

Kennedy Case Autopsy Move

New Bedford, Mass.

District Attorney Edmund Dinis asked a Pennsylvania court yesterday to order exhumation and an autopsy on the body of Mary Jo Kopechne, drowned July 18 in a car accident involving Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

Dinis said in his petition he wanted the post-mortem examination for the forthcoming inquest into the accident.

"The purpose of the inquest," he said in the petition, "is to determine whether or not there is any reason sufficient to believe that the sudden death of Mary Jo Kopechne may have resulted from the act or negligence of a person or persons other than the deceased."

Dinis sent the petition to the Common Pleas Court in Luzerne county, Pennsylvania.

Miss Kopechne, 28, of Washington, and a former secretary of the late Robert

F. Kennedy, was buried in her hometown, Plymouth, Pa., which is in that county.

Dinis asked for a hearing on his petition and further urged the court to set a date "as soon as is practicable, because time is of the essence."

The inquest into Miss Kopechne's death is to open in the Dukes county court at Edgartown, on Martha's Vineyard Island, where Miss

Kopechne died.

Dinis said in his petition that the exhumation and autopsy are required "in order that the circumstances surrounding the death be resolved . . ."

Dinis was quoted yesterday as saying that he ordered an autopsy on Miss Kopechne's body July 20 only to find out that it already had been sent to Pennsylvania.

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