

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation

Fall
1986

I.M. Pei Reflects on Library Design

In July of this year I.M. Pei received a Medal of Liberty for accomplishment in his field. While Dr. Pei has designed many other significant and beautiful buildings, it was his work on the Kennedy Library that brought him world recognition.

Born in Canton, China into a prominent banking family, Dr. Pei used to watch American films and dreamed that he would some day come to live in our country. It was in America that he studied architecture and began his prominent career.

When the Library first opened in October of 1979, Dr. Pei looked back on the extraordinary challenge of designing a memorial for one of America's best-loved presidents. "The Library must be worthy of the

individual whose historical legacy it safeguards," he said. "It must speak of his deeds and his vision. And in our time there have been few public men for whom this symbolic aspect has greater importance than for John Fitzgerald Kennedy."

Dr. Pei believes that "the symbolic expressiveness of the Library gains enormously from the site on which it stands." Built on a point overlooking Boston Harbor, the site is clearly a spectacular setting for a memorial to a President who loved the sea. In this dramatic place, Dr. Pei attempted "to recapture some of John Kennedy's youthful and buoyant confidence in a building whose simple white forms suggest a lighthouse or a beacon."

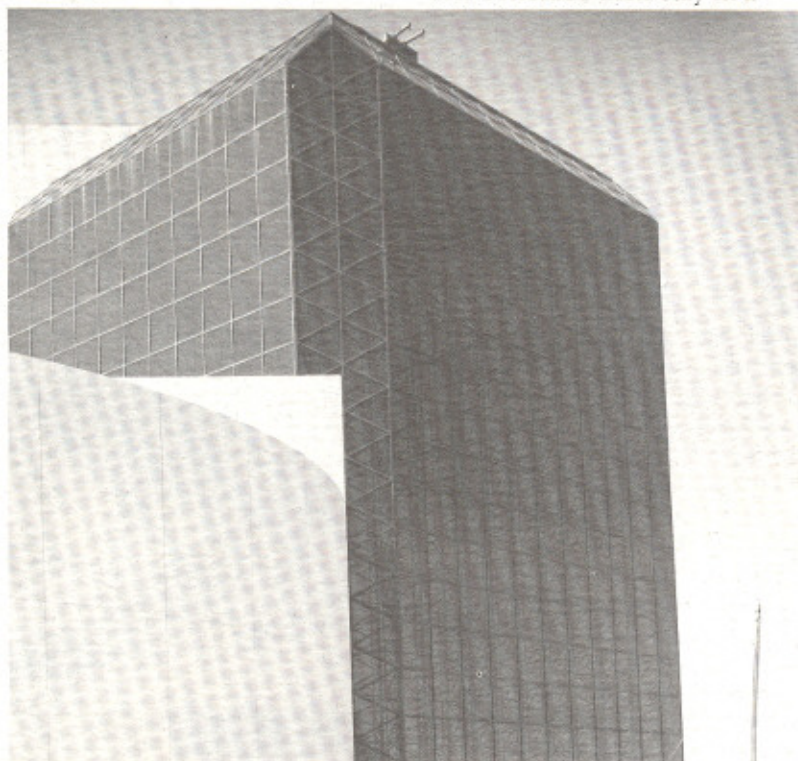
After viewing the Library's film on the life of President Kennedy and exploring the exhibit area with its many photographs and memorabilia, visitors conclude their stay in a



place where they can reflect on what they have seen. In many ways, the glass enclosed pavilion is the heart of the Library. In Dr. Pei's words, "It is the Library's most prominent visual feature, giving coherence and focus to the whole design. It is also the place where the Library's symbolic importance reaches its culmination. Except for a large American flag suspended to one side from the ceiling, there is no distraction from the contemplation of the vast panorama of sky, land, and water that lies beyond."

