

Inducted January, 2012

Lewis Arthur Larson (July 4, 1910 — March 27, 1993) was an [American lawyer](#), law professor, United States Under Secretary of Labor from 1954 to 1956, director of the [United States Information Agency](#) from 1956 to 1957, and Executive Assistant to the President for Speeches from 1957 to 1958.

Lewis Arthur Larson (his first name was never used) was born in [Sioux Falls, South Dakota](#). He was the third of five children of Lewis Larson and Anna Huseboe Larson, both of whom were second-generation Americans of Norwegian descent. Larson's father was a family court judge in Sioux Falls. Arthur Larson attended the public schools there and the local Lutheran college, [Augustana](#), and then studied law at [Pembroke College, Oxford](#) (1932-1935) as a [Rhodes Scholar](#). He was married to Florence Newcomb on July 31, 1935. He then worked as a lawyer for four years (1935-1939) with the firm of Quarles, Spence and Quarles in [Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#). When depression-era conditions led to his layoff in the summer of 1939, Larson found a job as assistant professor of law at the [University of Tennessee](#) Law School in [Knoxville, Tennessee](#). While there, he and Florence Newcomb Larson had two children.

In 1941, during [World War II](#), Larson moved on to [Washington, D.C.](#), when he mostly worked as a lumber industry regulator at the [Office of Price Administration](#) (OPA). In 1945 he became an assistant professor of law at [Cornell Law School](#). Over the next seven years he produced a legal treatise on the *Law of Workmen's Compensation* (Mathew Bender: 1952), which led to his being named dean of the [University of Pittsburgh School of Law](#) in 1953.

Larson's growing fame as a moderately conservative expert on the law of the [welfare state](#) and his strong public speaking abilities led to appointment as Under Secretary of Labor (in March 1954) in the [Dwight Eisenhower](#) administration. There he emerged as the most articulate spokesman for Eisenhower-era Republicanism. Larson's most popular book, *A Republican Looks at His Party* (Harper and Row: 1956) was personally endorsed by Eisenhower, who hired Larson to write speeches for him. Eisenhower named Larson the director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in December 1956 and as his top [speechwriter](#) in October 1957.

After leaving the Eisenhower administration in the fall of 1958, Larson became a law professor at [Duke University](#), where he specialized in [international law](#), [arms control](#) and [disarmament](#) efforts. He died there on March 27, 1993. Larson's rise to fame from relative obscurity and then gradual return to it reflected the changing fortunes of moderate conservatives within the Republican Party and the nation during his lifetime. Larson is criticized as a prototypical big government Republican in [Barry Goldwater](#)'s landmark small government Republican manifesto, *The Conscience of a Conservative*. Larson's life and work are treated at length in a biography by [David Stebenne](#), *Modern Republican: Arthur Larson and the Eisenhower Years* (Indiana University Press, 2006).



Arthur Larson

Arthur Larson, who articulated the philosophy of Modern Republicanism (*A Republican Looks at His Party*), has long ranked high in presidential esteem. As director of the U.S. Information Agency, Scholar Larson was cut up by the long knives of politics on Capitol Hill (*TIME*, Oct. 28). But his credentials in the law area are hard to beat. A Rhodes scholar who took honors in jurisprudence at Oxford (B.S., M.A.), he rose from a Milwaukee practice to dean of the University of Pittsburgh Law School, was appointed Under Secretary of Labor because of his definitive books on fast-changing workmen's compensation laws and on the social security system. Ike read *A Republican Looks at His Party* while convalescing from his ileitis operation, sent for Larson and had long talks with him while trying to put Eisenhower Republicanism into scholarly terms.

