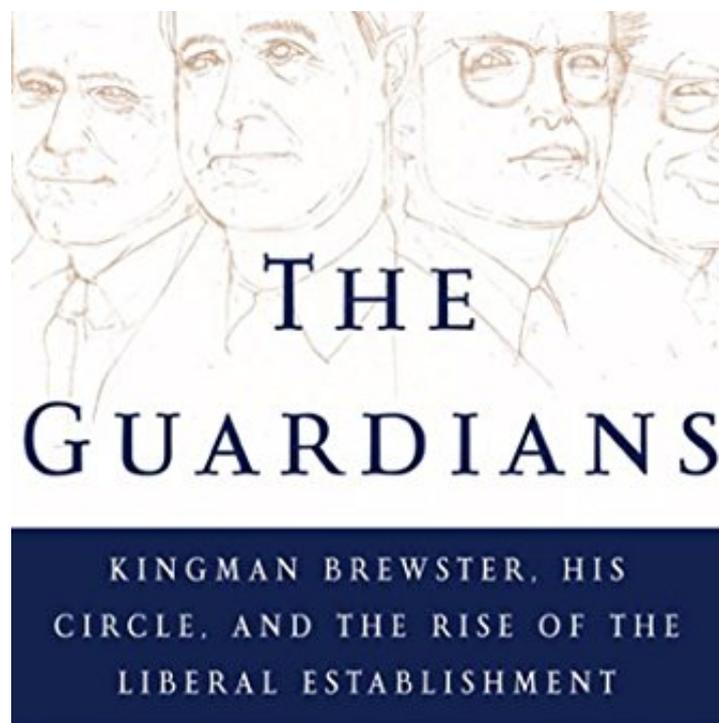


# The Guardians: Kingman Brewster, His Circle, and the Rise of the Liberal Establishment

*by*

William Kuhn



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## Synopsis

How liberalism and one of the most dramatic eras in American history were shaped by an influential university president and his powerful circle of friends Yale's Kingman Brewster was the first and only university president to appear on the covers of Time and Newsweek, and the last of the great campus leaders to become an esteemed national figure. He was also the center of the liberal establishment—a circle of influential men who fought to keep the United States true to ideals and extend the full range of American opportunities to all citizens of every class and color. Using Brewster as his focal point, Geoffrey Kabaservice shows how he and his lifelong friends—Kennedy adviser McGeorge Bundy, Attorney General and statesman Elliot Richardson, New York mayor John Lindsay, Bishop Paul Moore, and Cyrus Vance, pillar of Washington and Wall Street—helped usher this country through the turbulence of the 1960s, creating a legacy that still survives. In a narrative that is as engaging and lively as it is meticulously researched, *The Guardians* judiciously and convincingly reclaims the importance of Brewster and his generation, illuminating their vital place in American history as the bridge between the old establishment and modern liberalism.









































































































## What people say about this book

Joseph Ryan, "The Country Was Obligated by Their Noblesse. The Guardians is a scathing indictment of the Old-Boy Network that felt it ruled the U.S. in the 1960s. It's not clear whether the author understands what he has written; I tend to think that he does but that he, like his subjects, is too polite to say it plainly. Coming of age during World War II and then going to law school after 1945, this group was immediately offered academic positions without competition, advanced degrees, or scholarship, or they entered into family-networked law firms or investment houses. A few years later under Kennedy, they became government advisors in areas they knew nothing about and bungled, or else they headed universities and foundations where they deigned to listen to the reformers and modernizers who brought more justice and science into American life. After the Nixon disaster and Gerry Ford's close loss in 1976, this group got some respite from President Carter but their native Republican Party under the militant fundamentalists had no place for them. Gradually they became unemployed and, while only in their 60s after 1980, they were unable to be productive and even ended up strapped for money. Caught between McGeorge Bundy and Spiro Agnew, one can argue that the U.S. was ill served. This is a fundamentally sad story."

Joseph A. Cari, Jr., "An enlighten view of a strain of America society that's misunderstood. When I started this book, I thought it would reinforce my view of the wasp structure of power to keep the status quo. I was so mistaken,, the men like Kingman Brewster served this country as a noble cause,, open to change much more than the generation above especially in civil rights. Steady leadership meant not avoiding conflict, but understanding why the conflict existed and trying to come to a new definition of progress. I can't recommend this book more highly, a tour de force of a part of the american experiment."

LTH, "Worthwhile.. Always admired Kingman Brewster and the era in which he helped define. Well researched and written ."

J. William Ilmanen, "Kabaservice is a good writer.. I read the book so many years ago that I can't remember how to critique it. Why can't you be more timely in your request. It shouldn't be too much to ask."

Charles J. Rector, "Important Book About an Important American. Although he is almost forgotten today, Kingman Brewster who was the president of Yale from 1963-1977 was in fact an important figure in recent American history. One reason for this was the fact that he ran Yale in such a way that the university almost completely escaped the tumult that wracked other campuses during the Vietnam War. Another reason is that he revamped the admissions policy at Yale so that poorly achieving students at prep academies such as Andover could not get in Yale over high achieving public school graduates. It was in this area of expanding the elite educational

experience at Yale to all Americans, not just members of the WASP elite that Brewster did his most signal public service. Brewster was truly an agent of change. This was most interesting in light of the fact that Brewster was born to a comfortable upper class family, which is precisely the sort of background one would think would spawn conservative thinking. Brewster's activism began back when he was a big man on campus as a Yale undergraduate. Interestingly enough, Brewster was also one of the founders of the America First Committee that many Americans today regard as being a right wing outfit. Actually, as the author of this book points out, America First was originally a left-wing group and many of its most prominent members were left wing activists. After America's entry into World War II, America First dissolved and Brewster wholeheartedly took up America's cause against the Axis Powers. It may surprise many Americans today that the Republican party used to have a strong left wing and Brewster was both a stalwart liberal and Republican. It was for this reason that Brewster was never offered a position in the Kennedy Administration. As university president, Brewster initiated a wide body of reform on campus. Unlike most campus administrators of his time, Brewster did not resort to repression of dissent during the Vietnam War. In fact, Brewster publically sympathized with the radicals on many issues. After resigning from the presidency of Yale in 1977, he became the U.S. ambassador to Britain. After leaving the diplomatic service, he retired from public life and passed away as the 1980's were drawing to a close. Kingman Brewster was an important American who held an important position as Yale University president. Geoffrey Kabaservice has done a public service in writing this book about a forgotten man in American history."

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