

Tom McIntyre. McIntyre had little chance of winning, but he kept hammering away at the fact that on the day when all the other congressmen from New England had flown to New York to hear the president's address on the Cuban situation, his opponent had chosen instead to make a campaign speech. McIntyre won that election. You never know for sure, but I would guess that Bass's decision to stay home that day was a major factor in his defeat.

Before we leave Jack Kennedy, there are a couple of myths about his administration that I'd like to clear up. The first misconception is that Jack had a first-rate congressional liaison team. Now it's true that Larry O'Brien knew everyone worth knowing on the Hill, and that he and Dick Donahue were friendly and popular, and that they were unusually adept at doing political favors for individual congressmen.

Unfortunately, they weren't nearly as effective at their job, which was to help get the president's legislation through Congress. Other than the Manpower bill, there wasn't much Kennedy legislation that actually passed during his shortened term in office. Eventually, most of his legislation did go through, but it took the political skills of Lyndon Johnson to make it happen.

But it would be unfair to judge Jack Kennedy only in terms of legislation. Despite his lack of success in dealing with Congress, his leadership set the stage for so many important changes in America. What would we have achieved in civil rights without Jack Kennedy? Or in space exploration? Or arms control?

When you consider the larger picture, it's clear that Jack Kennedy left a shining legacy. Perhaps his most important achievement was to draw a new generation of young Americans into politics and government. He brought government to the people, and, equally important, he brought talented people into government.

The other misunderstanding about Jack Kennedy is the misinformed notion that he was responsible for getting us into Vietnam. In my view, just the opposite was true. If Jack had lived to serve a second term—and there's no question that he would have creamed Goldwater—he would have pulled out all our troops within a year or two.

Certainly the Pentagon would never have exercised the kind of power over Kennedy that it had over Johnson. Lyndon Johnson revered West Point and the military leaders who came out of there,

outcome
was said

lives his
of 1962.
many
when
on was

esident
e were
is, San
v from
v quiet
ticians.
count-
to get
ith the
out to

ilding
shown
oading
ow he
y Rus-
e story
g seri-

om big
Bass of
lelega-
mbers,
nguish
akker
n that
ome to

named

and he believed their judgment was infallible. Kennedy, on the other hand, was an Ivy Leaguer who was always skeptical of the military. There was no way he would ever allow them to call the shots.

Kenny O'Donnell used to say—and I believe him—that as president, Jack Kennedy agreed with Mike Mansfield on the need for a complete military withdrawal from Vietnam. But because the president knew that such a move might prove wildly unpopular with the voters, he intended to wait until 1965, the beginning of his second term, to put that plan into effect. Unfortunately, he never got the chance.

I vividly remember the last time I saw Jack Kennedy. I was flying in from Boston on a Monday afternoon in November, and when the plane touched down, Billie Smith, my secretary, was waiting for me. "The president wants to see you," she said.

When I got to the White House, Jack was already meeting with Dick Bolling and two or three of the other Democratic members of the Rules Committee. "The train is off the track," he said. "We can't get anything through Congress. I called you fellows over because you're my friends and your philosophy is the same as mine. I don't want the leadership to think I'm talking behind their backs, but what's going on here, and how we can we straighten things out?"

We explained to the president that the White House was taking too much for granted, and that his congressional liaison team hadn't been working closely enough with the members of the House. Jack was concerned, but he probably took our comments with a grain of salt. He was already looking ahead to November of 1964, and he simply relished the prospect of running against Goldwater, whom he regarded as a very weak opponent. After the anticipated Democratic landslide of 1964, which would bring a large group of new Democrats into Congress, he expected the House to pass all of his legislation without much difficulty.

When the meeting was over I left the White House through the back door, but Billie Smith had already driven off. I walked back inside to call my office, and I ran into the president.

"Tip, where are you headed?" he asked.

"I guess I'll walk to the University Club," I said. "My secretary drove off with the car."