

# Washington ceremonies pay tribute to JFK

## Thousands in capital to mark 25th anniversary of his death

By Barbara Gamarekian  
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — A quarter of a century after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, thousands of people are gathering here to honor his memory.

At noon yesterday, 500 former Peace Corps volunteers began a 24-hour vigil in the Rotunda of the Capitol, reading aloud their

thoughts about the 35th president from journals and letters they wrote while abroad.

At 1 p.m. today, the 25th anniversary, a commemorative service will be held at St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Cathedral, where President Kennedy's coffin rested.

For weeks, more than 150 television crews from around the world have been filming at his grave where, beginning today, an

hourly round of tributes and visits will be offered.

The grave is visited by 4 million people each year.

The Kennedy family has expressed a preference that JFK's life be celebrated by commemorating the day of his birth, May 29, not the day of his death. But it was his violent death that helped to shape the way his presidency is

Kennedy, A-9 ▶

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## Kennedy

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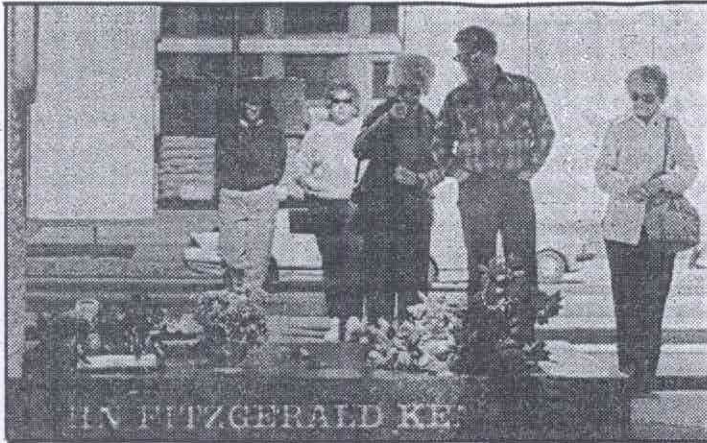
remembered by many — buoyant, eloquent and unfulfilled.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., who helped build health clinics in the Dominican Republic as a Peace Corps volunteer in the mid-1960s, introduced a congressional resolution making the Rotunda ceremony possible. He was joined there yesterday by other members of Congress who were in the Peace Corps.

Each read aloud for three minutes. Some read from letters written on Nov. 22, 1963; some read from journals, recounting that Kennedy sent them off as "messengers of peace" in a Rose Garden ceremony.

Along with the camera crews from Tokyo, London, Vienna, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Rome and Cologne, there have been many American film crews at Arlington.

"We've had a lot of local television people here from Arizona, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia — you name it," said Patty Heard, a press assistant at the Military District of Washing-



Paying homage: Visitors at JFK memorial in downtown Dallas.

ton. "They are all doing shows marking the 25th anniversary."

As for today, she said, "we have ceremonies all day long, the Green Berets, the seventh class of the motor torpedo boat squadron, the one the president graduated with, the Old Hibernian Club, and Phi Kappa Theta, Jack Kennedy's fraternity at Harvard."

At 8:15 a.m. EST today, former members of the Kennedy White

House staff will assemble for a memorial Mass at Arlington.

At 9 a.m., they will place the first flowers on his grave: 46 red roses, one for each of his years.

Gen. Michael D. Healy, the last commander of Special Forces in Vietnam, will speak at a chapel service this morning at Arlington Cemetery. Later, a wreath in the form of the Green Beret will be placed on the grave.