



AP Wirephoto

Joan and Teddy Kennedy with (from left), Kara, 12, Edward Jr., 10, and Patrick, 4

## Joan Kennedy: 'Haunted by Fear'

New York

DISCLOSING that she has been seeing a psychiatrist for more than a year, Mrs. Edward M. Kennedy said yesterday she is haunted by the fear that her husband, like his two brothers, will be assassinated.

"I live with the fear. I have for a long time," Joan Kennedy said in an interview in *Good Housekeeping* magazine. (Her father, Harry Wiggin Bennett, said, "Joan is terrified.")

Mrs. Kennedy said her husband receives hundreds of threats against his life each week, most written but some telephoned. She said he had tried to keep them from her.

"I always hear everything

anyway," she said. "Somehow, somehow, the stories get back to me. These days Ted's a lot more straightforward with me about the danger. If something's happened, some incident, he tells me right away.

"Of course, I worry, and yet I know Ted's not going to stop being a controversial senator, and the more controversial he is, the more he lays himself open to threats."

Mrs. Kennedy — once quoted as saying she never wanted her husband to be president — said she hoped that if her husband decides to seek the presidency he would wait until 1976.

"Four years from now I'll be more able to cope," she said.

But, she added, "I would do anything that Ted would want to do and I certainly wouldn't make it difficult for him if the presidency is what he wants — someday. I hope it's not this year."

Mrs. Kennedy said that when she began psychiatric treatment in January, 1971, in Washington she had lost her self-confidence.

After a year, she said, "I feel more independent now, more self-assured."

"It's very easy to feel insecure when you marry into a very famous, intelligent, exciting family. I certainly don't regret having done it, but it's difficult. You start comparing yourself to the other Kennedy women and somehow your confidence in yourself begins to evapo-

rate," she said.

Awed by the other Kennedy women, Joan Kennedy said she resorted to such attention-getters as spectacular outfits.

"I wish I'd never done that," she said. "Let's just say I don't need to do that sort of thing anymore."

Mrs. Kennedy said it was "absolutely untrue" that she had considered leaving her husband after the 1969 accident at Chappaquiddick, Mass., in which he drove his car off a bridge, killing Mary Jo Kopechne, the former Kennedy campaign aide who was with him.

Mrs. Kennedy said if any good has come from the tragedy, it is that she and her husband are closer than ever.

AP, Reuters, UP