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The Name Is Still

Some Fire in Smoke About Kennedy Designs, But School Has 331-Year Tradition of Independence

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—Twenty seven days after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, his two brothers gathered with a group of his Washington and Harvard friends in a private dining room of New York's 21 Club.

The purpose of the meeting was announced by then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy: to make plans for a "living memorial" to the late President.

It was a glittering, all-Harvard assemblage. From the White House came McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Richard Goodwin. From the Harvard faculty were School of Administration dean Don K. Price and political scientist Samuel H. Beer. In the party too was Richard E. Neustadt, a Harvard alumnus, White House consultant, author of "Presidential Power" and a professor of government at Columbia University.

This session was followed by others in the Georgetown home of Jacqueline Kennedy and in Harvard conference rooms. It was from these free-ranging meetings and from an ensuing deluge of memos and letters that the concept of the Kennedy Institute for Politics emerged.

Memorial Capstone

THE INSTITUTE, everyone agreed, would be the capstone of the Harvard memorial to President Kennedy.

"It was a legitimate and necessary extension of what President Kennedy had in mind when he spoke of having a place at his library where, after his retirement, he might lecture and conduct seminars," Schlesinger said.

The early stages of planning were "little more than a babble of voices on the banks of the Charles," recalled Neustadt, on whose career the first meeting—Dec. 19, 1963—would have fateful impact. "There was no certainty it would go anywhere."

The drift of things was mirrored in a Jan. 6, 1964, memorandum to Schlesinger from an eminent White House colleague:

"Our problem is the Center and

here we have widely divergent views," the memo crisply asserted. "Sorensen is not interested in it; Neustadt thinks it amounts to starting a new college and the rest of us fall in between . . . If we find it hard to draw a clear charter, it seems to me that it would be harder still to frame one that carries conviction at this stage to the world at large."

But the babble finally gave way to consensus. A program was defined. Harvard recently agreed to adopt the Institute as part of a new \$30 million academic and memorial complex in Cambridge. The Kennedy family would endow the university through the Kennedy Library Corp. with \$10 million.

The plan was ratified by the Massachusetts courts and the state legislature as the result of the combined energies of Harvard, the Brahmin law firm of Ropes & Gray and the potency of the Kennedy name.

The Kennedy Goal

IN ITS LOFTIEST TERMS, the Institute would strive for President Kennedy's goal, as Schlesinger once voiced it, of "bringing together the world of ideas and the world of affairs; the world of scholarship and the world of decision."

In physical and financial terms, it seemed to be a marvel of Yankee compromise between the venerable university and the young Kennedy dynasty. Politically, however, it nurtured talk of a Kennedy government in exile—a storehouse of professional brainpower that might some day be tapped for another Kennedy assault on the White House.

True or not, the suspicions were fanned by British free-lance journalist Henry Fairlie's article published in the London Telegraph and The Washington Post and distributed by the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service on Jan. 15. Harvard, which faced British muskets with equanimity nearly two centuries ago, lost its cool under Fairlie's attack.

Fairlie charged that Sen. Robert F.

Kennedy (D-N.Y.) was using the Institute as a "recruiting college" for his presidential aims. The article suggested also that the university (with endowments of \$1 billion) had compromised the chastity of its School of Public Administration in exchange for the \$10 million Kennedy Library Corp. endowment, one that would produce an ultimate income of \$500,000 annually.

There was a prompt rejoinder from Dean Price, who branded the Fairlie article "irresponsible and inaccurate." From faculty members themselves, during five days in Cambridge, I heard a steady refrain of protest against the Fairlie article: silly . . . naive . . . uninformed . . . ridiculous.

A Stronger Case

ON THE BASIS of available evidence, an even stronger case than Fairlie's might be drawn on the purported Kennedy invasion of Harvard.

For instance: The endowment agreement between the Kennedy Library Corp. and the university gave the President's widow the right to veto Harvard's first three choices for any successor to Neustadt as Institute of Politics director. This extraordinary grant of authority to a member of a donor family is not recorded in the public file on the endowment agreement.

For instance: The agreement decrees to Harvard that "you will appoint as the first director of the Institute Prof. Richard E. Neustadt." As a Kennedy nominee, it might be asked would Neustadt's primary loyalties be to the family or to the university which pays his salary?

