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'Ted Told Truth on Mary Jo'

*Joan Kennedy
Interviewed*

NEW YORK — (UPI) — Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's wife, Joan, says she knew about the party at Chappaquiddick in advance and believes what her husband has told her about the tragic death of Mary Jo Kopechne.

Asked in an interview in the current issue of Ladies' Home Journal magazine whether she believed stories that Kennedy and Miss Kopechne were going for a midnight swim when his car went off the Chappaquiddick bridge, Mrs. Kennedy replied:

"No, I'm sure they weren't. Ted left the party early so he could get a good night's sleep and be ready for the next day's (yacht) race."

She was quoted as saying she thought her husband "probably should have notified police earlier."

"I believe everything Ted said," she was quoted. "I believe in giving him all the support I can. I don't believe in bugging him, in saying 'why did you say that?' or, 'Why didn't you do this?' It was very unfortunate . . . a tragic accident."

Mrs. Kennedy said she did not go to the yacht races in which the Senator participated prior to the cookout on Chappaquiddick because it was a long, rough race and she was two months pregnant.

"Ted phoned me that Friday, after the race was finished, and told me, 'we came in fourth,' she said . . . The next morning . . . Ted phoned me again and said there had been a terrible accident and Mary Jo had drowned."

Her conscious fears for her husband's own life did not begin until she watched "love turn into hate" in the turmoil of the 1968 Chicago Democratic convention and the fear is with her — and with her husband — always," she said.

"And all this you hear about the Kennedy family pressuring Ted to run for President," Mrs. Kennedy continued. "What family? What's left of the Kennedys? Besides Ted, only women and children! You don't seriously think we want Ted to be President, do you? To have the one Kennedy man left risk having happen to him what happened to his brothers?"

She said the surviving Kennedys "need" her husband and "he is quite aware of how we feel."