

Kennedy: 2 Years After His Election

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By RICHARD REEVES

Two years after becoming a New Yorker, Robert F. Kennedy is in a position to take over the state Democratic party and wait for the right year to run for President of the United States.

The charge of "carpetbagger" is no longer heard. Senator Kennedy has done more than buy a five-room apartment overlooking the East River. He is building his own organization of bright young men who could become new leaders of the New York Democratic organization, he has fought for New York in the Senate, and he has initiated a series of public-service projects.

His party has lost two elections in two years, but the Senator has won the

praises of many New Yorkers who opposed him in 1964, the grumbling respect of his fellow Senators and both the public adoration and private fear of state party leaders.

In Washington, one veteran Senator complained to a subcommittee chairman this year that Senator Kennedy was getting preferential treatment for a freshman.

"Oh, no," was the chairman's reported reply. "I treat him the same way I'd treat any future President."

In New York, many Democratic leaders revile the Senator in private and swarm all over him in public. Some of the leaders are beginning to notice, and resent, the several hundred young lawyers, educators and businessmen that the Senator has quietly re-

cruited to work on a series of personal projects such as improving slum schools.

"I'm encouraging these people to run for public office," Senator Kennedy said, conceding that this might bring his personal organization into conflict with the regular party organization. "Out of this group might come a good candidate for Mayor in 1969 or Governor in 1970. I expect some of them will run for Congress and State Legislature."

His people would replace candidates like Abraham Beame and Frank D. O'Connor, whose defeats for New York Mayor in 1965 and Governor last Tuesday left Senator Kennedy as the only Democrat in a major elective

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neddy said he believed the United States must honor its commitment in Vietnam, but added that he believed the bombing of North Vietnam "serves no military purpose." Such public reservations about Administration foreign policy have helped him win over the New York liberals who opposed his election two years ago.

A typical liberal comment came from Carey McWilliams, editor of The Nation. He was a Democrat for Keating in 1964. "I've been impressed with his performance and his positions," Mr. McWilliams said. "He's been diligent and attentive to the problems of the city and state. Maybe he's changed. I'd work for him now."

"Certainly he's changed," said one of his closest friends, Edwin O. Guthman, who was his press secretary in the 1964 campaign and now is national news editor of the Los Angeles Times. "But there is no new Bob Kennedy. He's just matured an awful lot in 10 years. The quick judgments that characterized his youth are a thing of the past."

Most people who meet Robert Kennedy find him a charming and witty companion. His friends defend him against the old "tough and ruthless" charges that have haunted him since his days on the staff of the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate Rackets Committee.

The toughness is seldom flashed in public these days. But it is still there. While campaigning last month in California, the Senator learned a reporter was writing a story he didn't like. He sought out the reporter and accused him of "sensationalism" in front of 20 other reporters. Then had an aide telephone the paper's editor to complain.

One place where Robert Kennedy is not particularly popular is in the Senate.

He waited only three weeks to make his maiden speech in that institution, while some freshmen wait years. (His brother, Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts waited 16 months.)

"It takes longer to get things done in the Senate than I like to see things done," Senator Kennedy said.

"He gets bored quickly," said one of his top assistants.

Last July, Senator Kennedy apparently thought things were taking too long when the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee spent a long afternoon in executive session discussing a resolution concerning the national airline strike.

He smilingly passed notes back and forth with his brother while New York's Republican Senator, Jacob K. Javits, and Oregon Democratic Senator Wayne Morse debated over the exact words to use in a key sentence.

Suddenly, Robert Kennedy stood up. "Oh, hell, why don't you just flip a coin?" he said. Then he walked out of the room.

Two of the three Senate amendments with Sen. Kennedy's name on them are primarily concerned with state

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position who could dominate the party.

"Win or lose, changes should be made in the party," Senator Kennedy had said in an interview a few days before Mr. O'Connor was defeated by Governor Rockefeller. Because of the loss, other Democrats have begun agitating for changes and some of them, have already pointed to the Senator as the man who must rebuild the party.

Senator Kennedy plans to spend almost all of his time in New York during the next three months, partially because he wants to be a major force at the Constitutional Convention, which meets in April to rewrite the state's fundamental law.

But some of his backers believe Senator Kennedy will also find the time during those months to begin shaking up the Democratic party. They see the Senator clashing with some of the leaders (or "bosses") who brought him here, helping Reform Democrats increase their strength and maneuvering to push the Liberal party toward oblivion.

Robert Kennedy's friends feel he has come a long way in two years. In 1964, he was the abrasive, tight-lipped young Attorney General who came to New York with a real chance of being defeated by Senator Kenneth Keating. But this fall, Senator Kennedy, now 40 years old, is not only the most powerful Democrat in New York but is perhaps the most popular politician in the nation, cheered by almost hysterical crowds holding signs aloft that proclaim: "Bobby in '68," "Bobby in '72" and "Bobby Anytime."

