

'Professional Spook'

Richard McGarrah Helms

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WASHINGTON, June 28— Before leaving Williams College in 1935, Richard McGarrah Helms had been chosen the junior who best exemplified the traditions of the school, permanent president of his class, president of the senior honor society, editor of the school paper,

editor of the senior year book, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and, in the opinion of his classmates, the

most likely to succeed, the most respected, the one who had done the most for the college, the best politician, the second most versatile and the third most popular. Now, at the age of 53, Mr. Helms could probably win comparable honors and kudos in any part of the Government, especially on the Virginia campus of the Central Intelligence Agency, to which he has devoted his career.

The Senate unanimously approved his appointment today as Director of Central Intelligence.

Although the first "professional spook" to head the C.I.A., there is nothing spookish about Mr. Helms. He seems to have no obsession with romantic adventure, but rather is serene and gentle.

The emphasis in conversation about him is on "professional." He is described as a practical and decisive man, the kind who could get himself an interview with Adolf Hitler as a young United Press correspondent in Germany but toss over all the excitement on the eve of World War II to manage advertising for The Indianapolis Times to support his family.

Mr. Helms is almost universally respected, although very few know what he has really done and how well. The few who know will talk only in generalities.

Mr. Helms was born March 30, 1913 in St. David's, Pa. He was reared in Sotuh Orange, N. J., and spent two high school years in Switzerland and Germany. His father, Herman, was a sales executive for Alcoa until he retired to take his family to Europe.

He is fluent in German and French, makes decisions promptly and speaks crisply and to the point. He likes to leave his office in late afternoon with the in-basket empty, and is that rare C.I.A. man who has endeared himself to the Pentagon for not waging jurisdictional warfare.

Tall and dark complexioned, Mr. Helms keeps in excellent physical shape by



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A pleasant, gentle spy

playing tennis. He is pleasant even in disagreement, and a number of associates say they have never seen him lose his temper.

It is this patience combined with professionalism that finally brought Mr. Helms to the top of the intelligence community. His career began in World War II, when he was assigned by the Navy to the Office of Strategic Services, to ply his linguistic talents in the European theater.

He stayed in intelligence after the war, with the Joint Strategic Services of the War Department, which gave way

in 1946 to the Central Intelligence Agency.

He has been an assistant or deputy director of the agency throughout its history, but three times in recent years he had to sit by while other men moved ahead of him.

He was the second in command of covert operations when, in 1958, Allen Dulles passed him up for promotion in favor of the more flamboyant Richard M. Bissell Jr. In 1962, after both Mr. Dulles and Mr. Bissell had come to grief over the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba—which Mr. Helms reportedly opposed—he was chosen to head the euphemistically named

"plans" division, only to find Lyman Kirkpatrick as executive director of the C.I.A., a position that downgraded Mr. Helms one notch in the agency.

A year ago, John A. McCone campaigned to have Mr. Helms succeed him as director, but President Johnson instead chose Vice Adm. William F. Raborn. Mr. Helms was expected to supervise the professional work at the agency as the admiral's deputy.

Mr. Helms is not known as a student of history, and is said to have deferred to C.I.A. professional analysts for long-range judgments. His politics have been defined negatively—as neither "bleeding liberal" nor "F.B.I.-style anti-Communist."

"Dick is so undoctinaire," says one associate, "that he insists there are pros and cons in everything."

Mr. Helms married Julia Bretzman Shields of Indianapolis, a sculptor, in 1939. Their son, Dennis, 24, is at the University of Virginia Law School. There also are a son and daughter from Mrs. Helms's previous marriage—James R. Shields of Charlotte, N.C., and Mrs. Jean-Loup Guerin of Denver.