



Ike and John always have been unusually close to each other.

THE NEW ROLE OF THE YOUNG EISENHOWERS (Continued)

John's thoughts and perceptions go deeper than Barbara's. He has a scholarly interest in the Civil War. His conversation revolves largely about international affairs.

As man and wife, the young Eisenhowers have successfully solved the problems of being members of America's first family. As one member of the cabinet put it, "They don't seek the spotlight, but they don't retreat from it, either, as many White House children have done."

In nine months, the spotlight will shift, and they will be "private" citizens. When I asked John what new course his career will take, his answer was a laconic "unknown at this time."

But this much is known: the Army was never John's sole interest for a career.

At the age of 18, in fact, he was faced with a choice of three careers. His own inclination was to become a writer or newspaperman. His uncle Edgar, a prominent attorney, told him he would make a fine lawyer. And there was the lure of an Army career like that of his father.

At this crucial time in his son's life, Ike urged John to consider the choices seriously and make up his own mind—even though, in his heart, Ike always wanted his only son to be a soldier. Years before, he had persuaded John to do special exercises to strengthen his weak feet, having in mind a future physical examination for West Point.

THE CLUE to John's ultimate decision can be found in a father-son conversation at Fort Lewis, Wash., just before he was graduated from high school. Ike was then 50, a regimental executive officer—so completely unknown to the public that his picture in a local newspaper had been captioned "Lt. Col. D. C. Eisenboing."

Ike told his son that he didn't expect to go much farther in his own career. But he also expressed deep contentment. In the Army he had found good friends and a good life.

"No man," Ike told John, "could ask for more."

John decided to go to West Point.

His West Point yearbook later said of him: "Another four-star general? Maybe. But he wants to be a writer. He'd make a good one." And it is generally agreed that John, with his probing, scholarly turn of mind, is more like his uncle Milton, the educator, than any other member of the Eisenhower family, including the President himself.

It is this potpourri of early, conflicting tendencies that makes John a more complicated and richer personality than he would otherwise be. It is these tendencies, too, that give him the scope that has made him one of his father's important advisers.

Not impossibly, these tendencies will lead Maj. John Eisenhower—private citizen—toward a significant future of his own. Not impossibly, after 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue ceases to be the address of his parents, we shall hear of him and Barbara in their own right.

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