A Political Legacy

The crowds and polls acclaiming his popularity give the junior Senator from New York more power than almost all his political elders. Although he ranks 99th in seniority among 100 senators, he already has his name on three substantial pieces of legislation.

As the political heir of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy has a special position in American politics. He periodically uses that position to publicly criticize President Johnson, whom, in the

words of a close friend, "he respects a good deal and dislikes a great deal."

But the public criticism became less persistent at the end of the summer, when Democrats began campaigning. Since then, the Senator has been praising the President almost daily—"Lyndon Johnson has ably continued the policies of President Kennedy."

Away from the microphones, however, in a hard, toneless voice, he talks about the time he asked President Johnson to keep a promise made by President Kennedy—that New York Democratic campaigns would be financed by the Democratic National Committee because so much of the national money is raised by New Yorkers.

"You don't seem to understand," President Johnson is quoted by Senator Kennedy as answering. "That was a different President."

Friends and associates of the Senator interviewed by The New York Times during weeks of research on his record in New York agreed that Senator Kennedy did not yet know what he would do in 1968. "He's playing it by ear," said one associate. "He's ready for anything—there just isn't any Kennedy master plan."

Plans For 1968

Some friends of the Senator believe he would accept if the President asked him to run for Vice President in 1968. "They don't have to like each other," a close friend said. "Bob's brother didn't like Johnson either."

While friends and political writers analyze his plans at length, the Senator, publicly and privately, insists he has no plans for 1968. Last month, at the University of California at Berkeley, he was asked whether he intended to run in 1968. He said "No." The audience booed softly and hissed as he added: "I'm going to remain in the Senate representing New York."

In the theater, Senator Ken-

problems. One enabled 13 upstate counties to receive aid under the Appalachia redevelopment program. The other (co-sponsored by Senator Javits) allowed 100,000 Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans to vote.

The Appalachia amendment, passed over the objection of Governor Rockefeller, has brought \$29 million in Federal aid to the southwestern part of the state. Most of the money is allocated to modernize Route 17, but \$4-million is being used to help vocational schools, sewage treatment plants, libraries, hospitals and airports.

School Aid Test

The third Kennedy amendment, passed as part of the Education Bill of 1965, authorizes the Federal Government to establish a universal system to test the progress of students in Federally-aided schools. The Senator—who has a habit of dropping into schools in any town he visits—believes the testing system will become “a national standard by which parents will be able to judge educational quality for the first time.”

Senator Kennedy has added an executive function to his job by starting more than two dozen of his personal, usually unpublicized, public service projects. The young men he has recruited—who are informally called “associates”—from law firms, colleges and office buildings are often responsible for planning and administering the projects.

The Kennedy projects include: helping to establish a hot breakfast program and tutorial programs in New York City's special schools for emotionally disturbed children. (“Help started coming our way as soon as Bobby visited a school,” said one principal, Albert Budnick of the Walter Reed School in Queens); helping to develop two parks in the Bronx; establishing a corporation to bring industry to the slums of Brooklyn; arranging for Columbia University to work closely with Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem; distributing theater and football tickets to poor children; establishing regional development councils for upstate counties.

Looking for Talent

“Some of these people came to us,” the Senator said. “But, usually, we hear that someone is bright and we approach them.”

Arnold Spillen—34 years old, a Yale Law School graduate, a Reform Democrat—said he was approached by another lawyer. He has spent “lunch-hours, evenings and weekends” helping to develop two small parks for Senator Kennedy.

James M. Edwards, junior partner in a Wall Street law firm, is researching a complicated railroad merger for Senator Kennedy and represents him at transportation meetings. Ronald Corwin, a Syracuse University teacher, is touring state Indian reservations to prepare a report for the Senator. He, like all the other Ken-

nedy volunteers, receives no pay.

Senator Kennedy will be checking his projects during the next three months, when he will live in the apartment at 860 United Nations Plaza. (He and his wife live with their nine children on a six-acre estate in McLean, Va.) During his stay in New York, he will also be meeting with Democratic delegates to the state Constitutional Convention.

“The Senator said all along that the election of convention delegates was more important than the gubernatorial election,” said William vanden Huevel, one of several Kennedy friends elected as a delegate last Tuesday. “He wants to leave his mark on the new constitution.”

With Mr. O'Connor's defeat, Sen. Kennedy expects to be the major influence on the Democratic majority of convention delegates. He is already organizing task forces that will study constitutional issues and make recommendations to delegates.

