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Sen. Edward M. Kennedy with his wife, Joan, as he announced he would not be a presidential candidate in 1976.

WXPost Kennedy Bows Out for 1976

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Cites Duty to Family

By William Claiborne
Washington Post Staff Writer

BOSTON, Sept. 23—Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) announced today that he would not be a presidential candidate in 1976.

"There is absolutely no circumstance or event that will alter the decision," Kennedy told a news conference here. He said he would not accept a draft in 1976 and would oppose any effort to place his name in nomination at the Democratic National Convention.

Kennedy's decision leaves the contest for the Democratic nomination wide open, with three senators already building campaign organizations and traveling to test their appeal to voters. They are Sens. Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota, Henry M. Jackson of Washington and Lloyd M. Bensten Jr. of Texas.

Each will presumably seek Kennedy's support, but he did not make any statement that could be interpreted as an endorsement.

Kennedy decided nearly a month ago that he would not seek the presidency in 1976, according to a close adviser to whom he revealed the decision.

Kennedy announced today that he wouldn't run, this adviser said, in order to put behind him all the questions about his political future that were plaguing him at every turn when he traveled for Democratic candidates.

With his impressive leads in public opinion polls, it had been widely as-

See KENNEDY, A6, Col. 1

Ticket Up for Grabs

By Jules Witcover and Richard M. Cohen
Washington Post Staff Writers

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's sudden withdrawal from 1976 presidential contention not only throws the Democratic nomination up for grabs, party leaders agreed yesterday, but also sets the stage for a dramatic, multi-ballot "brokered" convention.

Kennedy was the only prospective 1976 aspirant who appeared to have a chance to win the Democratic nomination on the first ballot, these leaders said, especially under new party rules for delegate selection that bar winner-take-all state primaries and caucuses.

"This will be the first convention brokered in the name of reform," said a political adviser to Sen. Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.), one of the hopefuls who is expected to benefit among party liberals as a result of Kennedy's decision.

But Mondale was only one of at least three Democrats listed by party leaders yesterday as likely beneficiaries of Kennedy's decision.

Although he is considered to the right of Kennedy on the political spectrum, Sen. Henry M. (Scoop) Jackson (D-Wash.) will be helped by the Kennedy pullout because it will give him a clearer field in the fight for support of organized labor, most Democratic politicians agreed.

AFL-CIO President George Meany and Alexander Barkan, director of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education, "both would rather have Scoop than

See IMPACT, A6, Col. 6

Kennedy Exit Precipitates Scramble for '76 Nomination

IMPACT, From A1

Teddy," a high ranking Democratic National Committee official said yesterday, "but they would have been perfectly happy with Teddy, if he had become the nominee. Teddy's withdrawal makes it easier now to pull labor for Scoop."

However, because the labor vote no longer is deliverable as a bloc and because it is factionalized, several party and labor politicians noted, other candidates can be expected to draw off some of the old Kennedy support.

Among them, they said, is Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, who in Democratic presidential primaries in 1964 and 1972 demonstrated strength among the same blue-collar voters who in the past have supported the candidacies of the Kennedy brothers.

Most party leaders contacted in the wake of the Kennedy announcement predicted a widened field of Democratic aspirants, particularly liberals rushing to fill the Kennedy vacuum. That prospect, they noted, would work against Mondale, who up to now had been mining the liberal lode as the prime alternative to Kennedy.

Among those being mentioned yesterday as possible added starters on the liberal side were Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), if he can win re-election impressively in November; Gov. John J. Gilligan of Ohio if he can beat

back the challenge of former Republican Gov. James A. Rhodes; and former astronaut John Glenn, odds-on favorite to win a Senate seat from Ohio.

The Kennedy withdrawal also is expected to increase the prospects that two other Democrats already testing the presidential waters, Sen. Lloyd M. Bentsen of Texas, and Rep. Morris K. Udall of Arizona, will eventually take the plunge.

One 1972 candidate, Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) said that while he was disinclined to make a second try, "I guess it's no secret that the taste for the challenge has never left me. But whether it makes sense to go after it again is another question."

Muskie noted he had just accepted the chairmanship of the new Senate Budget Committee, which he viewed as a worthwhile and constructive undertaking, "and it's not my instinct to run around the country in a hopeless cause."

But he added: "If what I consider to be unlikely, if there was a strong enough indication it might make sense for me to think about it again, I suppose I would be tempted to think about it. But that hasn't happened yet, and I don't find the juices flowing."

One ranking party official, asked about Muskie, said: "Muskie is more anxious to be President than anybody you know. He's the most frustrated of all of them."

The 1972 Democratic standard-bearer, Sen. George McGovern, was in South Dakota yesterday campaigning for re-election. An aide said there was no change in his position that he would not be a candidate in 1976.

Mondale said of Kennedy's decision: "I think it's a helpful development for me. It clarifies the situation. In my travels and in hundreds of occasions people say, 'we like you, but what's Teddy gonna do?' Now we know. He was clearly the dominant candidate and it was difficult for me to get a hearing. Now it will be much easier."

Mondale held a meeting with his chief aides yesterday morning and said afterward he planned no essential change in strategy but "I believe I will now be able to raise some money better than I have."