Recently, Dr. Pei was interviewed on ABC's *Good Morning America* by David Hartman, who noted that the success of the Library design is due in good part to the fact that Dr. Pei is so successful with geometric shapes and is a master with glass. Interviewed in the Library pavilion, Dr. Pei explained that "... this idea of creating a space that opens out, not only to Boston but actually to the world, to the future, is what I thought [would] be appropriate for the president."

Asked about how difficult it has been for him to take chances with his designs, Dr. Pei offered this advice, "You have to believe in yourself. You have to have goals which are not easily reached. But you also have to know your limits. You should go [to] the limit." President Kennedy would have admired Dr. Pei's attitude, as well as the vision and ambition that created this beautiful structure.



Summer Institute Explores Common Ground

J. Anthony Lukas's *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* received enthusiastic reviews and numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. Lukas's penetrating study of Boston during the decade of court-ordered busing was the subject of a major symposium at the Library last fall and, recently, a summer workshop with teachers.

The fall symposium was the first to celebrate the publication of *Common Ground*. This conference brought together key people in Lukas's narrative for a detailed analysis of the book and the public policy questions it raises. The forum clearly demonstrated the book's extraordinary educational value, particularly in introducing young people to the explosive combination of politics and public policy in Boston during the 1970s.

Following the symposium it was decided that the annual Kennedy Library Summer Institute for Teachers would focus on the critical issues raised in *Common Ground* and how they might be addressed in the classroom.

With Lukas's participation, the ten-day workshop examined *Common Ground* from a national as well as a local perspective. Some of the areas covered included political leadership, religion and politics, ethnicity and neighborhoods, the

Courts, and civil rights and protests.

More than two-dozen teachers from the greater Boston area participated and responded enthusiastically to the many distinguished speakers. As a result of the workshop, many teachers have since prepared curriculum units for use with their students. We expect the educational potential of this extraordinary book to begin to be felt in the classrooms of the city from which it emerged.



Researchers Receive Grants

The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation has awarded the first annual grants to scholars for research at the Kennedy Library. The six grant recipients will be studying a variety of topics pertinent to the Kennedy years.

A graduate student from Loyola will examine the impact President Kennedy had on Irish-Americans throughout the United States. An American Rhodes scholar at Oxford will investigate the evolution of trade policy from the Kennedy

administration to the present. A Ph.D. candidate from the University of Connecticut will research the Peace Corps in Peru, and a Stanford graduate student in art will examine arts policy. Free trade and the Kennedy administration will be researched by a University of Massachusetts Ph.D. candidate, and, finally, a Carthage College history professor will explore President Kennedy's African policy.

These grants are designed to stimulate original research by younger scholars in relatively underutilized resources; thereby contributing to the growth and development of Kennedy materials as well as the stu-

dent's knowledge. The next series of grants will be announced in April of 1987.



Philippine President Corazon Aquino Visits the Library

On Saturday, September 20th, Philippine President Corazon Aquino made a homecoming trip to the Boston area, where she and her late husband, Benigno Aquino, lived in exile for three years. Her visit included a stop at Boston University, where she received an honorary degree; at Harvard University where she delivered a keynote address; and at the Kennedy Library for a reception hosted by Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

At Harvard, President Aquino described the fall of the Marcos regime and the beginning of her administration in this way, "What was irresistible was our determination and our numbers. What was irrevocable was the spirit. Marcos had proclaimed a hollow electoral victory and in the final act he fell to the unique force of people power."

At the Kennedy Library guests listened to Senator Kennedy speak of President Aquino's courage and inspiration and of how John F. Kennedy would have viewed her:

"As President Kennedy once said, politics truly is an astonishing profession—it permitted him to go from an obscure lieutenant in the Navy to Commander-in-Chief in just fourteen years. Well, Jack would be even more amazed by Cory Aquino, who took just three years to go from Newton, Massachusetts to President of the Philippines

President Kennedy would also be proud of Cory Aquino for another reason. My brother Jack was a lifelong student of history who believed that in-



dividuals can make a difference. And if my brother were writing *Profiles in Courage* today, he would have a special chapter on the unique person who may be the most courageous woman of our time, Cory Aquino.