His Appeal

Democratic leaders are certain to be demanding much of Senator Kennedy's time and, if the past two years are a guide, he will not find too much time to see them. When they do get near him, state politicians have about as much reserve as do the teen-age girls who squeal over his mop of greying chestnut hair. The party faithful almost broke down the doors of a reception room in Buffalo's Statler-Hilton Hotel for a chance to shake the Senator's hand during a reception before the state Democratic convention last summer.

“But when party leaders are alone, three out of four hate him,” said one important county leader. “They don't mention him by name. Everyone knows who they're talking about when they say ‘that little . . .’, well, they use a word they don't use in front of their wives.”

“They hate him because they're afraid of him,” the leader said. “I doubt many of them would cross him. But he's unsure of his power with the leaders, he'd rather go to the voters.”

The fear of Senator Kennedy in political circles increased last June when he joined Reform Democrats and Liberals in successfully backing Samuel J. Silverman for Manhattan Surrogate against the regular organization candidate. He went after [Manhattan Democratic leader J. Raymond] Jones that time. How do I know I'm not next?” a county leader said.

Still, the Senator bungled several attempts to keep the gubernatorial nomination from Mr. O'Connor.

No Entry for Race

“Sure he wanted to stop O'Connor,” said one of the few New Yorkers close to Sen. Kennedy. “But there was no one to stop him with. [Nassau County Executive Eugene H.] Nickerson made little impact and the man Kennedy really wanted, Sol Linowitz, just didn't have the stomach for the race.”

Senator Kennedy talked to Mr. Linowitz, a Rochester resident, who was then chairman of the Xerox Corporation and is now ambassador to the Organization of American States, about seeking the nomination. He also approached at least four other men: Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare John W. Gardner, who turned about to be a New Jersey Republican; New York University President James

Hester, another New Jersey resident; Cornell University president James Perkins, who lived in New York, but not long enough to be eligible to run, and former Assistant Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatrick, who wasn't interested in running.

Mr. O'Connor—“He's a nice man, isn't he?” was the Senator's private remark about the candidate—was obviously Senator Kennedy's last choice. The final Kennedy attempt to persuade Democratic leaders to forget Mr. O'Connor came after Liberal party leader Alex Rose informed the Senator that the Liberals would not endorse the candidate.

The Senator admits he is

"frustrated" by the fact that the Liberals have consistently held a veto power over Democratic nominees.

"They've performed a useful function over the years," he said. "But I'd like to see us just have a Democratic party. Selfishly, I'd rather not deal with them. Perhaps the situation will change soon."

The Liberal Party

Although the Liberals supported Mr. Kennedy in 1964 (at the urging of President Johnson) and the Senator and Mr. Rose worked together in the Silverman campaign, friends of the Senator say one of the reasons he would like to get rid of the Liberals is because he dislikes Mr. Rose.

"After President Kennedy was assassinated, there were certain people who went out of their way to be unkind to Bob because they thought he had no power left," said one of the Senator's closest friends. "One of those people was Alex Rose."

Mr. Rose still had unkind words for the junior Senator before they allied briefly during the Silverman campaign. On the night John V. Lindsay was elected Mayor with Liberal support, an acquaintance asked Mr. Rose what he would like to do next. "We have to cut that little punk Kennedy down to size," Mr. Rose answered.

If Senator Kennedy makes a serious attempt at this time to rebuild his own party—and some friends think he might ignore the party and concentrate on his personal organization—he would almost certainly have the gleeful support of Reform Democrats and some younger county leaders.

But any major realignment would probably be opposed by such leaders as Stanley Steingut of Brooklyn, one of the "bosses" constantly under attack and one of those who helped select Mr. Beame and Mr. O'Connor.

Several observers predicted that Senator Kennedy would take a middle road—build up his personal organization and attempt to push his own people into the leadership of Manhattan replacing Mr. Jones, or sponsor candidates to succeed such aging leaders as his old friend Charles Buckley, 75, of the Bronx, and Daniel O'Connell, 81, of Albany. Mr. Buckley was a key figure in secur-

ing the Kennedy Senate nomination.

The Senator attempts to brush off specific political questions and insists he does not have the power to move into county struggles. "I'm in no position as a Senator to change a county organization," he said. "But I can encourage people to start making the changes."

One reason Senator Kennedy might favor political peace in New York is to insure that the 1968 delegation to the Democratic National Convention is united—under his leadership. Under any circumstances, he is expected to have more than enough influence to persuade county organizations to nominate Kennedy-oriented delegates before the 1968 primary elections.

As a Senator, Robert Kennedy does not have the power to fill jobs that Governor Rockefeller can use to keep the Republican Party in line. But there is always the threat that the Senator will run for Governor in 1970, although he says now: "I won't do that, absolutely. I'm interested in foreign policy."