Jackson said as a result of the Kennedy decision he would accelerate his "effort from the standpoint of staffing" for his 1976 bid, now regarded a near-certainty. He saw the Kennedy pullout as a boon to his prospects for labor backing but he also believed new candidates likely would emerge.

Jackson said the likelihood that no candidate now could anticipate a first-ballot nomination "will require great strength in the primaries, and you have to avoid all the bruises" in order to survive in the negotiations that would accompany a deadlocked, multi-ballot convention.

Presidential Candidacy in '76 Kennedy, Citing Family, Bars

KENNEDY, From A1

sumed in the party that the nomination was Kennedy's for the asking. However, some party leaders had been sensitive to the fact that as long as Kennedy withheld his decision, it would make it more difficult for other candidates to develop.

Although Kennedy said his decision is applicable for "any foreseeable future," his responses to questions appeared to leave the door open to a candidacy in 1980; when he will be 48, still young by presidential standards.

Alluding to the assassinations of his older brothers, President John F. Kennedy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Kennedy said, "I've seen in my own family where it never serves a purpose to plan beyond the immediate future."

He said he plans to be a candidate for re-election to the Senate in 1976, and in the meantime will remain active in the party.

While tacitly acknowledging that he may not be able to remove himself from speculation about the 1976 nomination, Kennedy repeatedly attempted to underscore the finality of his decision to withdraw as a candidate.

On the verge of exasperation at one point, he said, "I said it. I can't find words in the English language that are more clear."

Later, when asked if he could envision any state of affairs in national politics that would make him change his mind, Kennedy momentarily glanced in the direction of his wife, Joan, and said, "No. I must say I would not . . . there are no circumstances."

Kennedy said his decision was based solely on personal considerations involving his family.

"From the campaigns of my brothers before me, I know that seeking the nation's highest office demands a candidate's undivided attention and his deepest personal commitment. If any candidate is unable to make that commitment, he does a disservice to his country and to his party by undertaking the effort," Kennedy said.

"My primary responsibilities are at home. It has become quite apparent to me that I would be unable to make a full commitment to a campaign for the presidency. I simply cannot do that to my wife and children and other members of my family," Kennedy declared.

Seated beside him in a crowded—and occasionally boisterous—news confer-

ence at the Parker House was Mrs. Kennedy, who periodically has been under hospital care.

Another major factor, aides to the senator said, was that a presidential candidacy would intrude on Kennedy's ability to follow closely the cancer prevention treatments for his son, Teddy Jr., who had a leg amputated last November.

Although he has persistently been haunted by questions arising out of his automobile accident on July 19, 1969, at Chappaquiddick, Mass., in which a passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, drowned, Kennedy said the accident and a spate of articles this summer on its fifth anniversary were not factors he considered.

He acknowledged that the accident and his role in reporting it to authorities would have been a "factor that would have been raised" in his candidacy, but he said he was prepared to address the questions squarely.

Referring to a coroner's inquiry following the accident, Kennedy said, "These questions asked of me would be asked of me in other parts of the country.

"I can live with my testimony. Although this tragedy is a deep personal tragedy, one that I accept full responsibility for . . . I can live with my testimony," Kennedy added.

In spite of his decision against making the 1976 race, Kennedy said, he will respond in the future to newsmen's questions about

the Chappaquiddick incident. No questions about his role in the accident were posed at today's news conference.

The personal dangers inherent in the last surviving Kennedy brother running for national office also were not a major factor, the senator insisted, although he obliquely revealed the extent to which he had given thought to the possibility of an assassination attempt.

"Any one who didn't realize the potential dangers would be naive, and anybody who was obsessed with them would be ineffective," Kennedy said.

Kennedy repeatedly sidestepped attempts to elicit an endorsement of Democratic hopefuls in 1976, saying instead he preferred to let prospective candidates make their appeals to the voters.

He said he will do some campaigning this fall, but he indicated it would be limited to a relatively few commitments he has already made.

Kennedy denied that he felt any pressure on the part of the Democratic organization to announce his withdrawal now. Repeatedly over the past year, he has said he would announce his intentions by mid-1975, although during a political trip to California last weekend, he said an announcement would come sooner.

Facing an incumbent President, Democratic strategists have noted that any aspiring challenger should begin organizing his cam-



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Sen. Kennedy announcing he won't be '76 candidate.

paign now, in the face of increased reluctance of donors to make campaign gifts as a result of the aftereffects of Watergate.

While denying that party leaders had pressured him to announce his intentions, Kennedy conceded that after this fall's congressional races, "there would, perhaps, have been more intensive pressure."

Washington Post staff writer Jules Witcover reported that Kennedy concluded in late August that his family responsibilities—especially the hospitalizations of his son and wife—would not permit him to undertake the kind of full-

scale campaign that would have been required.

He called David Burke, his one-time Senate administrative aide and longtime personal political adviser, to Cape Cod and for several hours Burke, who agreed that Kennedy should not run, played devil's advocate, laying out the considerations, pro and con, of his decision.

The decision made, only the matter of timing remained. Kennedy said privately he wanted to make a statement as soon as it was prudently possible.