

Our file
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BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

OF

AMBASSADOR EUGENIE ANDERSON

The Department of State recently announced the appointment of Ambassador Eugenie Anderson of Minnesota as Special Assistant to the Secretary, effective April 15. Ambassador Anderson has been serving, since September 1965, as U.S. Representative on the U.N. Trusteeship Council and as a Member of the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. As Special Assistant, she will assist the Secretary with liaison with community groups and non-governmental institutions and in evaluating the effectiveness of U.S. participation in such programs as trusteeship and other related U.N. matters, as well as international educational, cultural and other activities. She will continue to have the personal rank of Ambassador.

Ambassador Anderson, who served as America's first woman Ambassador was U.S. Ambassador to Denmark from 1949 to 1953. She was also the first American woman to serve as Chief of Mission to an Eastern European country, having been U.S. Minister to Bulgaria from 1962 to 1965.

During her assignment to Bulgaria, Mrs. Anderson negotiated and concluded the Financial War Claims Agreement. She also resolved a number of long-standing citizenship cases, by which American citizens residing in Bulgaria were permitted to return to the United States.

Mrs. Anderson began studying Bulgarian after her arrival there, and on July 4, 1963, became the first Western diplomat to speak in Bulgarian on the State TV and Radio. She also made TV and Radio speeches in Bulgarian in December 1963, shortly after President Kennedy's assassination and again on July 4, 1964. As a result of these TV and Radio speeches, as well as personal visits to many parts of Bulgaria, Mrs. Anderson became widely known among the Bulgarians who often called her by her first name.

Among her other official activities in Bulgaria was the promotion of American exhibits, cultural exchanges and high-level visits.

During her previous assignment as Ambassador to Denmark, Mrs. Anderson contributed greatly to the strengthening of friendly relationships between Denmark and the United States. In addition to the important Greenland Agreement, she negotiated a Fulbright Agreement for the exchange of Danish and American scholars and students, and she became the first woman to sign a treaty in behalf of the United States with the conclusion of the Treaty of Trade and Navigation in 1951.

Mrs. Anderson is perhaps more widely known, however, for her popularity with the Danes and success in interpreting the United States to them. Five months after her arrival in Copenhagen -- in May 1950 -- the new Ambassador had learned enough Danish to make a nationwide Mother's Day broadcast. The Danes, who know few foreigners attempt to learn their difficult language, were amazed at Mrs. Anderson's accent and fluency. On the basis of this "introduction", the people of Denmark developed an affection for her never before accorded any foreign diplomat.

Immediately after her resignation in 1953 as Ambassador to Denmark, Mrs. Anderson was decorated with the "Grand Cross of the Order of Dannebrog" by King Frederick IX in recognition of the esteem with which the Danish people and Government regarded her. Never before in the history of Denmark had a woman received such a high Danish decoration.

While Mrs. Anderson's diplomatic achievements have won high praise from professional diplomats, she was trained for a musical career. Music was her major study at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, and Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. She continued her study of music at the Institute of Musical Art in New York City after her marriage. Mrs. Anderson received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from Carleton College in June 1963, from Simpson College in May 1954, and in February 1965 she was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by Temple University.

Mrs. Anderson, the daughter of a Methodist minister, and a native Iowan, lived in Iowa until 1930, when she met and married John Pierce Anderson. After several years of study in New York, the Andersons returned to Red Wing, Minnesota, and settled down at Tower View, the family farm, where they still reside. They have two grown, married children, and six grandchildren.

It was not until after Mrs. Anderson had made a trip to Europe in 1937 and observed conditions which were leading to World War II that she became actively concerned with international problems. She began an intensive study of democratic government, worked in the League of Women Voters, served on the School Board and other civic organizations. In 1944, she entered Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party politics, and also lectured extensively on the United Nations and other foreign policy issues.

In 1948, Mrs. Anderson was elected Democratic National Committee-woman and a Minnesota Delegate-at-Large to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

Known throughout Minnesota simply as "Eugenie", she also has been active in State and National affairs. She served from 1955 to 1960 as Chairman of the Minnesota State Commission for Fair Employment Practices, having been the first Minnesota woman to serve as the Chairman of a State Commission. Also from 1959 to 1961 she was a member of the Board of Directors for the American Association for the United Nations, a Board Member of the United States Committee for Refugees, and a member of the Democratic National Advisory Committee on Foreign Policy.

In 1961, the Andersons made a seven-months' tour of the Far East and India. While in India, from January to June 1961, Mrs. Anderson lectured in all the major cities under the auspices of the Asia Foundation and the Indian Council of World Affairs. Recently, the Andersons have travelled extensively in Eastern Europe.

Shortly after her appointment to the UN Trusteeship Council, Mrs. Anderson made an official tour of the United States Trust Territory in the Western Pacific.

In May and June of 1966, Mrs. Anderson made a five-weeks' tour of Africa as the Chief United States Delegate on the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization.

Late in 1967, she visited South Vietnam at the request of President Johnson.

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