For instance: McGeorge Bundy, a Kennedy family friend and adviser as well as former dean of Harvard College, played a wide-ranging "inside" role in the formation of the Institute. Before leaving his White House job as national security adviser to become president of the Ford Foundation, he drafted the document — "An Outline Plan for the Institute of Politics in the John F. Kennedy School"—that was the basis for the university's request for a \$2 million Ford Foundation grant. A copy of the Bundy document bears a hand-written notation: "By Bundy for RFK discussion with Nate Pusey." Nathan M. Pusey is president of Harvard.

Other terms of the agreement, already made public, called for the ap-

Harvard University



A 1776 engraving of Harvard Yard, then a mere 140 years old.

pointment of a member of the Kennedy family to a "small advisory committee" that Harvard would establish and required that the name of the School for Public Administration be changed to the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

In 1936, Harvard refused a request by the School's first major benefactor, New York glove maker Lucius Littauer, that it be named after him. In popular usage, however, it did become the "Littauer School" and the glove maker's name was engraved over the building's Greek columns.

Recruiting College

FAIRLIE'S INDICTMENT of the Kennedys and Harvard hinged on one central point: Do the Kennedys exercise meaningful control over the Institute's policies and appointments?

Can it, in fact, be used as a "recruiting college" for family political aspirations?

The language of the letter-agreement is explicit on this point. "Full responsibility," it says, "for the conduct of both the School and the Institute, and appointments to the staff of both, will rest with Harvard, its governing boards and officers." The one exception was the limited veto for Mrs. Kennedy.

Furthermore, most candidates for the School of Government faculty carry senior professional status in a regular Harvard faculty department, most commonly the economics or government departments. The faculty committees of these departments are notoriously hard-nosed in judging the scholarship credentials of prospective members. Neustadt, for example, had to qualify in the government depart-

ment for a professorship even though his chief mission is to create a program for the Institute.

Even if the Kennedy family were rash enough to nominate a candidate for the School of Government faculty, he would have to pass the gantlet of a Harvard faculty committee. Here the Kennedy credentials would be of little avail. One prospective member of the Institute has already been denied senior professorial status by Harvard's economic faculty.

So it is that Harvard responds with bafflement or frosty derision to the notion that its faculty could be stacked with RFK political operatives.

"Anyone who thinks this institution can be moved by the Kennedy family stands convicted of the most incredible stupidity," said a senior professor.

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of government who has no connection with the Institute.

Nor is Mrs. Kennedy's membership on the advisory board, or her limited veto power, a subject of faculty alarm. "Back when all this was taking shape," recalled one person familiar with the background, "I remember Bobby remarking to McGeorge Bundy, 'My God, suppose they decide to appoint Gore Vidal as director!' (Vidal is a New York author who is on exceptionally unfriendly terms with the Kennedy family.) But that atmosphere of suspicion no longer exists."

Commented Dean Price: "It would have been indecent for Harvard to have excluded the Kennedy family from membership on the advisory committee."

A Lot of Clout

EVEN BY HARVARD standards, the Institute's advisory committee, headed by Ambassador at Large Averell Harriman, represents an impressive array of financial and social clout. Under its charter, however, the committee doesn't have authority over the lowliest staff appointment.

The Institute's fellowship program might be a lively point of controversy since it is there that a Kennedy patronage spigot might be turned on. But Neustadt, who no one accuses of insensitivity to political nuances, has striven to avoid any suggestion of partisanship.

One member of the current crop of Kennedy Institute Fellows, former

State Department Far East hand Jonathan Moore, is widely reported to have been offered the job of foreign policy adviser to Michigan Gov. George Romney. Moore is a Republican. Another Fellow, John G. Stewart, will return to his job as special assistant to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey. "Bobby Kennedy sure as hell isn't going to get much mileage out of me," Stewart is quick to say.

The one-year fellowships are the major element in the Institute's program. They are aimed at what Adam Yarmolinsky, head of the recruitment committee, labeled the "in-and-outer"—a careerist who commutes from public service to private or university life.

"Averell Harriman is an outstanding example of the 'in-and-outer'" observed one Institute member. "But he didn't have to worry about keeping his base in the private sector, thanks to a private fortune."

An average profile for this year's first batch of ten Fellows would be a man in his middle to late 30s who has spent the past five or six years in an influential executive or congressional job. Most are Democrats who have strong and nostalgic memories of the early Kennedy Administration days.

"Public service was challenging, exciting and interesting," said David Filvaroff, former special assistant to Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach on civil rights matters. "To some of us the prospect of returning to government is not unattractive. This isn't tied to any particular administration."

