

John F. Kennedy: No Challenge Too Great—No Task Too Difficult

By United Press International
John Fitzgerald Kennedy

On a bitterly cold and snowy day in January, 1961, when he was inaugurated 35th President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy sounded a call to action that in many ways summed up his own remarkable career.

"Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend

and foe alike," he said, "that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a cold and bitter peace."

Kennedy was all these, and he bore the torch of world leadership in a society where the old order was changing fast. Kennedy's policies seemed as mid-

predecessor, Dwight D. Eisenhower on that January day, no man had ever flown in space. On that day Negroes in southern cities such as Jackson and Birmingham were not yet demonstrating. On that day the world had not come consciously close to nuclear destruction as it did in the great Cuban crisis of 1962.

"Sure it's a big job," Ken-

neddy once said. "But I don't know anybody who can do it any better than I can. I'm going to be in it for four years. It isn't going to be so bad. You've got time to think—and besides, the pay is good."

He later found out—and conceded—that it was a bigger job than he originally believed. But it is mostly unlikely that he ever once wavered in the belief that no one could handle it as well as he could. To think otherwise would have been a negation of his whole life.

The presidency of John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born in the fierce pride of an Irish immigrant family. It was carefully nurtured in the training stages by a multi-millionaire father, and brought to fruition by the man himself through a career in the House and Senate and on the campaign trails of America.

In a manner typical of his family, Kennedy started at the top in many things.

He was a product of Choate, Harvard and the London School of Economics. He produced his first book, "While England Slept," in 1940 at the age of 23. On his second literary try in 1956, he won a Pulitzer Prize for his widely acclaimed "Profiles in Courage."

He also started at the top in politics. There was nothing up-from-the-precincts in his career. He started after the war by winning a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives from his native state of Massachusetts. After six years in the House he ran for the Senate. That year—1952—was a bad year for Democrats because of the Eisenhower landslide. But Kennedy defeated Henry Cabot Lodge, a scion of an old New England family whose Brahmin roots were so vastly different from those of the Kennedys.

Hero In War

Kennedy's World War II record became a national conversation piece. The saga of PT109, how Kennedy commanded a PT boat in the Solomons that was rammed by a Japanese destroyer, was celebrated in books, a motion picture and countless retelling by magazines, newspapers and television.

Kennedy coupled this illustrious background with a headlong drive for the presidency that has been seldom matched for vigor, tenacity and expense. But despite this, he barely made it to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

With the largest voter turnout in history, he defeated Vice President Richard M. Nixon in 1960 by scarcely 100,000 ballots. Kennedy's 34,227,096 popular votes gave him an Electoral College edge of 330 to 219 over Nixon, who got 34,108,546 popular votes.

Not many hours before Kennedy took office, the family patriarch, Joseph P. Kennedy, forced deep satisfaction that one of his four sons had made it to the American pinnacle.

But the elder Kennedy, one of the wealthiest men of his time, knew his older son faced problems as no other president has confronted.

"He's got to be good from the very start," said Joe Kennedy to a friend. "Not only because of his youth, but because the world has reached a point where the American president can make damn few mistakes and get away with it. This means Jack must make a go of it right from the beginning—and it means he'll need all the support he can possibly get."

Kennedy entered office on a surge of towering personal popularity. The new President, his strikingly attractive wife, Jacqueline, and their children made one of the most appealing and photogenic families ever to occupy the White House.

Their styles, their tastes, their preferences in sports from

touch football to waterskiing, swept the nation in a Jack-and-Jackie fad. Motion picture fan magazines dropped cinema sirens for months and emblazoned their covers with alluring pictures of the First Lady in bathing suits, riding costumes and T-shirts.

Newspaper and feature writers, night club and television comedians, recording stars and composers combined to spread the doings of the Kennedys. A great cult of personality swept the nation. Not since the early days of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal did a president and those around him become such an object of interest to the entire nation.

Undisputed personal popularity did not protect Kennedy, however, from the lash of severe criticism that accompanied some of the efforts of his administration. Nor did it rub off on Congress to the extent that the lawmakers fell over themselves to get his programs passed.

