

250,000 Pay Last Respects To Late President



ATTEND CEREMONIES — Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, holding hands of her children, Caroline and John Jr., leads group from the Capitol after ceremonies honoring her late husband, President John Kennedy. Behind, left to right, are Attorney General Robert Kennedy, his sisters, Mrs. Stephen Smith, and Mrs. Pat Lawford, and brother-in-law Stephen Smith. —UPI Telephoto

WASHINGTON (UPI)—By the tens of thousands, they came to look on the bier of their dead leader—many weeping openly, others seemingly bewildered.

And when the solemn procession finally was halted today by sympathetic police, an estimated quarter of a million persons had filed past the flag-draped casket of the late John F. Kennedy in the rotunda of the Capitol.

The night chill was no deterrent to those who stood in line for hours. Some carried small children, many were lightly dressed. They came from near and far for 18 hours to pay their last respects to the man whose vibrant youth captured the imagination of so many.

Several thousand others still were in line when police finally were forced to bar further viewers at 9 a.m.

After the huge doors to the Capitol were closed to the public, senators and congressmen joined the last of the ordinary

citizens in the rotunda in passing the closed casket. Former Vice President Richard M. Nixon and his wife also were among the last visitors.

At one time during the cold night, in which the temperature fell into the 30s, the crowds patiently waiting to enter the Capitol were estimated at far over 120,000.

At 8:25 a.m. EST, police formed a cutoff in the long line at a point about two blocks east of the Capitol. This meant that some thousands who had endured the near-freezing weather for hours would be disappointed.

The cutoff was necessary to assure that the rotunda would be cleared in time for John Fitzgerald Kennedy's last ride to the White House. Hundreds in the Capitol when the cutoff came continued to shuffle forward to file past the casket.

As the last of the visitors passed the flag-draped casket at 9 a.m., EST, Capitol Police Chief Charles J. Sullivan estimated that 250,000 persons viewed the casket on its ancient catafalque shrouded in

black. Other, unofficial estimates by persons who had watched the crowds throughout the night put the figure at about 140,000.

In any event, it was a massive outpouring of affection and sorrow for the assassinated young President.

At midnight authorities had warned those at the end of the slow moving line — almost 20 blocks long—that they might not get a chance to get into the rotunda.

But still they came. Police repeated the warning at 2 a.m. and again at 3 and 4 and 5—and later. But still they came. Among the last to pause in reverence beside the bier were former Vice President Richard M. Nixon, the man Kennedy defeated for the presidency in 1960, and his wife, Patricia. They appeared at

three minutes before 9 o'clock. The massive doors to the Capitol were closed promptly

at 9. Those inside the rotunda were allowed to file past the bier. By 9:05 a.m.,

EST, the last of the tens of thousands of ordinary mourners passed the bier.

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Martin said student enrollment at his institution has almost doubled to 35,000 since World War II. In the same period, he said, the University's annual electrical costs have risen from less than \$15,000 to more than \$1.5 million.

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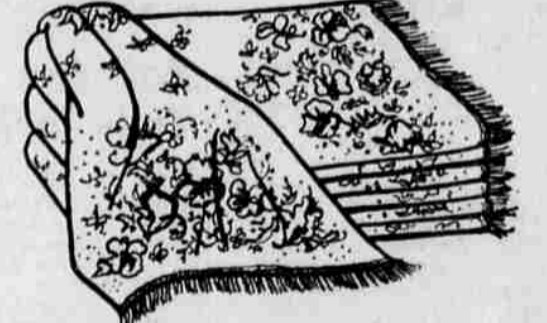
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