

New York Post

MAN IN THE NEWS: DAVID ROCKEFELLER

By ROBERTA BRANDES GRATZ

HE IS THE Rockefeller few really know, no matter how often they hear about him. The banker Rockefeller, head of Chase. The Governor's brother—and, by many accounts, the one with the most far-reaching influence.

David Rockefeller is the youngest of the five brothers and one sister, the most educated (Lincoln School, Harvard, London School of Economics and the University of

A Day at the Bank

Chicago, where he received his PhD in economics) and the only brother to have wholeheartedly followed his grandfather, the first John D. Rockefeller, into the competitive world of business and finance. (The second John D. Rockefeller, David's father, devoted himself to the family philanthropies.)

It looks he most resembles Nelson. The nose is a little longer and thinner, the face rounder, the mouth when he's talking remains tighter. But the smile, the manner of speech, the intonations are similar.

But David Rockefeller is never as relaxed in his public role as his Albany brother, who appears to relish each moment. Considerably less aggressive and occasionally even ill-at-ease, he sometimes gives the impression he lacks the self-confidence which Nelson has to spare.

Yet whenever anyone draws a list up of the 10 most powerful people in the country, David Rockefeller's name is bound to be on it—more often than Nelson's.

Down through the years he's been mentioned as a mayoralty prospect. Is anything like that possible? "I do think having two brothers as politicians [there's also Winthrop, twice Governor of Arkansas] may be enough for one family," he says.

Only one position ever came close to enticing him into government service. President Kennedy was reported to have considered offering him the job of Treasury Secretary. Says David Rockefeller: "In a sense that position has appeal but I have to admit that I have an awfully good job. That sounds so silly, but really there is a certain freedom I have and really it's a sort of platform from which one can do many things."

One not only can, one does and when he speaks, people listen.

Few men can go before an audience as David Rockefeller did this week at the annual Regional Plan Assn. dinner, propose the formation of two new national agencies to deal with new-town development and core-city rehabilitation, knowing full well that it would be on the front pages of the morning newspapers and taken seriously on all levels of government.

For 25 years, he says, he's concerned himself with urban problems and for this concern, the Regional Plan Assn. this week gave him its annual distinguished service award.

But for all his public activities the image persists of David Rockefeller, the prototypical banker—remote, cold, calculating and stiff. It is not an image displayed to the closes observer, and it is one which Rockefeller seems to find amusing.

"Needless to say I don't think of myself as either remote or impersonal," he says laughing. "But then I suppose the fact is inevitable that anyone you hear about and don't know seems remote and mysterious.

"I suppose that bankers are thought of traditionally as being distant, cold unhuman, what I think is a wrong image but nevertheless they have it and it's not easy to change that."

Perhaps that is why Rockefeller—who has never been very talkative about his private self in public—recently allowed himself to be persuaded to let this reporter accompany him through a day's routine. It was a routine that included a session with NYU representatives seeking a large contribution from the Chase Manhattan Foundation, meetings with groups of company executives, with Treasury Under Secretary Paul Volcker, with newly appointed Treasury Secretary John Connally and, at day's end, a meeting at the Brook Club—an exclusive men's club—of the Bilderberg Conference, a little-known group that Rockefeller helped organize seven years ago at which leaders of the Atlantic Community meet informally and off the record to discuss common problems.

In his office, he listens carefully as the NYU people appeal to his concern with urban problems, flatteringly recall his past generosity, inform him of the good-size commitments other banks have made and show him assorted promotional publications—the photography and lay-out of which impress Rockefeller, who has a similar assortment of publications about the bank that he likes to present to visitors.

Rockefeller walks the few blocks to U. S. Trust at 45 Wall St. where he is to meet with Connally, and gets momentarily lost in the maze that is the financial district. He is amused and embarrassed. Returning afterward to his 60-story building's two-acre plaza, he points with pride to the site where will stand in two years a 40-foot sculpture by Jean Dubuffet. It will be the largest outdoor sculpture in New York.

At 55, the father of four sons and two daughters, grandfather of one boy, Rocke-

feller dresses in conservative but well-tailored custom-made suits, colored shirts and colorfully patterned ties, which are a little wider these days as his sideburns are a little longer. He is a non-smoking social drinker, wine and food enthusiast, polka contest winner (31 years ago with his wife-to-be Peggy McGrath), beetle collector, linguist (fluent French, German, Spanish), sailor, golfer, enjoyer of picnics and all in all a man of varied interests.

He mostly enjoys a "friendly, quiet evening at home," only occasionally still goes dancing but, he notes, "I must admit that I haven't gotten to where I can do rock 'n roll."

He averages a 16-hour day packed full with high-powered appointments but occasionally makes his own phone calls, takes time out for personal problems of staff members and is easily accessible if an urgent matter arises with any of his non-banking involvements.

