

With '76 Ruled Out, Kennedy

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Sen. Edward M. Kennedy may have said nay yesterday to the 1976 Democratic presidential nomination, but he did not rule out 1980, 1984, 1988 or even 1992.

By the 1992 campaign, Ted Kennedy will be 60 years old — younger than Gerald R. Ford will be in two years when he makes his presumed run for his own presidential term.

Ted Kennedy is still young politically, despite a life where ill health and tragic convulsions have been as common as the remarkable political successes. For the Kennedy family, and its enormous ambitions, there are still other years, other campaigns.

When Kennedy said yesterday that "I simply cannot do that (run for President) to my wife and children and the other members of my family," he capsulized one tragedy upon another.

Within his own family, his son, Ted Jr., had a leg ampu-

tated last November. Ted will be 13 on Thursday and needs constant treatment to prevent the spread of cancer.

His wife, Joan, has been hospitalized time and again over the last few months for nervous disorders.

And there are the 13 other children for whom he is the only Kennedy father — the two of his brother Jack, shot down while he was President, and the eleven of brother Bob, shot down while trying to become President.

Ted Kennedy has shared in all of the well-known traumas that have been visited upon the Kennedys, and undergone a few of his own.

There was sister Rosemary, who was born retarded.

Then there was the oldest brother, Joe Jr., who they say was destined to be President, who was shot down in Europe as a Navy flier in World War II.

Then there was sister

Kathleen, who died in a plane crash in France in 1948.

And then there was Joseph P. Kennedy Sr., the patriarch of the family, who suffered a severe, paralyzing stroke in 1961, losing his ability to speak, finally dying in 1969.

Edward Moore (Ted) Kennedy has, like all the Kennedys, lived a life that is in so many respects charmed. He received his first communion from Pope Pius XII. He and Joan were married by Francis Cardinal Spellman. Few would doubt that he won his first election, just three years out of law school in 1962, because his last name was Kennedy and his brother in the White House was very popular, indeed, in Massachusetts.

But Ted Kennedy's own misfortunes, almost a reverse charm, had started before.

In his freshman year at Harvard, in 1951, Ted Kennedy as a lark had a classmate who was expert in Spanish take an examination for him in Spanish a.

The imposter was spotted when he handed in the exam booklet; a Kennedy was booted out of Harvard.

He enlisted in the Army and was sent eventually to Paris, where his life was not a hard one. Always a bit of a daredevil, while there he entered a Swiss bobsled race — never having been aboard one — and won the race.

When he was readmitted to Harvard, Kennedy became a bit of a "grind," but his record was not good enough to get him into Harvard Law School. He eventually entered the University of Virginia Law School, where his brother Bob had preceded him.

At Virginia, his penchant for speed caught up with him; he was notorious for gunning around the campus in his Oldsmobile. Twice he paid fines for traffic violations, speeding and running lights.

Kennedy's curious combination of luck and misfortune escalated after he was elected, in 1962, to fill the

Could Run in '80, '84, '88 or '92

unexpired two years of his brother Jack's Senate term.

Eleven months after Ted became a senator, John F. Kennedy was slain in Dallas.

Only months later, on June 19, 1964, a rented plane carrying Ted Kennedy to a political appearance in Springfield, Mass., crashed. The pilot was killed, as was Kennedy's administrative assistant.

Sen. Birch Bayh and his wife were along. Both were injured but not as badly as Kennedy, who had been standing in an aisle when the plane hit. Bayh pulled Kennedy out all but dead. Three vertebrae were smashed, two ribs were cracked, internal bleeding was profuse.

The next painful six months were spent on a rotating Stryker frame. It was December before he could stand upright again and, like his brother Jack, he has been destined to live with constant back pain and supportive bracings.

While he lay immobile in

Boston's New England Baptist Hospital, his shy wife Joan campaigned in his stead. He won his own term in the Senate smashing, winning 75 per cent of the votes cast.

In June 1968, the third of the Kennedy brothers, Robert, then New York's junior senator and having just won the California Democratic presidential primary, was shot down. Ted, the last of the Kennedy sons, delivered the searing eulogy at the St. Patrick's Cathedral services.

Thirteen months later came the next Kennedy tragedy, this one on July 19, 1969, on the small island of Chappaquiddick off Martha's Vineyard.

Ted Kennedy was driving a car which plunged off tiny Dike Bridge and into a tidal pond. His passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, who had been a secretary and campaign worker for Robert Kennedy, drowned. Kennedy managed to get out and survive. And he failed to report the drowning to police until

some hours later, the next morning.

Kennedy ultimately pleaded guilty to leaving the scene of an accident. He made a nationwide television appearance on July 25, during which he told his version of the events at Chappaquiddick. An estimated 35 million Americans watched.

His role in the incident has never been resolved fully for many Americans, and it is said to have been a factor in his declining to seek any national office in 1972. He said yesterday it "would have been a factor," though he feels not a conclusive one, if he had run in 1976.

Kennedy's ill fortunes did not end with Chappaquiddick, however.

Six months before, Kennedy had challenged Sen. Russell B. Long for the job of assistant majority leader of the Senate. He won 31 to 26.

Two years later, his fellow Democrats ousted him from the whip's job, 31 to 24, in

favor of West Virginia's Robert C. Byrd.

Meanwhile, his huge plurality in Massachusetts in 1964 shrank. He won in 1970 over Josiah A. Spaulding with no mean margin of victory—he had 62.1 per cent of the vote—but a far less smashing one than 1964's.

His spirits were buoyed again in 1972, when he took the campaign trail for his fellow senator, George McGovern, and for his brother-in-law, R. Sargent Shriver Jr., in their unsuccessful bid for the White House.

Kennedy warmed to the crowds he drew, and to observers it was clear that his political magnetism, his Irish politician's way with a crowd, was far more effective than McGovern's. McGovern had pleaded with him repeatedly to join the ticket as the vice presidential nominee.

He was thinking about the presidency again when the word came last year that young Ted had cancer, and that his leg would have to be amputated.