

OBITUARIES



EVELYN NORTON LINCOLN

JFK Secretary Evelyn Lincoln Dies at Age 85

From News Services

Evelyn Norton Lincoln, 85, who was personal secretary to President John F. Kennedy, died May 11 at Georgetown University Hospital of complications after surgery for cancer. Mrs. Lincoln, who had been hospitalized since April 2, lived in Chevy Chase.

She was Kennedy's personal secretary from January 1953, when he started his first term in the Senate, until his death Nov. 22, 1963. She was one of the few people who knew that Kennedy secretly taped conversations in the Oval Office, and when that fact became known in the early 1980s, she valiantly defended it.

"There wasn't any sinister motive on the part of the president to get any information on anyone in order to blackmail them, or whatever. It was just a recording of the events," she told The Washington

Post in an interview in 1982.

Mrs. Lincoln was born on a farm in Nebraska. Her father, John N. Norton, was a member of the House of Representatives. She came to Washington in 1930 with her husband, Harold W. Lincoln, and the two got involved in politics.

She graduated from George Washington University, where she majored in English and dramatics. She also attended George Washington's law school for two years.

In 1951, she was working for a U.S. representative from Georgia when she identified Kennedy, a young representative from Massachusetts, as a shooting star and decided to volunteer in his office.

When Kennedy won his Senate seat, she was offered the job as his personal secretary. When he moved to the White House in 1961, she

went along. And she was there in Dallas in 1963 when he was assassinated.

Mrs. Lincoln kept a diary the whole time, and although she published bits and pieces in her books, the diary itself has remained secret. She told an interviewer in 1982 that she would make it public only after her death.

Asked if there were any bombshells in the diary, she said: "Oh, I think maybe there would be some. Some of the things that were said about other people."

She said she thought about leaving Kennedy's service only once. That was in the Senate, when she spent half her time screening calls from young women who wanted to meet him.

"He was charming. He had an Irish temper and when things didn't go right, he'd tell you about it," she told The Post.

In another interview, Mrs. Lincoln talked about booking appointments for Kennedy with his girlfriends.

After Kennedy's death, she worked on his personal papers, many of which are in the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston and in the National Archives in Washington.

She also worked for Rep. James Kee (D-W.Va.) from 1967 to 1973.

Mrs. Lincoln wrote two bestselling books, "My 12 Years With John F. Kennedy" and "Kennedy and Johnson."

She was known for visiting Kennedy's grave at Arlington National Cemetery every year on the anniversary of his death. In 1988, on the 25th anniversary, she went alone to the grave and laid three red roses near its eternal flame.

"I always come. I haven't missed a one. I feel that I should honor him. It's the least I can do," Mrs. Lincoln said then.

She said she "wouldn't give anything" for the experience of working in the White House with Kennedy. "That's why I'm grateful and I come out to the grave to thank him," she said.

Survivors include her husband of 64 years, who lives in Chevy Chase.

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