

# The Family

## Glamor and Ambition Is Undimmed

STEVE NEAL

*Of The Inquirer Staff*

**T**HERE IS HOPE in Camelot, The armor may be rusting, but the legend survives. Icons of JFK and RFK, the martyred heroes, hang from the walls of a million living rooms in tenements and ranch houses.

The Kennedys, 10 years after JFK's thousand-day reign, have remained America's holy family. And, if things go according to schedule, there will be a restoration of Camelot in 1976.

Edward M. Kennedy, the handsome, charismatic 41-year-old surviving brother, can have the Democratic Presidential nomination for the asking. Democrats see him as the one man who, with his young, black and labor constituencies, can unite the party and defeat any Republican candidate.

They are probably right.

When Kennedy appeared with George McGovern in the fall 1972, he injected excitement into an otherwise dull campaign. The crowd size, at such appearances, usually doubled. And Kennedy got the cheers.

For all his glamor and style, Ted Kennedy is by no means a political giant. John F. Kennedy once called him "the family's best politician," but the surviving brother blew his first test of leadership, losing his job as Senate Whip after two undistinguished years. "I don't know what Ted really stands for," says a disillusioned former liberal senator. "He's certainly an intellectual lightweight compared to his brothers."

Indeed, when Kennedy entered the Senate in 1962, a Harvard Law School professor complained — "His academic record is mediocre. His professional career is virtually nonexistent. His candidacy is both preposterous and insulting."

Kennedy's greatest obstacle however, may be terror of terrors, the morality issue. While the public mem-



EDWARD AND ROSE KENNEDY

ory of Chappaquiddick may dim, rumors persist about Kennedy's drinking habits and girl-chasing. Other Presidents have, of course, had character flaws, but, after the sorry spectacle of Richard Nixon, the nation is becoming less tolerant.

But when Kennedy, in his haunting voice, urges his countrymen to "help me finish what my brothers began," the emotions will be so overwhelming that all will be forgiven.

**J**OAN KENNEDY, the potential President's beautiful, golden-haired wife, would be, without question, the sexiest First Lady since Dolly Madison. But Mrs. Kennedy insists, both publicly and privately, that she doesn't want her husband to run for President. She is terrified of the possibility that some demented, brain-damaged creature, reaching for a footnote in history, would assassinate the last Kennedy brother.

But 83-year-old Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, the family's strong, proud matriarch wants her dynasty returned to power. Since the death of her husband, former ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy in 1969, Rose Kennedy has become even more committed to the family's political fortunes.

It was Rose Kennedy, almost alone, who encouraged Ted Kennedy to continue his political career in 1969 after the Chappaquiddick incident. Her son faced possible manslaughter charges,

and, it appeared, certain political exile.

She hosted teas, shook hands at receptions, and made appearances at party rallies during his 1970 campaign. In 1972 she vetoed George McGovern's efforts to get her son to run for Vice President. Good Democrat that she is, Rose Kennedy still wasn't about to let her son be part of a losing ticket.

Her memoirs, titled "Times to Remember," will be published next March. And the book is expected to be one of 1974's most popular titles.

But more and more, Rose Kennedy's thoughts are on 1976.

