

C.I.A. Man Who Told Thomas Wardell Braden

see Windmiller commentary,
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LOS ANGELES, May 6—
"All my life, I've wanted to do things, to be involved," Thomas Wardell Braden says. Consequently, a frenzy of activity over the last 25 years has given Mr. Braden the aura of an eclectic Renaissance Man.

He has been, successively, a soldier, parachuting intelligence operative, college teacher, college administrator, art museum executive, official of the Central Intelligence Agency, newspaper publisher, publisher, state educational official, and political aspirant.

Man in the News

His latest role is that of militant pragmatist. In an article in the current issue of the Saturday Evening Post, he defies intellectuals who deplore the secret involvement of private organizations in the military intelligence and psychological warfare programs of the C.I.A.

Mr. Braden, a wiry, sandy-haired man of 49, has a craggy, handsome, Marlborough-country visage that could be a composite of John Wayne, Gary Cooper and Frank Sinatra.

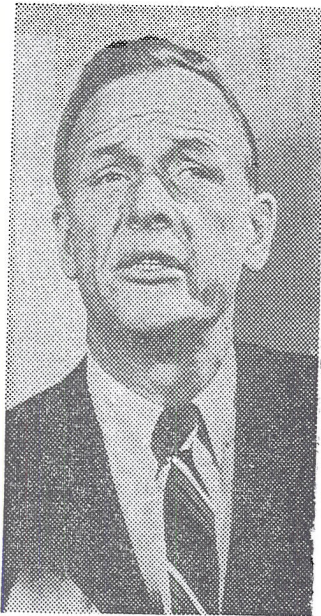
He has high cheekbones, piercing eyes, an engaging grin and a repertoire of slouching, foot-on-the-fence postures that he runs through while talking, which he does with great articulateness.

Help From the Young

His traits inspired many young Democrats to render devout assistance in his marginal campaign for the Democratic nomination for Lieutenant Governor last year. Both Mr. Braden, a Kennedy man, and Lloyd Hand, a Johnson man, sought unsuccessfully to unseat Lieut. Gov. Glenn Anderson, who ultimately was dislodged in the Reagan landslide.

Mr. Braden was born in Dubuque, Iowa, on Feb. 22, 1918. His father was an insurance agent, and his son worked in a New York City printing plant and then was graduated from Dartmouth College in 1940. As World War II came on, he enlisted in the famous British Eighth Army, which fought in North Africa, and led an infantry platoon.

When the United States got into the war, he shifted to the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the C.I.A. Despite several parachute jumps into occupied France, he professes with rather a note of disappointment, he was never injured and never found himself in a situation he considered dangerous.



Associated Press

Has an aura of the eclectic Renaissance man.

After the war he went back to Dartmouth, taught English for a year, and then became assistant to the president, Dr. John Sloan Dickie. Subsequently, he became executive secretary of New York's Museum of Modern Art for two years. From that he returned to working for his wartime O.S.S. chief, Gen. William J. Donovan, and then he became assistant to Allen W. Dulles, director of the C.I.A.

Married in 1948

In 1948, Mr. Braden married the former Joan Ridley, whom he met when she was on the staff of Nelson Rockefeller in New York. She later became an assistant to Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Eisenhower Administration.

Eventually, the Bradens gravitated into the circle of young intellectuals surrounding the Kennedys. The Bradens have eight children, from 3 to 16, which has generated jokes about competition with the proliferating family of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Becoming publisher-editor of The Oceanside Blade-Tribune in California in 1954, he quickly attracted attention throughout the state. During the administration of Gov. Edmund G. Brown, he was the leading member of the State Board of Education, upholding a liberal position against those who wanted to ban "Catcher in the Rye" from school libraries.

Two weeks ago, with no specific plan except to find a

field of more "involving" action, he sold The Blade-Tribune. "The two big problem areas of the next 10 years are going to be government and education," he says. "The other day I found myself at Claremont [a university] talking about possible post-graduate work in government."

Many people feel the last has not been heard from Mr. Braden in politics, and it seems a virtual certainty that the last has not been heard from him in some way or other.