

Lifelong Learning Academy
Spring 2019
The Kennedy's
Ken Brace
kenbracejr@aol.com

Session 1
"The Road to Camelot"

Introduction - "A Tragic American Family Story" - Could Shakespeare even have imagined this story?

Cast of Characters

- Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. - Suffered an incapacitating stroke in 1961
- Rose Kennedy - Outlived 4 of her children
- Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. - Killed in bomber explosion in 1944
- John F. Kennedy - Assassinated in 1963
- Rose Marie Kennedy - Suffered an incapacitating lobotomy in 1941
- Kathleen Kennedy - Died in plane crash 1948
- Eunice Kennedy - Lived to be 88
- Patricia Kennedy - Lived to be 82
- Robert F. Kennedy - Assassinated in 1968
- Jean Kennedy - Last surviving member of Family
- Edward Kennedy - Involved in Chappaquiddick Incident 1969

In the Beginning There was Joseph Patrick Kennedy Sr.
Family Patriarch
September 6, 1888 - November 18, 1969

1935 - "I have no political ambitions for myself or my children."

1. Overcoming Irish - Catholic bias
 - Educated at famous Boston Latin School and Harvard (1912)
 - "How can we make some money?"
 - Denied membership in best social clubs - Why?
 - Entered banking field after graduation
 - "If you're going to get money, you have to find out where it is."
 - Became Assistant Bank Examiner for the state

2. Married Rose Fitzgerald in 1914
 - Daughter of John Fitzgerald - Mayor of Boston - “Honey Fitz”
3. During the 1920’s learned the stock market
 - Profited from insider trading, short sales and selling out before the crash of 1929
4. The lure of Hollywood and the movie industry in the late 20’s
 - Made \$6 million with a variety of movies
 - Worked with stars like cowboy Tom Mix and Gloria Swanson, with whom he had an adulteress relationship.
 - Help create RKO studio
5. Support for Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - Raised \$150,000 for Presidential Campaign
 - Loaned FDR campaign \$50,000 - not repaid
 - With James Roosevelt went to Europe to import medicinal liquor, including some well known brands, just in time for the repeal of Prohibition. Dewars scotch, Gordon gin, Ron Rico rum etc. Made a fortune.
6. In 1934 named 1st chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission by FDR
 - FDR - “It takes a thief to catch a thief”
 - Prohibited some behaviors he had profited from in the 20’s
7. 1938 - Appointed Ambassador to Great Britain - Can you imagine?
 - FDR amused at first - Later angry, embarrassed, brings him home
 - Calls the Queen a “cute trick” and “dowdy housewife”
 - Supported Neville Chamberlain’s Policy of Appeasement
 - “I’m for Hitler” - We should cooperate for the common good
 - Anti Semitic references - Letter with Joe Jr.
 - “Democracy is finished in England and it may be here”. Nov.10,1940
 - ENDED HIS PUBLIC CAREER - TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO HELPING HIS SONS

8. Continued to add to his personal fortune. Was one of richest men in the United States. Invested in real estate, oil, and shipbuilding including:
 - Merchandise Mart in Chicago
 - Hialeah Race Track in Florida

9. Joseph P. Kennedy had many enemies: WHY?
 - He was ruthless in business - Wall Street, Hollywood, Liquor, Real Estate
 - Penchant for using vulgar ethnic tags for minority groups. Impression he was anti-Semitic
 - During WWII an ardent isolationist who felt democracies should work with Hitler
 - New Dealers felt he was reactionary - the U.N. is hopeless - against lavish spending to foreign nations
 - He was a friend and admirer of Joseph McCarthy

John F. Kennedy - In Profiles in Courage

The story of the son is not wholly separable from the story of the father. For John Quincy Adams was, as Samuel Eliot Morison has described him, "above all an Adams"...

Ted Sorenson in his book "Kennedy" published in 1965

- Father and son could scarcely been more different
- Joe said I could write speeches for Jack but was too liberal for him
- Both had a natural charm and a winning Irish smile -Joe more dour and gruff- Jack more calm
- Joe more prone to angry outbursts - Jack more gentle composure
- Both were capable of making hard decisions but Joe more aggressive
- Both had a hatred of war -Joe (Fortress America) Jack (focus on domestic issues)

On the Other Side

- Both shared a delightful sense of humor
- A fierce family loyalty
- Endless vitality and a constant air of confidence
- Jack recognized that his father was a controversial figure, but no bigot
- Strong feelings of loyalty and love - proud of each others successes

