

Mother Arrives Here to Prepare for the Services

Family Aide Is Kept Busy
Arranging Details — Stores
Alerted on Wardrobes

By CHARLOTTE CURTIS

High above Park Avenue in a cream-colored Kennedy family office with a mustard-yellow carpet and a white telephone, Mrs. Gertrude Ball sat at her desk yesterday working out the myriad details of housing, feeding, clothing and comforting the Kennedy family, which is assembling here for the funeral of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Mrs. Ball, a family employe, ordered black Cadillac limousines to supplement those the funeral director dispatched to meet the plane carrying 87 Kennedys, co-workers and campaign aides from Los Angeles. She called the housekeepers in the family's New York apartments to tell them who would arrive and how many extra beds would have to be made up.

She called the beauty salons that the Kennedy women like and made Saturday appointments for hairdressers to go to their apartments. She arranged for Senator Edward M. Kennedy's mourning clothes to be flown from Washington to New York and then picked up. And she called the department stores in search of black veils, black mantillas and black stockings.

"Nothing is very definite," Mrs. Ball said in the office in the Pan Am Building. "It all changes so quickly. We hoped and we prayed, and now there are things we must do."

Mrs. Ball's first chore yesterday was to see to it that Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy's day was a smooth one. The Senator's 77-year-old mother, the first of the family to arrive in New York, had been awakened in her Hyannis Port, Mass., home at 6 A.M. and told of her son's death.

It was the third time that someone has had to break the news to Mrs. Kennedy that a son had died violently. She dressed quickly, in white with a white lace mantilla drawn around her cheeks, and went to 7 A.M. mass in the small Cape Cod church where her son Robert, even as Attorney General, had several times acted as an altar boy.

After mass, Mrs. Kennedy flew to New York, where Mrs. Ball had a limousine waiting for her. She was driven to



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Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy, the Senator's mother, arriving at LaGuardia Airport yesterday after trip from Boston.

the apartment she and her husband, former Ambassador to Great Britain, have had for several years. She also visited Bergdorf Goodman.

"We had to get some things ready for her," said Mrs. Ball, who wasn't sure what, if anything, Mrs. Kennedy or any of the other Kennedy women, intended to buy. "We had to be ready for whatever any of them needed."

Saks Fifth Avenue and Bonwit Teller were also alerted to be ready with clothes. But at 4 P.M., after lunch and an afternoon rest, Mrs. Kennedy left her apartment and walked along Central Park to Bergdorf Goodman.

Bareheaded, dressed in a black silk suit, her face impassive and her eyes clear behind lightly tinted sunglasses, she walked rapidly and with a firm tread past the Plaza Hotel, pausing briefly at 58th Street for traffic and then crossing into the store's side entrance.

No one recognized her, or if they did they did not even glance at her. But Bergdorf's, which had been notified of her arrival, whisked her into an elevator, which no other shoppers were permitted to enter.

Mrs. Kennedy got off at the second floor and turned left into the dove-gray carpeted rooms that are the custom boutique. From here, she was shown into a smaller room, where the elaborate curved double doors closed behind her. She was at Bergdorf's until after 6 P.M.

Mrs. Kennedy had told aides she wanted "all white dresses, either linen or cotton for the morning — something with sleeves." If the dresses were sleeveless, she said they had to have sweaters or jackets. She said she wanted something in "the \$150 to \$180 price range" and that size eights fit her better than size tens even though size eights were sometimes too tight.