

JFK's letters, doodles, drafts, notes exhibited

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BOSTON — Before selecting the title "Profiles in Courage," John F. Kennedy considered naming his book on political heroism the considerably less inspiring "Call the Roll" and "Eight were Courageous."

As he prepared his famous "Berlin Wall" speech, he phonetically spelled out what would become memorable words: "Ish bin ein Bearleener."

And, with a last-minute scratch of the pen, the nation's 35th President spontaneously turned the turgid line, "When power intoxicates, poetry restores sobriety," into the more lyrical, "When power corrupts — poetry cleanses."

These and other first drafts of history are among the original documents and memorabilia featured in "Treasures of

the John F. Kennedy Library" an upcoming exhibit at the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum.

Organized to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the presidential museum, the exhibit of Kennedy's handwritten notes, personal effects and gifts from other world leaders will run Oct. 9 through May 1.

The exhibit of rarely displayed artifacts includes an original copy of a handwritten pep talk to the young President from former President Harry Truman.

"Mr. President don't let these damned columnists and editorial writers discourage you. . . . You meet 'em, cuss 'em and give 'em hell and you'll win in 1964," Truman wrote in an August 1962 note.

The museum also will display the original draft of Kennedy's legendary "Ask not what your country can do for you . . ." inaugural speech, as well as two pages of notes that show the President tweaked text that had read, "Ask not what your country is going to do for you."

In a letter to his sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Kennedy was uncertain what to name his book about elected officials who made unpopular political stands.

"Dear Eunice: Would you and Sarge (husband Sargent Shriver) and your friends mull over the following suggested titles for the book and let me know as soon as possible which you think is the best: 1. Men of Courage, 2. Eight were Courageous, 3. Call the Roll, 4. Profiles of Courage," Kennedy wrote in July 1955, shortly before the book was published.

It's unclear what counsel his sister provided, but "Profiles in Courage" earned Kennedy the Pulitzer Prize in 1956.

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