



# Edward Bridge Danson: Steward of the New West

*Eric Penner Haury*

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## **Edward Bridge Danson: Steward of the New West** Eric Penner Haury

As a boy, future anthropologist Edward Bridge "Ned" Danson dreamed of adventure. He read books about explorers and heroes and studied the lives of prominent men. He raced cars through the streets of Cincinnati, when he should have been studying, and made friends using a charm that was second to none. At age seventeen, he lived his dreams by joining the crew of the schooner Yankee for a voyage circumnavigating the globe. Over the next year and a half, Danson encountered cultures dramatically unlike his own and won friends around the world: From a German baroness in the Galapagos islands to the descendants of the Bounty mutineers on Pitcairn Island. In 1937, he found a new home, Arizona, and discovered his passion, anthropology. With newly learned discipline, fused with his skill at uniting people in common cause, Ned Danson, as Director of the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff during the 1960s and '70s, helped reveal the past and reshape the future of a West on the rise. With his wife Jessica and children Jan and future actor Ted Danson at his side, he placed himself at the crossroads of past, present and future, the meeting place of the first peoples of Arizona and its newest immigrants. He worked with Arizona giants like Barry Goldwater and Stewart Udall to preserve the grandeur of the Southwest, even as it modernized, and traveled the country to extend and advance the National Park system for all to enjoy. From the World War II battlefields to the halls of Congress, from Cincinnati country clubs to Navajo trading posts, and from passionate lectures in university classrooms to sacred ceremonies on the Hopi Mesas, Ned Danson lived a life of adventure and consequence that shapes the West to this day. ALL PROCEEDS OF PURCHASE WILL GO TO THE EDWARD BRIDGE DANSON ENDOWED CHAIR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT THE MUSEUM OF NORTHERN ARIZONA, INC. (MNA), AN INDEPENDENT 501(C)3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. Eric Penner Haury is a freelance writer and grandson of Ned and Jessica Danson. As a child, he stayed several weeks each year with his grandparents, who regularly took him to the Museum of Northern Arizona. He can be contacted at ep\_haury@yahoo.com.

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