

# More Than 600 Honorary Guards, in 6-Man

By DAVID K. SHIPLER  
A gray-bearded Greek Orthodox priest stood silently facing a small blond-haired boy across the African mahogany casket of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy yesterday in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The boy, the priest and hundreds of others—high government officials, postmen, entertainers, friends, colleagues and campaign workers—stood in six-man shifts, three on each side of the coffin as honorary pallbearers.

The silent vigil began when the late Senator's body was placed in the cathedral Thursday night, and continued through yesterday into the night. It was planned to last, in 15-to-30 minute shifts, until the funeral this morning.

Men like Sidney Poitier, the actor; Burke Marshall, former deputy attorney general, former Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon and Roy Wilkins, the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, took their places around the coffin, stood for a while and then stepped aside for others.

The idea for the vigil "just sprang up as a thing to do" Thursday night, according to William Haddad, a Kennedy appointee in the Peace Corps and the poverty program.

A small group of the late Senator's friends and aides began it spontaneously when the coffin was placed in the cathedral, Mr. Haddad said. It grew from about 25 persons



Robert S. McNamara



Rafer Johnson



Arthur J. Goldberg

during Thursday night to more than 600, in shifts of six, during yesterday and last night.

"To us it meant an awful lot," said Mr. Haddad. "It took out a lot of the tension."

The unusual guard formed an

island of stillness around the coffin as two streams of mourners flowed single-file down the long center aisle of the cathedral and behind the pallbearers on each side of the maroon-draped catafalque.

Smoothly and quietly, aides and friends of the late Senator changed the guard by one man at a time. A touch on the shoulder signaled Ed. Sullivan that it was time for the next man to take his place. Mr.

## Shifts, Keep Silent Vigil in the Cathedral



Stewart L. Udall



Sidney Poitier



Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

the casket. They did, nervously, with their hands folded in front of them as they had been told.

Four members of the Green Berets, all friends of the Kennedys, stood silent watch over the bier early in the morning.

One of them, Sgt. Maj. Francis J. Ruddy, his uniform decked with rows of ribbons, was the man who placed the wreath on President Kennedy's grave the day of burial in November, 1963.

Sergeant Ruddy could not talk for a few moments after standing his guard. Then, haltingly, he said: "Boy. You know. Loss of my life."

Former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, who was an appointee of President Kennedy and has been a close friend of the whole family, described his feeling while standing by the coffin as "one of grief, a grief that was shared by thousands passing by."

Each who stood the vigil stood it in his own way. Most clasped their hands in front of them, some behind their backs, others left their arms at their sides.

Some looked straight ahead, others watched the mourners touch or kiss the coffin. Some looked down with eyes half closed. Others stared at the six flickering candles around the coffin. Each appeared deeply lost in his own thoughts.

Writer Grieves and Weeps  
Writer Budd Schulberg's face was lined with grief as he came away from the coffin. Perspiring from the muggy air and hot television lights, he sat beside his wife in a pew, mopping his face with a handkerchief and weeping silently.

Sullivan turned toward the altar, kneeled, crossed himself and walked slowly out of the cathedral.

Most of those who served in the guard were invited by the Kennedy family, many at

the request of the late Senator's wife, Ethel.

But some, like Capt. Earl P. Yates—prospective commanding officer of the new aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy—came on their own.

Others, like Donald and Malcolm Kerry, 10 and 11 years old, respectively, were sitting in a pew when they were asked by a Kennedy aide if they would like to stand by

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