

# Joan Kennedy Charged as Drunk Driver

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Joan Bennett Kennedy, wife of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated yesterday after her 1971 Pontiac convertible struck two other cars halted at a stoplight in McLean.

No one was injured in the accident, according to officials.

Police said Mrs. Kennedy was released on her own recognizance to a member of the Kennedy household which was informed of the accident by a phone call

from the McLean Police substation.

A spokesman at the senator's office said the office was notified shortly after the accident and Sen. Kennedy left immediately to be with his wife.

Police said the accident occurred about 1:45 p.m. at the intersection of Virginia Rtes. 123 and 193 near the entrance to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mrs. Kennedy was headed south on the inside lane of Rte. 123 police said, when her white convertible slammed into the rear of a green 1972 Capri driven by Edward F. McGrath of 1719 Saddler Ridge Ct Vienna.

The impact knocked the McGrath car into the rear of a blue 1955 Chevrolet driven by Carol A. Pinder, of 632 Tazewell Rd., Vienna.

McGrath, who identified himself as an administrative assistant in the Defense Department, said Mrs. Kennedy appeared very upset and "very, very sorry she had caused us problems."

He said her car was damaged slightly in the front and Mrs. Pinder's caved in in the rear. His car, he said, was smashed in front and rear.

All three vehicles were driven off, he said, but he had Mrs. Pinder follow im

to a Lincoln-Mercury dealer at Tysons Corner.

"Pieces were falling off," he said. "I didn't think I was going to make it."

McGrath said Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Pinder were alone in their cars. With him in his car, he said, was Arthur Wedler, a fellow Defense Department employe. The two men were on their way to a business meeting in Westgate Research Park near Tysons Corner. Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Pinder, he said, did not say where they were going.

McGrath said the police officer investigating the accident called each of the  
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three drivers individually to his patrol car to give his version of the accident, then crowded all three of them into the back seat to fill out a series of accident forms.

As they were doing so, McGrath said, the policeman turned around and "said he was going to have to cite Mrs. Kennedy. He didn't say what for."

McGrath said he and Mrs. Pinder then left the scene after exchanging telephone numbers, and permit and insurance information.

Police said Mrs. Kennedy was then taken by patrol car to the McLean substation a mile away.

There she was given a test that analyzes the alcohol content of a person's breath. Police declined to release results of the test.

McGrath said Mrs. Kennedy was dressed in a brown leather coat and, while upset, was not in tears.

"She was very thankful nobody was hurt," he said. "And she repeated to us over and over again that she was sorry."

Mrs. Kennedy's accident occurred just 15 days after her husband announced that he would neither seek nor accept the Democratic nomination for President 1976.

At the time Kennedy said his "primary responsibilities are at home.

"I reached this decision after discussion with my wife and other members of my family," he said. "I have chosen to announce the decision now in order to ease the apprehensions within my family about the possibility of my candidacy, as well as to clarify the situation within my party."

Mrs. Kennedy left a hospital in Capistrano-by-the-Sea, Calif., to be at her husband's side during the Sept. 23 news conference.

She had been scheduled to return to the hospital shortly afterward, but a spokesman in the senator's office said yesterday she has been at home in McLean for the past two weeks.

Before entering the California hospital she had been undergoing treatment at the Silver Hill Foundation Hospital in New Canaan, Conn., which specializes in treating people with drinking problems.

The California hospital also treats drinking problems, but the therapy is based on massive doses of vitamins—an approach an American Psychiatric Association task force says does not work.

Mrs. Kennedy began seeing a psychiatrist in Washington in January, 1971.

Her emotional problems worsened last November

when her son Edward, 13, developed cancer and had his right leg amputated.

His mother, according to doctors, is not considered an

alcoholic but began drinking heavily.

following the amputation.

Said a friend: "It hit her very hard."