"In no sense," explained another Fel-

low who held a high executive position in Washington, "did I leave the Johnson Administration in anger. But there is a group here who shared the Kennedy experience with a sense of deep, emotional involvement. And I see nothing sinister about that. It might be fun to sit up here and talk about Bobby Kennedy. But we don't."

There is, one senses, a powerful institutional loyalty to the memory of President Kennedy. His photograph was a common adornment in offices I visited, although I did not see one picture of President Johnson. This sentiment goes far beyond the Kennedy Institute or School of Government.

"There are a large number of my colleagues who have become disaffected with this Administration," said an influential member of the economics department who commutes frequently to Washington. "Much of this comes from the war in Vietnam or from Johnson's personality. Yet in Washington I get the impression that the President is a careful, deliberative man who is highly skilled in his job."

The widespread adoration of the Kennedy memory at Harvard goes all the way to the top. President Pusey admired the late President in the warmest personal terms.

"I have heard him say time and time again," said a colleague of Pusey. "that without President Kennedy's vision of a union between the world of practical politics and the world of intellect, our civilization is sure to go down the drain."

This was undoubtedly an important factor in the university's decision to

adopt the Institute in perpetuity as part of Harvard.

But there were also practical considerations. Pusey had long been concerned about the poor endowment position of the old "Littauer School." Dean Price acknowledges that "for a long time we were at the bottom of the heap."

After Pusey became president of Harvard in 1953, he performed prodigies of fund-raising: \$6 million for the Divinity School, \$82 million for the College, \$58 million for the Medical School by 1965 the university's over-all endowment had reached \$1 billion.

"All the while, Don Price was waiting patiently in line," a government department faculty member noted. "And then—then, along came Bobby Kennedy."

Ambitious Visions Achieved

AFTER MORE THAN two years of planning and negotiation, the Kennedys and Harvard agreed on a grand architectural scheme to be designed by architect I. M. Pei that would achieve the most ambitious visions of both. It became known as the "Big Plan." Pusey so referred to it in a "Dear Bob" letter to Kennedy last June in which he outlined its physical and financial dimensions.

Crucial to the plan was acquisition of the 12-acre site along the Charles River, occupied by a grimy streetcar barn owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Commission. Harvard had coveted the site for nearly half a century. President Kennedy himself despaired of ever wresting the yards away

from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

But in 1965 the Massachusetts legislature, under the watchful eye of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), passed a special act permitting Harvard to acquire the yards for the Kennedy memorial.

Harvard, under the Big Plan, will invest \$17 million in the land and new buildings: a Center for International Studies as well as the new School of Government. The Kennedy Library Corp. will spend \$12 million for the Archive and Museum as well as for the costs of the Institute. Massachusetts will pour out \$5 million for the land on which the Kennedy Archive will stand.

Half of Harvard's costs for the new memorial center—about \$8.5 million—will be raised in a fund campaign led by Harvard graduate C. Douglas Dillon, former Secretary of the Treasury, and a grant of \$2.5 million from the Ford Foundation. Pusey has already invited the Kennedy Library Corp. to "cooperate" with the university in raising the rest of Harvard's ante.

A Welcome 'Robbery'

LAST JUNE, THE Kennedy Library Corp. told Pusey it had raised \$13 million in gifts and pledges for the Kennedy memorial. But the total bill to the Kennedys for the endowment and construction costs will be more than \$22 million. Still, the family gave Harvard its "personal pledge," in an attorney's letter last June, to meet the

endowment goal, even if it had to dig into the private Kennedy coffers.

"If this is a question of being robbed," said Dean Price, "I wish Harvard could get robbed like this every week."

Finally, if Harvard is the capital of the Kennedy government in exile, it was not the Institute of Politics that made it so.

John F. Kennedy tapped deeply into the university's resources of brainpower as soon as he came to Washington.

"When I would drop into the White House during the early Kennedy years, it was like dropping in on a Harvard faculty conference," reminisced one Harvard economist. "There would be Bundy, Kaysen, Schlesinger and many others from Cambridge. Even now Bobby Kennedy could pick brains all over the university without even touching the Institute."

Kennedy friends in Washington refer waggishly to the Institute by the Napoleonic code name, Elba, in an allusion to the special relationship between the Kennedys and Harvard.

This link, along with the ingredients of a respected university and an ambitious political family, was probably a sure formula for controversy.

But Harvard had, after all, sent five Presidents to Washington before JFK. It has also survived the blandishments of generations of affluent alumni. It has been entwined with public affairs for most of its 331 years. Whatever may be the fate of the Kennedys, Harvard will never go into exile.