

3 Kennedys Attend Funeral for Drowned Secretary

By NAN ROBERTSON
Special to The New York Times

PLYMOUTH, Pa., July 22—Mary Jo Kopechne, whose life and death were interviewed with the Kennedy family, was buried here today on a high green hillside above the slag heaps of this mined-out anthracite town. She would have been 29 years old next Saturday.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, his wife Joan and Ethel Kennedy, widow of his assassinated brother Robert, flew from Hyannis Port, Mass., to the funeral of Miss Kopechne, who drowned when a car driven by the Senator plunged off a bridge on Martha's Vineyard Island during the weekend.

She had been a secretary and campaign worker for Senator Robert Kennedy and a friend of the family for years.

Today, Edward Kennedy was wearing a neck brace, presumably as a result of the accident. He looked grim and distracted throughout the requiem mass, as he was engulfed by a curious and excited crowd on the street outside and during the brief service at the grave.

His wife and sister-in-law appeared stunned. Mrs. Joseph Kopechne, the mother, seemed crushed with grief. She wept bitterly during the service for her only child in the Roman Catholic Church of St. Vincent, with its elaborate carvings and paintings, a block from Plymouth's main street.

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Her husband helped her to her feet for the responses, clasped her tightly about the waist, murmured to her and once laid his head against hers. They were alone in a pew across the aisle from the Kennedys, and looked neither at them nor at anyone else as the mass was said.

The two families had consoled each other earlier in the front parlor of the adjoining rectory, according to two priest who were there. It was yet another scene of agony and loss that the Kennedys and those they have touched have endured in recent years.

A large entourage of friends and associates of both the Kennedys and Miss Kopechne converged here today. They included seven of the 12 persons who, according to Senator Kennedy's aides, were at the cook-out party preceding Miss Kopechne's death.

They were Nance Lyons, a legislative aide to Senator Kennedy; her sister, Maryellen, an assistant to State Senator Beryl Cohen of Massachusetts; Rosemary Keough, who works for the Children's Foundation in Washington; Susan Tannenbaum, from the office of Representative Allard K. Lowenstein, Nassau County Democrat; Esther Newburg, of the Urban Institute in Washington; Joseph Gargan, a cousin of Senator Kennedy, and the Senator himself.

The young women kept to themselves, speaking only with the Kopechne family or Kennedy associates. They frequently burst into tears, both at the church and earlier at the funeral home of John J. Kielty, where they viewed the body of their friend. She lay in an open coffin, clad in a pale blue gown and clasping a crystal rosary.

Aides of Senator Kennedy spoke freely to reporters about the Senator's movements today and also of what they called "repeated" offers by the Kennedys to pay for Miss Kopechne's funeral, which her parents have refused.

Silent on Accident

They would say nothing about what happened in the nine hours between the accident off Martha's Vineyard and Mr. Kennedy's appearance on Saturday morning at the police station to report it.

Except for those who knew the dead woman, the scene today in Plymouth was not one of sorrow but of curiosity. Her parents moved from Plymouth when Miss Kopechne was only a year old, and live now in Berkeley Heights, N. J., where her father is an insurance man. But the family burial plot is still in the hilltop cemetery of St. Vincent's Church.

This morning, a crowd of 700

people waited outside the funeral home and the church or craned from front porches of little frame houses along the Streets. Msgr. William E. Burchill, St. Vincent's pastor waited nervously at the rectory door with his assistant, the Rev. Charles Smith.

At 9 A.M. the Kennedy plane, a DC-3 belonging to Mrs. Robert Kennedy's family, landed at the Wilkes-Barre-Scranton Airport nearby. Shortly thereafter the Kennedy cars rolled down Church Street to the rectory.

The meeting inside was brief. Present were the two priests, who withdrew after the introductions; the three members of the Kennedy family; the Kopechnes; William J. Vanden Heuvel, a Kennedy friend who is a New York lawyer, and David Burke, the Senator's administrative assistant.

The hushed church across the

grassy yard was full, with people stand along the sides and back and in the balcony. Almost all in the congregation were women, with many teenagers.

Sat in 4th Row

The funeral party entered by a side door at the front of the high-ceilinged edifice. When the Kennedys appeared, a loud buzz and murmur swept across the congregation. Senator Kennedy, in a dark suit and black tie knotted loosely beneath his neck brace, cast his eyes on the floor.

So did his wife, who was dressed in white, with a black bow at the back of her blonde curls. Mrs. Ethel Kennedy was all in black, with a short lace mantilla over her hair.

