

Mary Jo Worked for JFK, RFK

NEWARK (N.J.) — (UPI) — Mary Jo Kopechne was a "bright," "delightful" and "very efficient" girl, friends, neighbors and employers said last night.

"She was committed to the Kennedys in the hope of building a better world," a neighbor of her parents in suburban Berkeley Heights said.

Miss Kopechne, drowned when a car driven by Sen. Edward Kennedy ran off a bridge into a pond, had gone up to Cape Cod for the weekend, her employer, Matt Reese, a Washington campaign consultant, said.

"She left on Thursday and said she would be back on Tuesday morning," Reese said. "It was my understanding she was to meet with friends up there."

A neighbor of the girl's father, Joseph Kopechne, an insurance agent in Berkeley Heights, said Miss Kopechne had worked for the late Sen. Robert Kennedy, and Edward Kennedy had made an effort to keep all members of his brother's staff working for him.

He would not have had a social outing without inviting both staffs so it was not unusual for her to have been with his party this weekend, the neighbor said.

The Kopechnes, who also have a home in Plymouth, Pa., where Mary Jo was born, remained in seclusion at their home here. A neigh-

Kennedy Statement

'Repeatedly Dove Down to the Car'

EDGARTOWN (Mass.)—(UP)—The text of the statement given by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy to Edgartown police regarding the fatal auto accident on Martha's Vineyard in which Mary J. Kopechne was killed:

"On July 18, 1969, at approximately 11:15 p.m., I was driving my car on Main street in Chappaquiddick on my way to get the ferry back to Edgartown. I was unfamiliar with the road and turned right on Dike road instead of bearing hard left on Main Street.

"After proceeding for approximately one half mile on Dike Road, I descended a hill and came upon a narrow bridge. The car went off the side of the bridge.

"There was one passenger in the car with me, Miss Mary Joe Kopechne, a former secretary of my brother, Robert Kennedy. The car turned over and sank into the water and landed with the roof resting on the bottom.

"I attempted to open the door and window of the car but had no recollection of how I got out of the car.

"I came to the surface and then repeatedly dove down to the car and tried to see if the passenger was still in the car. I was unsuccessful in the attempt.

"I was exhausted and in a state of shock. I recall walking back to where my friends were eating. There was a car parked in front of the cottage and I climbed into the back seat. I then asked for someone to bring me back to Edgartown. I remember walking around for a period of time and then going back to my hotel room.

"When I fully realized what had happened this morning I immediately contacted the police."

bor said they shared Mary Jo's admiration for the Kennedys and both the senator and his wife had telephoned their condolences.

Reese said if he had to pick one word to describe Mary Jo, it would be "delightful."

Miss Kopechne, majored in government at Caldwell College for Women in Caldwell, N.J. and had worked for

John Kennedy in New Jersey in 1960.

After her graduation in 1963, she went to work for Sen. George Smathers in Washington, and then went to work for Robert Kennedy.

Miss Kopechne's body will be flown to the Wilkes Barre, Pa., Airport today and a funeral was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday with burial in Plymouth, Pa.

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