Kenneth Powers Williams attended Clark College from 1905 to 1906 before enrolling at Indiana University where he received his A.B. degree in 1908 and his A.M. degree in 1909. In 1909 he was employed as an instructor of mathematics in the Department of Mathematics at I.U. Having been granted a leave from I.U. in 1911, he attended Princeton University where he earned a PhD in 1913. In 1914, he returned to I.U. and resumed his teaching career in the Department of Mathematics.

During his academic career at I.U. he served as an assistant professor from 1914-19, an associate professor from 1919-24, and as a full professor from 1924-37. He was awarded the Chair of the Department of Mathematics in 1938 which he served as until 1944. Throughout his academic career, he made many noteworthy achievements in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, and history. One of his landmark achievements was the publication of “Lincoln Finds a General: A Military Study of the Civil War” in 1949. Originally published as a two volume set, he added volume three in 1952, volume four in 1956, and died while writing volume five. He retired in 1957 as a Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus.

In addition to his career in education, Kenneth Powers Williams also had a successful military career. He first served as a First Lieutenant with the Indiana National Guard near the Mexican border in 1916 during the Mexican Border Expedition. On April 17, 1917, Indiana University established a military training program in Bloomington called the Student Army Training Corps with Williams in command. In 1919, the Student Army Training Corps was renamed the Reserve Officers Training Corps. From the years 1917 to 1919 he served in the Rainbow Division as a U.S. Army Captain of Field Artillery with the American Expeditionary Force, from 1921 to 1931 he served as an officer in the Indiana National Guard Field Artillery, and from 1931 to 1939 he served as a Colonel and the Chief of Staff of the 38th division of the Indiana National Guard before commanding the 113th Quartermaster Regiment, eventually becoming Quartermaster of the 38th division in national service. Among the many commendations he was awarded during his lifetime was the Indiana distinguished service award for his military service.

Born: Urbana, Ohio August 25, 1887
Died: Bloomington, Indiana September 25, 1958
Years at IU: 1914-1958

See also the Kenneth P. Williams papers at the Indiana University Archives