

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

b. March 26, 1911

d. February 25, 1983

"To me, it was providential to be an artist, a great act of providence that I was able to turn my borderline psychosis into creativity."

Tennessee Williams was one of the most influential American playwrights. He transformed the darkest aspects of human existence into poetic theater.

Born Thomas Lanier Williams, he was raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He received his B.A. from the University of Iowa in 1938. He later changed his name to Tennessee, after his father's birth state.

While a scriptwriter at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Williams wrote an original screenplay the company rejected. It was reworked into a play. "The Glass Menagerie" (1945) earned the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and launched Williams's playwrighting career.

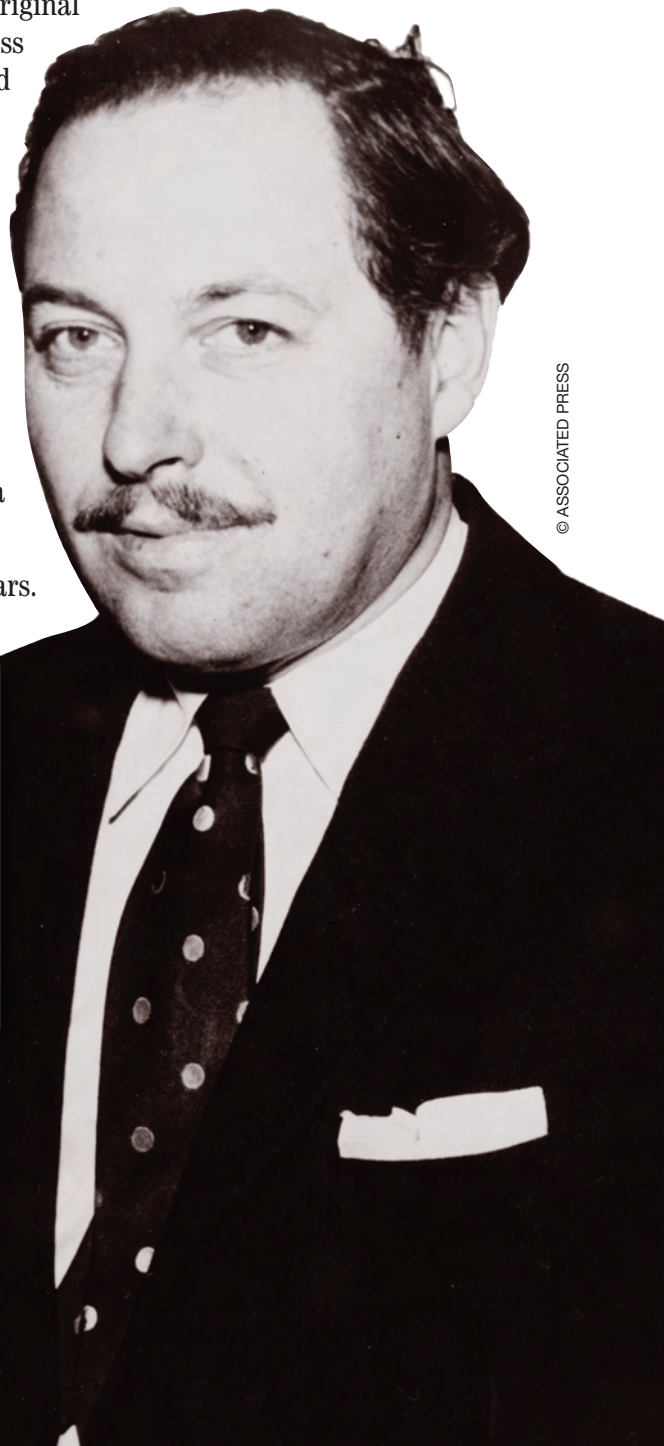
Often set in the South and featuring characters seeking salvation and meaningful human connections, Williams's plays are infused with aspects of his personal struggles. He sparked controversy by including gay characters.

His award-winning plays include "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1947), "The Rose Tattoo" (1951), "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1955) and "The Night of the Iguana" (1961). "A Streetcar Named Desire," "The Rose Tattoo" and "The Night of the Iguana" were adapted into Oscar-winning movies. Actors starring in his works included Marlon Brando, Elizabeth Taylor, Jessica Tandy and Vivien Leigh.

Williams and his partner, Frank Marlo, were together for more than 10 years. Their relationship ended when Marlo died of cancer in 1963.

Williams received two Pulitzer Prizes, four Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and a Tony Award for Best Play.

Tennessee Williams's plays were among the first to feature openly gay characters. An influential American playwright, his masterpieces include "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and "A Streetcar Named Desire."



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