

Kennedy Youth Under The Weight of History

By DIANE MONK
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Joseph Patrick Kennedy III, 15 years old, has lived more history than many men read in a lifetime.

"Joe . . . has had more of the pressures of the world on his shoulders than any boy I've ever known," said David D. Wicks, headmaster of Milton Academy in Milton, Mass.

Wicks was sitting in his office at the academy near Boston.

ABSENT

Joe Kennedy, eldest grandson of millionaire Joseph P. Kennedy, and still unable to shake the title of "Milton's most famous student," was absent.

The date was June 7, 1968, and Joe was in New York City, where he served as one of the pallbearers who carried the casket of his father into St. Patrick's Cathedral.

While millions watched on television, Joe performed this last service with the dignity and poise the world has learned to expect when the Kennedys grieve in public.

And yet, David Wicks further described this tall young man with the familiar Kennedy shock of dark blond hair, as "in so many ways, a typical adolescent—clumsy, chaotic, disorganized and confused."

LIKES SPORTS

Joe, already is 5 feet 10 inches tall. He's still growing, Wicks added, and is developing into a much broader and huskier man than the late senator.

Joe likes sports more than studying, and gets a special thrill from "dangerous" activities such as shooting the rapids in a canoe, and skiing, which has been a favorite pastime of the entire Kennedy family.

But he has been the unluckiest of all the Kennedys on the ski slopes. During the last two Christmas vacations, he has fallen and suffered a broken leg. Both injuries kept him from participating in sports at Milton for an entire year.

Joe's headmaster described him as well liked by his classmates, and said he felt popularity with other students was important to the boy.

A KENNEDY

However, no matter how hard he tries to be average, no matter how likeable he is in manner—nobody, and least of all Joe himself—ever forgets he is first and foremost a Kennedy.

His mother, Ethel Kennedy, spent the night before Joe's birth campaigning in Fall River, Mass., for Joe's uncle, John F. Kennedy, who was running for the U.S. Senate the time.

John F. Kennedy won the election, of course, and some of his opponents charged infant Joe had something to do with the victory.

They suggested that baptism of Joe by Archbishop Richard (now Cardinal) Cushing, in a special week-day ceremony just before the election, helped put his uncle over the top at the polls.

After that, Joe never had a minute off the bandwagon or out of the spotlight.

EVENTS

He was 8 years old in 1960, when his uncle became the 35th President of the United States and his father was appointed Attorney General.

He was 11 in 1963, when assassination and national tragedy first touched the Kennedy family.

He was 12 years old in 1964, when another uncle, Edward M. Kennedy, was

sent to the Senate by the people of Massachusetts.

He was 14 in 1966, when his father was elected senator from New York.

And Joe Kennedy, who "loves the whole show of politics," in the words of a friend, had made big plans for this, his 16th summer.

CAMPAIGNER

He was going to spend his whole vacation helping his father campaign for the presidency—beginning just as soon as school was out.

Instead, he left school at 5:30 a.m. on June 5, several days early. He flew back east the next night on the plane with this father's body.

He doesn't know how he'll be spending his 16th summer now.