With K. LeMoyné Billings, a friend from New York, they moved to the fourth pew behind three empty rows. The two robed priests with their acolytes moved down the center aisle to meet the coffin at the church door.

Eight pallbearers carried the heavy metal coffin, and Monsignor Burchill began the words of "De Profundis":

"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord . . . my soul waits for the Lord."

Six of the pallbearers were cousins of Miss Kopechne. The two others were K. Dun Gifford, Senator Kennedy's legislative assistant, and David Hackett, who helped keep the delegate count in a Washington office during Senator Robert Kennedy's Presidential campaign last year. Miss Kopechne and seven other young women worked there.

Today, all but one of these seven women were in the church.

When the coffin was set down between the Kennedy and Kopechne families, Monsignor Burchill began the requiem mass.

Near the end, he said: "Do not hand her over to the powers of the enemy and do not forget her, but command that this soul be taken up by the holy angels and brought home to paradise." Mrs. Kopechne buried her face in her hands.

Shouts From Crowd

The ranks of friends in the pews behind the Kennedy family across the aisle contained many who became noted through their association with Robert Kennedy.

They included Frank Maniewicz, Mr. Kennedy's press secretary, and now a columnist, who announced the Senator's death a year ago; Peter Edelman, associate director of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, and Adam Walinsky, an adviser.

As the funeral party emerged

from the church for the procession to the cemetery, shouts of "There he is!" burst from the camera-clicking crowd. They surged around Mr. Kennedy and the others, pushing for position close by. The Senator and all with him showed deep distress; many of Miss Kopechne's women friends were sobbing as

they struggled to reach their cars.

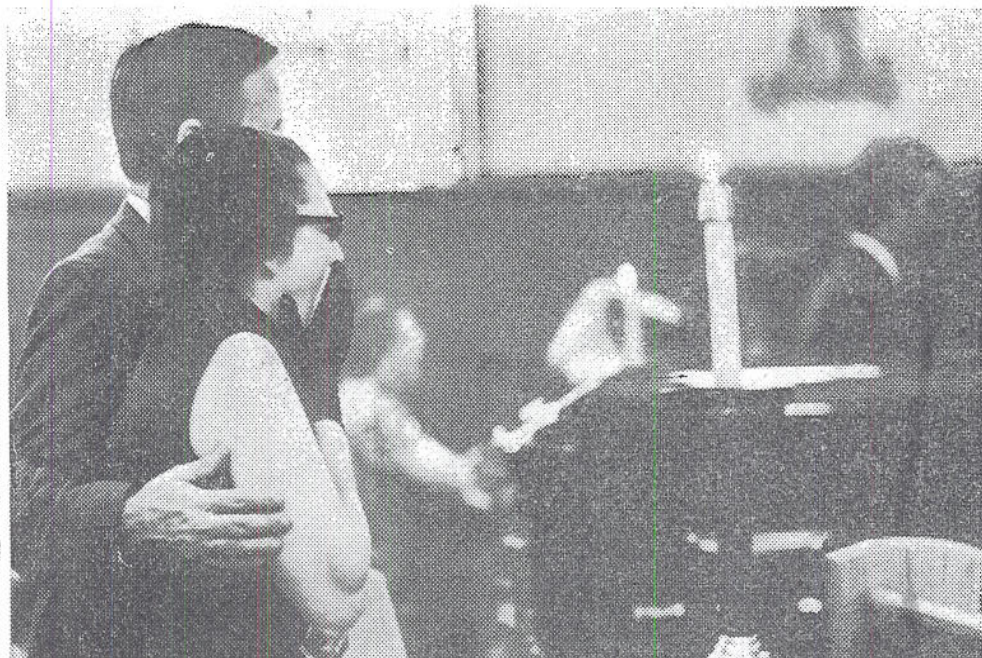
After about 10 minutes, the motorcade was able to move up a long, winding road to the gravesite. The narrow route was jammed with hundreds of cars, their occupants perspiring in the mugginess of the gray day.

The Kopechne family was seated in rows of chairs under an open-sided tent for the brief ceremony. Senator Kennedy, flanked by his wife and sister-in-law, stood at the back, his head tilted, staring abstractedly until it was over.

The Kennedy party, after accompanying the Kopechne family to a brief gathering at the nearby Kingston House Inn, flew back to the family compound at Hyannis Port on Cape Cod.

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BEREAVED: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kopechne at the coffin of their only daughter, Mary Jo, at her funeral yesterday in the Roman Catholic Church of St. Vincent, Plymouth, Pa.



The New York Times (by Mike Lien)

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kennedy at funeral with K. LeMoyne Billings, left, and Michael E. Kennedy, almost hidden.