In fact, his New Frontier legislative proposals were often embattled. His defeats in this area sometimes were impressive, his victories frequently narrow.

Great Problems

His great problems at the start were foreign policy and the domestic economy. In many ways both were later to be overshadowed by the Negro "revolution" of 1963 which confronted the nation with one of its gravest domestic crises since the Civil War.

Overseas, there was the ever-present threat posed by the Soviet Union, the troubles in Southeast Asia, and—over and over again—Cuba. The Kennedys had barely unpacked their bags in 1961 when the image of the bright young American President was tarnished by the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion. The plan to land exiles in Cuba in an attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro was conceived in the Eisenhower administration, and executed by the Kennedy men.

The disaster—for which Kennedy accepted full responsibility—lay like a gall on the administration for months. But if April, 1961, was a fiasco, October, 1962, was an unprecedented triumph.

The Cuban missile crisis was a test of all the skill and courage that Kennedy could command. By ordering a blockade but not sinking any ships, by talking softly but carrying the big stick of nuclear retaliation, he forced the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles it had placed in Cuba and thereby scored one of the greatest Western triumphs of the cold war. Just as the Bay of Pigs was the low-water mark of the first years, the Cuban crisis was the high tide.

Born Near Boston

The man at the troubled U.S. helm through this vast sea of difficulty was born in his family's Brookline, Mass., home outside Boston May 29, 1917. He had an older brother, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., who was killed in World War II. After John's birth, four girls, Rosemary, Kathleen, Eunice and Patricia, followed before the third son, Robert F. Kennedy, was born in 1925. He became attorney general in his brother's administration. After Robert, there was another girl, Jean, and then Edward F., the last of nine children, born in 1932. The youngest of the family continued the tradition of successful politics by being elected U.S. senator from Massachusetts in 1962 at the age of 30.



FOURTH VICTIM — The late President was the fourth chief executive of the United States to be assassinated while in office. The three others, shown left to right, were Abraham Lincoln, April 14, 1865; James A. Garfield, July 2, 1881; and William McKinley, Sept. 6, 1901.

After the war, Jack Kennedy dabbled in newspaper work, then decided to try for a Boston congressional seat being vacated by the incumbent. Only 29, he campaigned hard, talked pocketbook issues and won the nomination over a field of nine other Democrats. Running in a normally Democratic district, he easily defeated his Republican opponent in the election.

By 1948, Kennedy was beginning to seek statewide recognition with an eye to running against Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. in 1952. For the campaign against Lodge, he again relied on a personal political organization as he had done when he first ran for the House.

In that 1952 campaign, the entire Kennedy family of brothers and sisters and in-laws moved in to help with "coffee hours" and other political innovations. They were to be used again later in Kennedy's 1960 campaigns in state presidential primaries.

Lodge lost his Senate seat to Kennedy while President Eisenhower carried the state by more than 200,000 votes.

Marries Jacqueline

Kennedy was married Sept. 12, 1953, to Jacqueline Bouvier, then 23, at a fashionable wedding at Newport, R. I. Like Kennedy, she came from a wealthy New England Catholic family, although she had lived mostly in New York and Washington. A daughter, Caroline, was born in 1957; a son, John Jr., in 1960.

There were times when Kennedy was highly annoying to the advanced liberals of the party.

There were major administration accomplishments legislatively, but not one was gained without extensive effort and close margins. Relation with Congress were not helped when the Democrats scarcely held their own in the 1962 mid-term elections. Kennedy, however, derived comfort from the fact that the Democrats did not lose as many seats as usual for the party in power during an off-year election, but the net results showed the country still narrowly divided between the major parties.

During his early years the President devoted most of his domestic efforts to the state of the U.S. economy. His bruising, crushing battle with Big Steel in 1962, when he forced the major producers to rescind price increases, gave him an "anti-business" label which he disowned but came to accept as almost inevitable. But many of his later economic proposals won business support.

