

# PERSPECTIVES

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## In the DARK?

Has John Kennedy Jr.'s death revealed a profound gap between our generation and older ones?

**W**hy, I was recently asked, do we, as young adults, not feel the same degree of emotion concerning John F. Kennedy Jr.'s death as do our parents and even their parents?

Is it simply because we weren't around when his beloved father, JFK, was president and, thus, weren't shocked by his tragic assassination?

Or are we, in general, an apathetic bunch, emotionally numb from growing up in an era when violence consumes the daily news?

As is often the case, there is no single answer. But our lack of experience in years and lack of innocence in worldly ways probably both have something to do with the reasons why we have been less mournful than older generations.

When John, then just 3, saluted his father's coffin in 1963, we weren't among the teary-eyed viewers.

And, no, we didn't grow up believing the Kennedys to be the ideal all-American family.

That designation was reserved for made-by-TV clans like the Cosbys and the Simpsons.

To us, the Kennedys are largely a well-to-do family from the East Coast that has suffered a string of tragedies. JFK is a man revered in

our history textbooks as a forward-minded, classy president who died too young in perhaps the most-famous — or at least most-chronicled — assassination ever.

### Opinion



Tim Pyle

Besides those characteristics, most of our generation probably recalls JFK's alleged affair with Marilyn Monroe when remembering the late president.

That's something we can better relate with.

And his son is simply that — JFK's son. He may have started and run a magazine, George, but since when do deceased journalists get eulogized on the front page of every major publication in the country for up to a week after an unfortunate demise?

Not even Joseph Pulitzer himself commanded such after-life coverage.

Maybe we aren't deeply pained with JFK Jr.'s death because he grew up in the lap of luxury and really didn't do anything outstanding with the boundless opportunities he no doubt was presented.

Many of us are trying desperately to escape our parents' shadows.

Thus, we are unlikely to sympathize with a man who lived and died in the public eye because of his father's legacy.

Our generation seems less inclined to worship somebody just because of the family he or she comes from. Maybe we're trying to reverse the old adage from "It's who you know" to "It's what you know."

Regardless, most of us are still immersed in those whirlwind years when we're trying to figure out just who we are, fighting many of the traditional powers that be along the way.

The Kennedys, judging from their historical and current connotations, are traditionally a power that has been, is and assuredly still will be.

A lot of our apathy may have to do with the fact that we weren't held captive by the ongoings in the capital during those apparently unforgettable Camelot years. Or maybe tragedies like those at Thurston and Columbine are simply more tangible to us.

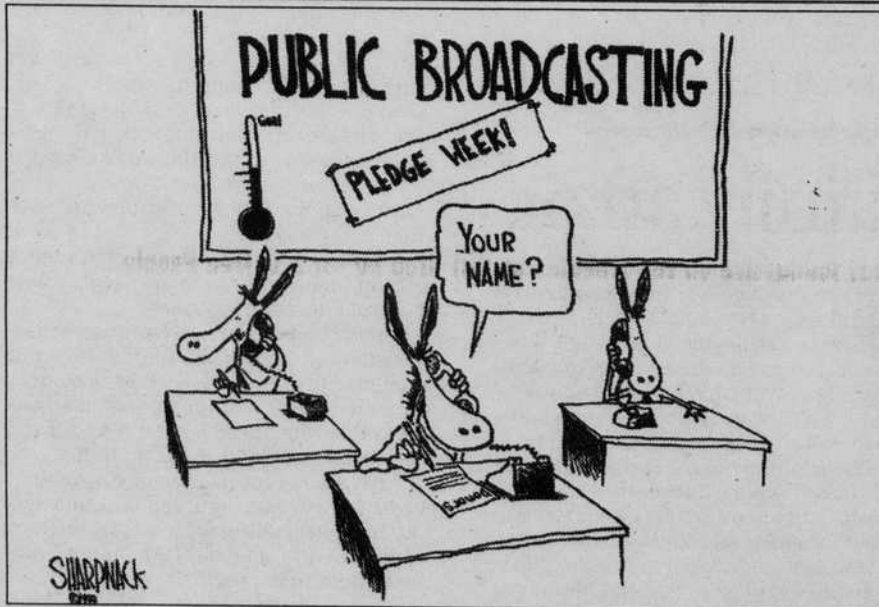
Perhaps, like much of the Kennedy-loving media implies, we just don't get it.

Do you?

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### Editorial Cartoons



### Oregon Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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