

# The New York Times

Published every day by The New York Times Company

ADOLPH S. OCHS, *Publisher 1896-1955*  
ORVIL E. DRYFOOS, *Publisher 1961-1963*



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## Death of a Warrior

Robert Francis Kennedy was a man always in strenuous combat. Born to great wealth, he could have devoted himself to private pursuits or to luxurious ease, but idleness was alien to his nature. He early chose public life as the hardest and most worthy field of competition.

He brought to the public service an ability to learn, an extraordinary zeal, tireless energy, singleminded dedication to the task at hand, and a moralist's firm conviction that the difference between right and wrong is clear and should be acted upon. In the early years of his career as an assistant counsel of the investigating subcommittee headed by the late Joseph R. McCarthy, and then as chief counsel of the Senate Rackets Committee, he relentlessly pursued those whom he or his superiors considered wrongdoers. His great fault was his indifference to procedural safeguards. Only with experience and wider responsibilities as Attorney General did he come to understand, at least in part, the merit and force of this criticism. He left the Justice Department a much more dependable defender of civil liberties than he had been when he came to it in 1951 as a young attorney.

Yet the image of the relentless young prosecutor stayed with him to the end despite his wider horizons and new concerns, because that image was consonant with something deep in his fiercely competitive nature. Whether he was managing his brother's political campaign or conducting his own, investigating the price policies of a steel manufacturer or just playing a game of touch football, Robert Kennedy was a man who pressed every advantage with terrier-like persistence. He was hard on himself, hard on others and always played to win. As a result, he could be immensely effective and aroused intense loyalty, but he was also feared and vaguely distrusted.

The young moralist and the political pragmatist coexisted in this man with a passionate idealist. He had a special capacity to empathize with the deprived, the defeated and the severely disadvantaged: the lost Negro youth in a city slum, the unemployed old coal miner, the malnourished Indian in a reservation, the migrant laborer on strike. There was nothing false

in the image of John Glenn, who journeyed into outer space. Robert Kennedy climbed a mountain, canoed through "white water," and responded to every challenge which life offered him or he could seek out.

His death is a tragic event. He was a man of many talents, of high resolve and of unfolding and ever-enlarging promise. He was a big man who at his death was still growing; he was a divided man who at his death was moving toward some yet undefined inner cohesion which could have been of immense service to his fellow men. The special quality of this tragedy is that now the world will never know the great man he might have become.

What the world does know is that he was a superior Attorney General, an enterprising and forceful United States Senator, and a powerful protagonist in political combat. He was not, like Al Smith, a happy warrior; he was a driving, committed, unyielding warrior. If he sometimes, particularly when young, fought more recklessly than wisely, he never fought for a low or merely selfish aim. Leaving the field of life at a moment of personal triumph, he will be remembered for the ideals he tried to advance.

(The above editorial, in substantially identical form, appeared in the final edition of yesterday's Times.)