

Elder Kennedy

Rumor Source a Mystery

The source of that baseless rumor yesterday of the death of Joseph P. Kennedy, father of slain Senator Robert F. Kennedy and former Ambassador to Great Britain, may remain forever a mystery.

It is known, however, that it received a major assist from a Bay Area radio station.

Checks of the Eastern seaboard have established the rumor was widespread hours before dawn in California.

RADIO REPORT

Newspaper, radio, and television switchboards in New York, Boston, New Jersey, and Philadelphia had been clogged by calls from worried questioners.

Most callers claimed to have heard the death rumor on a broadcast from a radio station they could not identify.

It is believed the rumor moved westward with early morning telephone calls and spread from mouth to mouth.

The Examiner's switchboard recorded calls on the subject as early as 6 a.m.

LOCAL ASSIST

The rumor received its major assist locally later in the morning when Hilly Rose, chatty personality on one of the many talk shows on Radio KNEW in the East Bay, noted dolefully that it was

possible the Kennedy family would be attending two funerals—one for the assassinated senator and one for his partly paralyzed father.

The Rose show begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 1 p.m. A KNEW spokesman emphasized that Rose qualified his statement by explaining clearly that it was but rumor and unconfirmed at the time.

Telephone calls to local newspaper, radio and TV stations escalated, reaching a peak at approximately 2 p.m.

Radio Station KGO broadcast denials of the rumor on the half hour. Station KCBS featured a taped statement by Edward Martin, press representative for the slain senator's father, declaring the former ambassador was alive and had been informed of the death of his son.

DENIALS PRINTED

Both major wire news services sent bulletin denials of the rumor to newspaper, TV and radio clients. In its late editions, The Examiner published a bold face type denial of the rumor but still the calls flooded in.

Radio Station KNBR, the Bay Area National Broadcasting Company outlet, also broadcast denials but was equally busy denying a second baseless rumor.

This second rumor was that TV newscaster Chet Huntley had suffered a fatal heart ailment at the time he was in good health and preparing for his evening broadcast.