He is close to his brothers and of their relationship, he says: "On the whole it's been a very good one. Our interests are very different and our temperaments and methods of approaching problems are very different. I think probably that Nelson, Winthrop and I tend to be the three that would be more outgoing, the other three (John, Laurence and his sister, Abby Mauze) somewhat more reserved, if you have to make that distinction."

Where his brother Nelson has been accused of arrogance, David Rockefeller, perhaps, may be accused of overzealous minimizing of his own influence.

"Power is a very intangible thing," he says, "I have to say it is surprising to me that people feel it because in a sense I don't know why they feel it because it isn't as though as chairman of the bank I could . . . obviously within the bank and within limits I have very considerable authority but in terms of things outside the bank this is not true. I have no legal or economic authority. It is more a question of persuasion and human rapport."

In the financial community, his voice, whether heard publicly or privately, is one of the most respected. As board chairman of Chase, he has a financial power base that is the second largest in the country and world (the largest is the Bank of America) with assets of \$25 billion and investments in almost every corner of the globe.

After two years in non-combat Army duty overseas, he joined the bank in 1945 at the urging of then Chase chairman Winthrop Aldrich, Rockefeller's uncle. Groomed for executive position, he became president in 1961 and chairman in 1969.

He shares the Rockefeller predilection for monumental building projects, the "edifice complex" as it has been called. David Rockefeller, first and foremost, has his Chase Manhattan Plaza which opened 10 years ago. The first major office building put up in the area in 25 years, it pretty much started the whole financial district renewal.

Rockefeller initiated the idea of the World Trade Center through his chairmanship of the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Assn. which

he organized. He also founded Morningside Heights Inc. to spur renewal of the upper Manhattan neighborhood. The projects have brought him both sharp criticism and high praise.

Both Morningside Heights and the World Trade Center have spurred outcries that they mean the destruction of the small businesses and residences that comprise a community. The Trade Center has brought additional charges that it will create monumental traffic jams and, by competing with commercial office space, cheat the city tax base.

How sensitive are you, he was asked, to the arguments against bigness—the impersonal kind of projects that engulf an area. Rockefeller reacts coolly to the indictment:

"I just don't see how you can avoid a certain amount of that. I don't think you will get things done without governmental and other action."



His office is huge, with modern furniture to complement the building's architecture. Push-button opaque-glass sliding doors insure maximum privacy.

The office interior is a clear reflection of Rockefeller's passion for art and variety of taste. It is a melange of 19th and 20th century paintings (Cezanne, Signac, Rothko, Wyeth), African artifacts, Oriental treasures, and Greek vases. Most of the works are owned by him personally, the rest from the bank's collection of some 1,600 works—valued conservatively at \$2.5 million—that has been selected over 10 years by a committee headed by Rockefeller.

"My interest in primitive and Oriental art stem from my family upbringing," Rockefeller says. "My mother was tremendously interested in art in general and in primitive and Oriental art in particular."

He is director of the Business Committee for the Arts and Board Chairman of the Museum of Modern Art as was the Governor before him. It is the museum his mother helped found and which his family has generously supported. The Museum, Rockefeller University and the Council on Foreign Relations are the three outside involvements that interest him most.

His own collection bridges the 19th and 20th centuries with the largest concentration in Impressionists and post-Impressionists. His wife is responsible for all the framing and deciding to which of their four residences (New York City, Pocantico, Maine, West Indies) each work will go.

While he credits his mother, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, with so much of his art interest, he says: "Even in college I took art courses and always enjoyed going to museums and visiting beautiful, historical monuments."

"Nelson is probably more oriented toward sculpture and I toward painting and he's more interested in the very contemporary. It just happened to start that way. Another thing that my wife and I have always been interested in is porcelain and furniture. Nelson more recently is getting into that area. Actually I think we're con-

ing closer together. He's been going farther back and I've been coming farther forward."

Adventures in "sailing, camping and pack trips" are the kind of shared family activities he enjoys, as he did over New Year's when the family vacationed in their West Indies home. "We had four of the six children with us which these days is doing rather well," he says smiling.

Is there a Rockefeller generation gap?

"I think we've had our share of it. On the other hand our eldest son is almost 30 and I think if anything the gap is narrowing. (He laughs). Who is moving toward whom is more difficult to say.

"Our generation had equally great differences with our parents but tended to express them less openly and less frankly and what we have today is probably better. This wasn't considered the thing to do in our day and if we had differences we expressed them with considerable diffidence.

"Our children are a very lively and independent lot ranging from 18 to 29. And we have one daughter (Abby) who's been interested in Women's Lib. I certainly share the feeling that women ought to be treated fairly, given the same opportunities as men and paid for the same work but I confess that I'm left behind with some of the things the more extreme Women's Lib people ask."

As for the challenges of his children, he adds with good humor: "I'm sure it's kept both my wife and myself younger, maybe turned our hair gray but certainly kept us younger in spirit."



"It's not easy to change an image."

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