



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

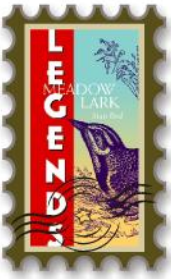
William C. Menninger (1899-1966)

Born one of three sons to Dr. Charles Frederick and Flo Menninger, William Claire Menninger was born and raised in Topeka, Kan. Menninger's father and older brother, Karl, were both psychiatrists and strongly influenced William's career choices. William graduated from Washburn University in 1919 and went on to attend Cornell University's College of Medicine, graduating five years later.



Menninger took a two-year internship at Bellevue Hospital before following in his family's footsteps and studying psychiatry at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. In 1925, Menninger returned home to Topeka to join his brother and father in opening the Menninger Clinic, a 13-bed sanitarium and psychopathic hospital. The three men pioneered treatment of mental illnesses, while also researching and teaching on the subject.

Dr. Will, as Menninger became known, was involved with the Boy Scouts of America's Sea Scouts program, which eventually led to the publishing of his "Handbook for Skippers." At the outset of World War II, Menninger left the family practice to serve in the U.S. Surgeon General's Office as director of the Psychiatry Consultants Division. In this position, Menninger was responsible for the mental health of 8 million Americans.



Menninger made numerous contributions to military psychiatry, including treatment in combat situations, mental illness prevention techniques for those engaging in military duties, and development of effective characteristics needed for military psychiatrists. At the end of the war, Menninger saw an enormous need for mental health professionals to be available to those emotionally devastated from battle.

At the Menninger Clinic, Dr. Will created a pilot program from both training psychiatrists in military psychiatry along with treating ex-servicemen. More than 100 physicians came to participate in the largest psychiatric training center in the nation. Menninger would later use his military background to create programs based on the theory that troop leadership directly affected servicemen's mental health. These theories still apply today, as practiced by businessmen trying to create a healthy emotional environment in the workplace.



In 1941, the Menninger Foundation was incorporated as a non-profit organization, and Dr. Will became the chief fundraiser. He spoke to groups nationwide about mental health and psychiatry, lobbying for improved conditions in state hospitals. He wrote six books and more than 400 papers on medical and psychiatric subjects. In 1948, Menninger became the first psychiatrist ever to be featured on the cover of Time magazine.

William Menninger was a remarkable speaker and strong proponent of many notable mental health causes. Menninger even advised President John F. Kennedy on mental health issues the nation faced. He spent nearly all of his life trying to improve the lives of others and did so on a grand scale until his death in 1966. His life's work was continued by his three sons and continues today through the work of The Menninger Foundation.

