 1911; Cincinnati, Ohio.
Lawyer; Vice Chairman, Americans for
Democratic Action, 1952-55, 1957-

Rauh, the son of an immigrant German
businessman, grew up in Cincinnati. After
graduating in 1935 from the Harvard Law
School, he served as legal assistant to Su-
preme Court Justices Benjamin N. Cardozo
and Felix Frankfurter. Rauh was an en-
forcement official for the Wage and Price
Administration and worked on the staff of
the Army's Pacific Command during World
War II. Returning to private law practice
after the war, Rauh became an important
defender of civil liberties and other liberal
causes; among his clients were the United
Auto Workers union, the Brotherhood of
Sleeping Car Porters and a number of
Americans accused of Communist affilia-
tions. In 1948 Rauh was one of the founders
of the Americans for Democratic Action
(ADA), a liberal anti-Communist group that
opposed what it regarded as the conserva-