John Fitzgerald Kennedy Essay, Research Paper

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (Jack) was born in Brooklyn Massachusetts on May 29, 1917, to Joseph Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald, who were the children of Patrick Kennedy and John Fitzgerald (Honey Fitz), whose parents both emigrated from Ireland in 1858. Honey Fitz was governor of Boston and served on the House of Representatives. Both men were influential in politics.

Joseph and Rose Kennedy had nine children: Joseph Jr., John, Rosemary, Kathleen, Eunice, Patricia, Robert, Jean, and Edward (Teddy). They set up a million dollar trust fund for each of their children for their education, so that they would never have to worry. This let them devote their lives to public good. The parents divided supper into two age groups. They ate at both, so that they could discuss important issues with each group. Their father had a motto, “Second place is a loser”. All the children loved sports except, Rosemary, who didn’t like rough play. Mrs. Kennedy took the children on long walks and to church each day.

John went to public schools as a young child, while later he went to private schools in Riverdale, New York and Wallingford, Connecticut. Then he

went to Harvard. He was an excellent golfer, swimmer and overall athlete. During a football game, John injured his back.

Joe and John were very close. While young, Joe said he would be the president of the United States. The Kennedy family believed him. Mr. Kennedy was named the ambassador to Great Britain in 1937. While in England, John and his brother worked as international reporters for their father. The family returned home in 1939 and John graduated with honors in 1940. He wrote his graduating thesis and expanded it into a book Why England Slept.

A few months before the Pearl Harbor incident, John tried to enlist in the army, but because of his bad back, he was not accepted. He was let into the Navy, however. After exercise, he was commissioned as commander of a torpedo boat. In 1943, during a night operation, his boat was rammed and cut in half by a Japanese destroyer. John’s back was reinjured, but he gathered his crew and swam to a near by island. One of the crew was so badly injured that he had to be dragged and pulled. They swam for five hours. John was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and given the Purple Heart and a salutation. He was discharged from the navy because of the back injury.

About one year after, Joe Kennedy’s plane exploded in flight and he died. John wrote a collection of tributes to him. In 1948, Kathleen was also killed in a plane crash. Joe’s death affected John deeply, because he had wanted a career in politics, but couldn’t because his brother had chosen that field. When Joe died, John decided to go into politics because it was his natural calling. He decided to

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run for the 11th district Massachusetts House of Representatives seat. The district was predominantly Democratic, and so was Kennedy, so he was sure to win. His family came to his side to help him. He defeated eight other candidates. He was reelected in 1938 and 1950. His back injury continued to bother him. He ran for senate in 1952. His family gathered once again to help him. He won by a landslide. He was one of a few Democrats to be elected. John helped pass many bills important to his home state’s textile industry.

In Washington, D.C., John met his future wife, Jacqueline Lee Bouvier. They were married on September 12, 1953. Jackie was born on July 28, 1929, in

Southampton, Long Island, New York. She attended private schools in America and Paris. Caroline, their daughter was born in 1957 and John Jr. was born on November 25, 1960, 17 days after John was elected for President.

John’s back still gave him a lot of pain. He had a series of operations to correct the problems in 1954. In 1955, he wrote a book about courageous senators, entitled Profiles in Courage. It won the Pulitzer Prize for biography. During his campaign for Democratic nomination for President in 1960, he began his speeches with this statement, “Thanks for not voting for me in 1956.” In 1956, he barely missed the nomination for vice-president. The Democrats lost that year. If he would have lost, it would have hurt his reputation and he wouldn’t have won in 1960. His family helped him win the reelection for the senate in 1958.

John defeated Richard Nixon to become the thirty-fifth President of the United States of America in 1960. At 43, he was the youngest man ever elected to the Presidency. Teddy Roosevelt was 42, when he was sworn in, but he was not elected. He was also the first Roman Catholic President. His Vice President was Lyndon Johnson. John and LBJ did not get the popular vote, but they won the Electoral College. As John took office, Communists pushed forward into Laos and threatened South Vietnam. John tried to halt the spread of Communism. To help the Peace Corps, young Americans went to work in under developed countries.

In April 1961, the Soviets launched the first manned space mission. This started the space race. John increased the budget for NASA greatly. This allowed the Americans to become competitive in the race to the moon and outer space.

In the spring of 1961, a group of CIA agents backed Cubans to invade the Bay of Pigs, in Cuba. They were to attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro, the communist leader. The mission failed and they were defeated quickly.

John was blamed for the incident, and he took full responsibility for it.

He was hated for the defeat and loved for admitting his wrongdoing. Later John met with Nikita Khrushchev, of the Soviet Union, to talk about Germany. It did not alter the Communist goals. The Berlin Wall went up shortly after in August. Back in Washington, almost all of John’s proposals were going through Congress. He proposed better Social Security benefits, higher minimum wage, and aid to

economically depressed areas. The twenty-third amendment was also ratified; it allowed Washington D.C. residents to vote in Presidential elections.

In March 1961, John proposed an international economical development program for the Americas. He also used his influence to get a steal worker’s wage settlement. Early in April of 1962, however, several companies announced increases in prices. John reacted strongly by moving government orders to rival companies and threatening to sue. Days later the price changes were canceled.

On October 1962, aerial photos showed Soviet missile silos in Cuba.

John ordered the Navy to blockade Cuba from any ships leaving or going into

Cuba. The Soviets backed down and the missiles were removed.

In 1963, in Alabama blacks and polices clashed over civil rights.

John made all public schools desegregate, and ended discrimination in businesses.

He started paying more attention to NATO. In the summer of 1963, he visited West Germany, Italy, and Great Britain. John guaranteed that U.S. military forces would remain in those countries, and on the continent.

In November John decided to visit some southern states and campaign for the upcoming election. He visited Florida and Texas. When he went to Texas he brought his wife, Lyndon and his wife. All along the way he was told Texas might be angry with him, but it did not seem like it in all the other cities they visited then they went to Dallas. On December 20,1963, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was shot in the throat and then the head, so was the Governor of Texas. He was hit through the back and the bullet hit his wrist then into his thigh. The

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shots rang out at 12:30 P.M. John was killed instantly, but the doctors worked on him until 1:00 P.M, at which time he was pronounced dead.

A reporter saw the gunman and gave police a description. At 1:18 PM an officer found the man, but was shot by him. The police later captured the man, Lee Harvey Oswald, in a theater. On November 24 Oswald was shot while being transferred to a different prison by Jack Ruby. To this day we do not know the motives of Oswald, or why Jack ruby killed him either. At 2:00 P.M on November 23, 1963, Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as President. Another tragedy struck the world as Robert Kennedy, John’s brother and adviser and Attorney General, was shot and killed while campaigning for presidential nomination on June 5, 1968.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy spent about 1000 days as President. He was an influential Senator, and a war hero. He was one if not the most loved Presidents, but he was also one of the most hated. The weirdest part about John was that if he had been reelected in 1964, he did not want JBJ as his vice-President, something that has never happened before. Another memorable thing about John, was that he was a father first, and a President second.

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