

The light of inspiration still shines

How well I recall Sen. John F. Kennedy speaking in New Brunswick in front of the post office on Sept. 15, 1960. It was a lovely, thrilling day, with thousands of people present.

I managed the Middlesex County headquarters for Citizens For Kennedy that fall, and it was a great experience.

Although I now live in Washington, I was a Middlesex County resident for more than 50 years and served Congressman Ed Patten for 15 years as his administrative assistant and press secretary.

On Jan. 20, 1961, the inaugural address of the young and vigorous president was eloquent and inspiring. To Arthur Krock, The New

York Times columnist, it was the best inaugural address since Woodrow Wilson.

I especially loved, "United, there is little we cannot do. Divided, there is little we can do." If people and nations would only cooperate more, I thought. Or are peace and justice merely childish dreams?

Somehow, though, John F. Kennedy placed real hope in my heart — hope that remains after 25 lonely years of waiting for another inspiration.

"Who can live without hope?" asked Carl Sandburg. With President Kennedy, there was justification for optimism.

In retrospect, the enduring legacy of John F. Kennedy is un-

conquerable hope.

America lost a president it admired and loved, but world freedom also found a permanent inspiration.

After I met Senator Kennedy in 1959, I thought of Sandburg's tribute to Lincoln: that rare combination of "steel and velvet." I knew Kennedy would be an excellent president. Twenty-five years after his death, I remember Kennedy with special appreciation. If Carl Schurz was right — that "ideals are like stars" — then Kennedy's inspiring light has not been extinguished, for death does not conquer ideals, love or hope. High ideals remain bright forever.

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