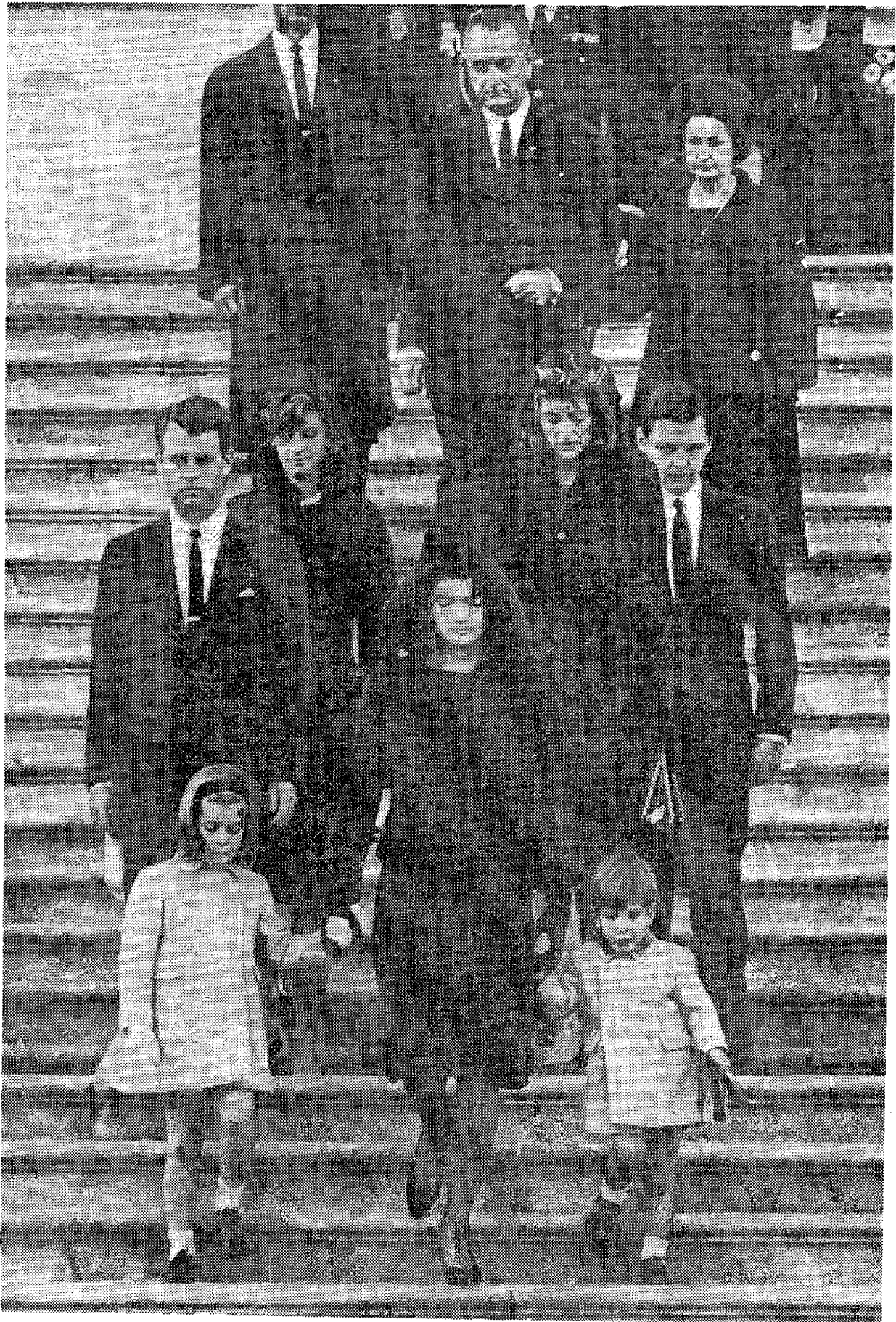
Mrs. Jacqueline Onassis, John F. Kennedy's widow, is far removed from American politics, a business she never really cared for in the first place. She is perhaps the best-known woman in the world but seeks only anonymity for herself and her children, Caroline (who will be 16 on Nov. 27) and John, whose 13th birthday is Nov. 25.

Ethel Kennedy, widow of Robert F. Kennedy, has talked about running for Congress in the five years since her husband's death.

But to date, Ethel Kennedy has not made much of an effort to become a candidate, spending most of her time raising her young children, and occasionally helping some worthy Democrat. She would, undoubtedly, actively campaign for Ted Kennedy in 1976.

Ironically, Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 Presidential campaign was a thinly disguised crusade against the hard-line foreign policy of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier. It would be no less ironic if Ted Kennedy, the man of Chappaquiddick, won the Presidency by promising to restore morality in government.

*The Feiffer cartoon and Vera Glaser column, normally on this page, are on Page 8.*



*Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy leads Caroline and John Jr. from the Capitol after ceremonies eulogizing the late President. Following her are Robert F. Kennedy and other members of the Kennedy family, with Lyndon B. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson in the rear.*