The state of the economy, he felt, was the nation's No. 1 do-

Record Shows Zero Years Are Jinx For Presidents

It's inscrutable, but the record bears it out that a President faces the grim reaper if he is elected in a year which ends with "0".

It started with William Henry Harrison, who was elected in 1840. He died a natural death in office. Every 20 years since, the ghastly jinx has returned to strike down a President of the United States.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected. He was killed by an assassin in 1865.

In 1880, James A. Garfield took over the reins of office. The following year, he was assassinated. In 1900, William McKinley was elected to his second term of the Presidency. He was killed by an assassin's bullet in 1901.

In 1920, Warren Harding was picked for the high of-

vice, and two years later, he died in San Francisco while on a nation-wide tour.

In 1940, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected to an unprecedented third term as President. Five years later in his fourth term, he was dead of a cerebral hemorrhage at Warm Springs, Ga.

Finally, 2 years and 10 months ago, in 1960, President Kennedy won a close election to move into the Presidency. Today he is dead—and the grim jinx has been served.

TV Broadcasts Are Suspended

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) — The television networks suspended all commercial broadcasting and entertainment programs Friday shortly after the assassination of President Kennedy.

CBS-TV announced that this policy would be in effect until after the Chief Executive's funeral. NBC-TV said it would stay with the story until it is over. ABC-TV reported its coverage would be extended indefinitely. Sources at NBC-TV and ABC-TV said also there was little doubt they would not resume any kind of normal programming until at least after the funeral.

There will be no commercials on any of the three networks, all of which are commercial, the sources said.

Truman Saddened By Kennedy Death

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. (UPI) — Former President Harry S. Truman, who himself was an intended victim of assassins' bullets 13 years ago this month, said Friday the assassination of President Kennedy was a "tragedy" for the nation.

"I am shocked beyond words at the tragedy that has happened to our country and to President Kennedy's family today," Truman said in a statement.

"The President's death is a great personal loss to the country and to me.

"He was an able President, one the people loved and trusted. Mrs. Truman and I send our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy and the family."

Truman said he planned to attend the funeral and burial services for Kennedy in Boston.



PRESIDENT AND MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY and children, John Jr. and Caroline, are shown in a happy family portrait taken in April of this year. They are shown after they attended private Easter Mass at the President's father's Palm Beach home. The picture turned to sadness Friday, when the President was cut down by a sniper's bullets in Dallas, Tex.



THE LATE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, shot by a sniper in Dallas, Tex., Friday, is shown with his family in a 1960 photo at his father's home in Hyannis Port, Mass., shortly after his election to the presidency. Standing, left to right are: Mrs. Robert Kennedy, Stephen Smith and Mrs. Smith, a sister; the late President, Robert Kennedy, Mrs. Peter Lawford, another sister; Sargent Schriver, Mrs. Edward Kennedy, and Peter Lawford. Seated, left to right are: Mrs. Schriver, a sister; parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy, Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, the first lady; and brother, Edward.



OREGON VISIT — Pierre Salinger, the late President's press secretary, waits for the then Sen. John F. Kennedy to write his reply to a question, during a visit to Portland in May 1960. Sen. Kennedy was suffering from laryngitis and Salinger had to read his written replies to questions from his audience.



DALLAS POLICE LIEUTENANT, Carl Day, carries rifle believed to be the weapon used by an assassin whose bullet killed President Kennedy Friday. Lee H. Oswald, a leader of the "Fair Play For Cuba Committee", former Russian visitor, and married to a Russian woman, has been officially charged in the late President's assassination.



WINDOW OF DEATH — Arrow points to window in a downtown Dallas building from which a sniper fired the fatal shots that felled the late President Kennedy and wounded Gov. John Connally, of Texas Friday. Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Connally, who were riding in the same auto, were uninjured. Gov. Connally was reported today to be in good condition and recovering from his wounds.



TRAGIC MOMENT — Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, the late President's brother, holds the hand of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy as they sorrowfully watch the body of the assassinated President being removed from the plane which carried it from Dallas to an ambulance following arrival at Andrews Air Force Base Friday.