

# Legacy of Warren Potter: Part II, Grandson Warren William Krech *(continued from page 13)*

Suave, debonair, and multi-talented, people said he resembled John Barrymore. So did Harry Warner when he saw Warren William on

stage in New York and Warner Brothers Studios signed him. With his rich, melodic speaking voice, Warren William was a natural for

Warner Brothers' new "talkies" films. His first talkie was *Honor of the Family* (1931) and *The Mouthpiece* (1932), which became a break-

through role.

An ideal leading man – mysterious, dark, handsome – Warren William had a first-rate speaking voice. He began to be typecast, mostly as villains, cads and womanizers. He often portrayed opportunistic, unscrupulous, unsympathetic rogues with no conscience, plenty of ego, yet romantically charming and sexy. Audiences liked him. Some of his leading ladies were Bette Davis, Joan Blondell, Ann Dvorak, Loretta Young, and Claudette Colbert. Colbert requested that Cecil B. DeMille star him in *Cleopatra* (1934), and Warren William was cast as Julius Caesar.

Many of his more suggestive early movies were "pre-Production Code" and made before America's Motion Picture Production (Hays) Code began in July, 1934, (some reports say the conduct code spawned during the Great Depression after a revival of conservative beliefs).

In 1934, Warren William became the first Perry Mason in *The Case of the Howling Dog*. And, later, he made a series of Michael Lanyard's *The Lone Wolf*. A talented actor, his characters in a single movie could be ruth-



Warren William, suave, debonair, and a talented Hollywood leading man who often played playboys or intense lawyers in the 1930s-'40s. Photo courtesy Marcia Hasskamp.

less, romantic, even funny. Excellent stage training gave him skills and flexibility to mimic exact personalities demanded for any role. His versatility was popular with Hollywood studios from love-hate romantic leads, to well-respected detectives and attorneys.

Ironically, Warren William's on-screen persona of a sinfully wealthy, world-traveling seducer of women was just the opposite in real life.

He was sometimes shy. He enjoyed working around his estate and remained happily married to his wife, Helen. He lived well, but modestly, for the times. Although he did not completely shun Hollywood's high life, he did not embrace it, either.

Helen was quoted as saying that her husband had three passions: "Inventing, gardening and keeping tidy." Warren William grew *(continued on page 15)*

## Filmography of Warren William (Krech)

- The Town that Forgot God (1922)
- Plunder (1923)
- Twelve Miles Out, uncredited (1927)
- Honor of the Family (1931)
- Expensive Women (1931)
- Under Eighteen (1932)
- The Woman from Monte Carlo (1932)
- Beauty and the Boss (1932)
- The Mouthpiece (1932)
- The Dark Horse (1932)
- Skyscraper Souls (1932)
- Three on a Match (1932)
- The Match King (1932)
- Employees' Entrance (1933)
- The Mind Reader (1933)
- Gold Diggers of 1933 (1933)
- Goodbye Again (1933)
- Lady for a Day (1933)
- Bedside (1934)
- Upperworld (1934)
- Smarty (1934)
- Dr. Monica (1934)
- The Dragon Murder Case (1934)
- The Case of the Howling Dog (1934) as Perry Mason
- Cleopatra (1934)
- Imitation of Life (1934)
- The Secret Bride (1934)
- Living on Velvet (1935)
- The Case of the Curious Bride (1935) as Perry Mason
- Don't Bet on Blondes (1935)
- The Case of the Lucky Legs (1935) as Perry Mason
- The Widow from Monte Carlo (1935)
- Times Square Playboy (1936)
- Satan Met a Lady (1936)
- The Case of the Velvet Claws (1936) as Perry Mason
- Stage Struck (1936)
- Go West Young Man (1936)
- Outcast (1937)
- Midnight Madonna (1937)
- The Firefly (1937)
- Madame X (1937)
- Arsène Lupin Returns (1938)
- The First Hundred Years (1938)
- Wives Under Suspicion (1938)
- The Lone Wolf Spy Hunt (1939)
- The Gracie Allen Murder Case (1939)
- The Man in the Iron Mask (1939)
- Day-Time Wife (1939)
- The Lone Wolf Strikes (1940)
- The Lone Wolf Meets a Lady (1940)
- Lillian Russell (1940)
- Trail of the Vigilantes (1940)
- Arizona (1940)
- The Lone Wolf Keeps a Date (1941)
- The Lone Wolf Takes a Chance (1941)
- Wild Geese Calling (1941)
- Secrets of the Lone Wolf (1941)
- The Wolf Man (1941)
- Wild Bill Hickok Rides (1942)
- Counter-Espionage (1942)
- One Dangerous Night (1943)
- Passport to Suez (1943)
- Strange Illusion (1945)
- Fear (1946)
- The Private Affairs of Bel Ami (1947)



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## Warren William Krech *(continued from page 14)*



1930's-40's Hollywood star, Warren William's boyhood Aitkin home where he lived with parents Freeman and Frances (Potter) Krech and two sisters. This picture was taken in the winter of 1934, and is courtesy of Betty Fossen, whose grandfather F. H. MacGregor, purchased the former Krech residence and raised his family there.

orange trees, limes, walnuts, plus flowers such as gardenias and bird of paradise. With his large tractor, he landscaped, terraced, and had a sun-ray water heating system and his Encino estate was called "one of the best in film land."

As an inventor, Warren William held several patents. One was for a design of the first lawn vacuum made from an old auto chassis. His inventions often were planned to make his life more enjoyable. He made a revolving

cupboard for hats and turned an old panel delivery truck into a "mobile trailer" before they were known. It had makeup equipment and a place to sleep on the way to the studio. He also had dogs, enjoyed playing tennis, and was an experienced yachtsman who loved the sea and had a nautical chart room in his home.

During his career, Warren William is credited with over 60 films; his most famous probably being *Cleopatra*, *Madam X* and *Imitation of*

*Life*. He was a movie favorite for 15 years, sometimes called "the poor man's John Barrymore" and his star is on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. His last film was *The Private Affairs of Bel Ami* (1947). His movies are still shown on Turner Classic Movies.

Warren William Krech died Sept. 24, 1948 in Hollywood after about a year's illness. News reports listed the cause as weakened by a rare blood disease and "Virus X," but it was multiple myeloma, a bone marrow cancer, plus pneumonia. He was only 53. He and Helen had been married 25 years. She died a few months later.

*Thank you to Tom and Marcia Hasskamp, great-grandchildren of Col. Warren Potter, for sharing family photographs of Warren William Krech.*

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