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Kennedy 450

NEW YORK AP — Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, in an echo of the way his brother Robert answered questions about seeking the presidency, says, "It goes without saying that I don't believe in making long-range plans."

"We can never know what is just up ahead that might change everything," he said in an interview published Monday in Look magazine. "And I don't believe in the tyranny of time—that at a certain time, you must do a certain thing, take a certain step, or the opportunity will be lost forever."

The young Massachusetts senator, two of whose brothers, a president and a senator, fell to assassins' bullets, said, "Some people say that 1972 is the year I must make a move for the presidency, or 1974, or 1980. But how do I know that some young fellow—some Jay Rockefeller—won't suddenly come on the scene and make everybody forget that anybody ever considered Ted Kennedy for the presidency?"

"And so I just try to work in the areas and on the problems that were my brothers' concern and let the future take care of itself."

But Kennedy also said, "I would rather do what I have always tried to do: to perform to the best of my ability, and then, if that performance is considered to be of a caliber qualifying for greater responsibility, to submit my record to the people."

In the article, which also notes that since Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated last year, Edward Kennedy has made four decisions, each in the face of strong opposition from advisers, that have advanced him more and more.

He decided to deliver the personal eulogy at his brother's funeral when those around him feared he would break down in the middle of it. He decided against pushing for the 1968 Democratic presidential nomination, accepted to make the Worcester, Mass., speech that brought him from seclusion and decided to fight for Sen. Russell B. Long's job as whip, or assistant Democratic leader in the Senate.

Rogers writes that Kennedy was under considerable pressure to reach for the presidential nomination as he waited in his Cape Cod living room during the Democratic National Convention.

"Basically, I just didn't have the feeling at that time for politics and campaigning, and, beyond that, I was too vulnerable," Kennedy said.

"After all, how could I conscientiously combat allegations by Nixon and we had to anticipate he would make them—that I was too young, that I had no record in public life strong enough to recommend me for the high office of president, that perhaps I was trying to trade on my brothers' names. I could not expose the Democratic party to that kind of vulnerability. I asked why he goes on in politics, Kennedy said.

"It seems to me, if you have the ability and the training for public service, and the opportunity, it would be a sin not to pursue it. I don't have any feelings of guilt, any of that conscience bit about noblesse oblige because I happen to be born with money. It's just that there is so much wrong in the world, so many people suffering needlessly, and, if I think I can help, it seems to me I must try.

"And there is a challenge in politics. You say to yourself 'I wonder if I can do it,' and then, later, you might say, 'I think I can do it,' and you try and you succeed, and it's a wonderful thing. I used to like the people, the rough-and-tumble of politics, but all that changed after . . . after . . . after 1962," the year President John F. Kennedy was slain.

A challenge looming before Kennedy now is in his home state of Massachusetts.

"The whip fight," Kennedy said, "is apt to look like a tea party when 1970 rolls around back home." He'll be running for re-election then.

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