The Senator and the Governor are not friendly and Senator Kennedy will undoubtedly criticize Governor Rockefeller sharply from now until 1970. The Senator also has few good words for Mayor Lindsay. He refers to him privately as "an intellectual light weight."

One of the Mayor's closest advisers offered this comment about the Senator: "He's around City Hall when there's a big story. When there's real work to be done, it's tough to get him on the phone."

Relationship With Javits

On the other hand, the relationship between Senators Kennedy and Javits has improved steadily. Senator Kennedy scored a quick point on Senator Javits almost immediately after the 1964 election. He announced that he was opening an upstate office in Syracuse. The next day Senator Javits, who never had an office outside New York City, announced he was opening a Buffalo office.

"Bob Kennedy loves upstate New York," said Mr. Guthman. "It was the campaigning up there, seeing the kids and the flags—this may sound corny—that was a big factor in bringing him out of the tremendous

depths of depression he was in after the assassination of his brother."

Upstate problems are a specialty of three of the 39 full-time employees on the Kennedy staff—30 in Washington, 7 in New York and 2 in Syracuse.

The motto of the three offices seems to be a statement once made by Mrs. Ethel Kennedy. She said her husband divided the world into black hats and white hats. "The white hats are for us and the black hats are against us," she said.

His Top Team

The Senator's top aide is his administrative assistant in Washington, Joseph Dolan, a former Justice Department lawyer and member of the Colorado Legislature. Under him are three fast-moving legislative aides: Peter Edelman, a 28-year-old Harvard Law School graduate from Minnesota; Adam Walinsky, a 28-year-old Yale Law School Graduate from New York and Wendell Pigman, a 35-year-old political scientist.

Thomas Johnston, a 30-year-old former television film producer from Kentucky, spends 15 hours a day running the New York office. Gerald J. Bruno, 39, a talented campaign worker, operates out of Syracuse.

On campaign trips, an aide usually follows the Senator with an armload of books. A sampling shows a wide range of interest: —Talleyrand by Duff Cooper; Samuel Eliot Morison's History of the American People; The Fixer by Bernard Malamud.

Friends describe him as a heavy reader, but he rarely seems to get the time to open the books. One of his favorite pastimes is picking the brains of people he meets. He has questions for everyone—"What do you think of George Romney?" he asks Iowa Gov. Harold Hughes; "What do you think can be done for gang kids?" he asks Laurence Cole, a psychologist working on the Lower East Side.

"He is an extraordinarily intelligent man," said Richard C. Goodwin, a friend of the Senator who wrote speeches for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. "He's as intellectual as anyone in public life today. He has a genuine concern about ideas."

But Senator Kennedy does not discuss issues like poverty

and civil rights on a philosophical basis. His sentences are peppered with the phrase, "right and wrong."

"I never lost any sleep over civil rights until 1961," he said. "But when you see southern sheriffs attack Negro children, you see the wrongness of it all."

Mr. Goodwin, who writes some of the Senator's speeches, is one of the crew of intellectuals and experts who feed him ideas. Many of them did the same thing for his late brother.

Other men the Senator often consults are: Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Theodore Sorenson, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, Burke Marshall, chief counsel of International Business Machines; William Rogers, a Washington lawyer; John Kenneth Galbraith, Columbia Dean David Truman, Dr. James Allen, state commissioner of education; Dr. Eugene McCarthy of Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Richard Boone, director of Citizens Crusade Against Poverty.

Most of these men are important in Senator Kennedy's future. So are the half-dozen or so men who met him in the towns and cities in 20 states, where he campaigned this fall.

When his Boeing 727 jet—filled with 50 newsmen from all over the world—landed at Seattle Airport, it was met by 1,000 cheering people and a few men wearing PT-boat tieclaps with the word "Kennedy" on the boat. The small group included Rep. Brock Williams, who served under the Senator in the Justice Department; James Whittaker, who climbed Mount Kennedy with the Senator, and Scott Wallace, a county commissioner who was one of the first men in Washington state to campaign for John F. Kennedy.

"These men are the well-oiled Kennedy machine that the magazines write about," said a friend of the Senator. "They're just a lot of people who know him and are willing to go to the wall for him. There's no secret who they are—they're college friends, people from the Rackets Committee, people from the campaigns in 1960, people from the Justice Department."

"If Bob Kennedy wants to run for President in 1972 or tomorrow," another friend said, "they'll be ready on the day he is."



The New York Times (by Edward Hausner)

OF POLITICS AND PARTY STRENGTH: In his living room at United Nations Plaza Apartments, Senator Robert F. Kennedy discusses political strategy with City Councilman Robert A. Low, Manhattan Democrat. The Senator is involved in many such sessions.