

# The Kennedy Women

## How Ethel Battled Death

By JACK V. FOX

United Press International

LOS ANGELES — Ethel didn't cry either.

For one brief moment, the wife of the tousle-haired man a nation knows as Bobby gave way to hysteria and fought an ambulance attendant trying to render first aid. Then she found control.

They are made of solid stuff, the Kennedy women. They have to be. Fate seems to move from one to another and say: "Now, it's your turn. Now, it's your husband."

Awaiting the birth of her 11th child in January, Ethel Skakel Kennedy bent over her husband, lying in a pool of blood on the floor in the awful glare of television lights, and murmured to him.

It was heartbreakingly reminiscent of another slim girl bending over a stricken husband in a convertible in Dallas.

When Robert Kennedy moaned as they carried him to the ambulance on a stretcher and cried, "Oh, no, don't" it was too much. She screamed at the ambulance attendant and hit at his face as he tried to put a bandage on the head wound.

### NO WEeping

At Central Receiving Hospital, she had put on the mask. She watched a doctor slap her husband's face trying to revive a spark through pain. Then she took the stethoscope proffered by the doctor and heard for herself the beat of Robert Kennedy's heart.

She followed in the ambulance to Good Samaritan Hospital and waited in a private lounge while surgeons for three hours removed fragments from the interior of the stricken man's skull.

Her friend, Claudine Longet, the wife of singer Andy Williams, said she never once wept.

Afterwards she talked with John Glenn and the astronaut walked grimly from the hospital to gather up six of the Kennedy brood who had come to Los Angeles to be with their so-often-absent parents and take them back to Hickory Hill.

Then the clan gathered around Ethel. Jean Smith, Bobby's sister, stayed close by her side. Patricia, the divorced wife of actor Peter Lawford, came to the hospital and then left, leaning on a companion for support.

### JACKIE CALLED

Across a continent, a phone rang in an apartment on Fifth Avenue and Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy answered a call from London

from her step-sister, Lee Bouvier Radziwill. Jackie Kennedy heard the news and she said, "No, it can't be."

Then she packed and boarded a private plane and flew to the side of the man who had stood by her side at a grave in Arlington Cemetery. From the plane she drove in a white limousine to the hospital. She wore a white coat and brown dress and her dark hair streamed down her back.

At the hospital by now was Ted, the youngest of the Kennedy boys. His wife, too, had known the fear of a husband's death. Sen. Edward Kennedy suffered a broken back when a private plane crashed in Southampton, Mass., in June, 1964, but he pulled through.

### THE MOTHER

In Hyannis, Mass., Mrs. Rose Kennedy, the mother, heard about Bobby shortly after she rose at 7 a.m. to go to mass. She had lost her oldest son, Joe, in World War II and then Jack. Her husband, the tough old father of the clan, sat in a wheelchair in Hyannis, victim of a stroke a few years ago.

Rosemary, had been mentally retarded since birth. Another daughter, Kathleen, died in a plane crash in France.

Now it was Ethel's turn. Not that she hadn't had it before. Both her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Skakel, met

death in a plane crash in 1955.

But in the past weeks she had been flip and happy campaigning with her husband, riding at his side in the motorcade through idolatrous crowds.

She looked anxious at times when it appeared they

would pull him from the car, but by Tuesday night it was all over and Bobby had won in California and they could go back with the kids to Hickory Hill for a few days.

Then they walked out together toward an elevator, where a man with a gun was waiting.





**A LONG VIGIL ENDED FOR ETHEL KENNEDY**  
She became the second family widow by violence

—AP Photo



**JACKIE KENNEDY ARRIVES IN LOS ANGELES**  
A repeat of a nightmare for former First Lady

—UPI Photo