... Her homecoming today is bittersweet, because her triumph is tinged with sadness. Ninoy Aquino gave his life for his country. But the spark of liberty that he kindled could not be extinguished in the hearts of his fellow countrymen and women. And today, the light of democracy in the Philippines has become a beacon of hope to all those in other lands who struggle in their own way, for their own freedom against tyranny and oppression...

In life, one of President Kennedy's most enduring qualities was his ability to inspire

young persons to public service and high achievement. With that same unique ability, Cory Aquino touched the hearts and conscience of her people...

Our family is honored today that in her brief but deeply moving return to our Commonwealth, she has graced my brother's library with her presence...

Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg then presented Corazon Aquino with a bronze bust of President Kennedy. Mrs. Aquino then told the crowd that, "Boston has been my second home" and added that during the three years that she lived in the area she visited the Kennedy Library ten times.

Senator Kennedy spoke for everyone in the audience when he concluded, "...for President Cory Aquino, may the best be yet to come."

A Look Back: "The Voters and the Missiles of October"

Every "off" year since 1930, the party in power has lost an average of 39 seats in Congress. In October of 1962, President Kennedy, determined to reverse this mid-year trend, took his campaign directly to the voters. On the 12th and 13th he campaigned in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Kentucky. On Sunday, October 14th, while President Kennedy campaigned in Buffalo, Soviet offensive missile installations were discovered in the San Cristóbal area of Cuba. On Tuesday, the President was shown photographs taken by two air force reconnaissance planes of the ballistic missile launch site.

President Kennedy immediately called a meeting of the National Security Council at which he appointed an Executive Committee (EXCOM) and stressed the necessity for utmost secrecy. He then decided to go ahead with his political commitments for the remainder of that tense week. Later that day he spoke to a

group of editorial writers who were attending a foreign policy conference at the State Department. He talked of the dangers of nuclear war with far deeper feeling than anyone in his audience could have expected. He ended his talk by reciting a verse reflecting his sharp feelings of lone responsibility at that moment:

Bullfight critics row on row
Crowd the enormous plaza
full

But only one is there who
knows

And he's the one who fights
the bull.

The next morning the President was shown additional photos from Cuba which revealed the construction of 28 launching sites for both medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles. Our military experts advised that these missiles could be operational within one week. That same afternoon, maintaining his pre-arranged schedule, President Kennedy campaigned in Bridgeport, Waterbury, and New Haven for Abe Ribbicoff who had left the Cabinet to run for the Senate in Connecticut.

On Thursday, after several meetings with his advisors, the President decided this first action against Khrushchev would be a naval blockade of Cuba. Friday morning, before he left for his planned campaign trip to Cleveland and Chicago, he told Bobby, "If you have any trouble, call me and I'll call off the trip and come back." He was counting on his brother, in his absence, to get a consensus for the blockade from EXCOM. Late Friday night he talked to Bobby and decided to return to Washington the next morning.

On Monday, October 22, President Kennedy talked to former Presidents Hoover, Truman, and Eisenhower; and he met with his Cabinet, the National Security Council, and Congressional leaders. At seven

o'clock that evening he went on national television to explain, for the first time, the situation in Cuba and the reasons for the quarantine.

The events which followed:

October 23

The President signed the Proclamation: Interdiction of the Delivery of Offensive Weapons to Cuba.

October 24

Quarantine went into effect.

October 25

Twenty Russian ships closest to the barrier stopped.

October 26

First vessel was stopped and boarded.

October 27

A U.S. U-2 plane was shot down over Cuba by a Soviet-made SAM missile and its pilot killed.

October 28

Khrushchev agreed to dismantle and withdraw the missiles under adequate U.S. supervision and inspection.

This had been the first direct test between the Soviet Union and the United States in which nuclear weapons were at issue. Throughout this crisis President Kennedy was in complete command. He later confessed that his chief concern had been the possibility of sudden death to millions of children in this country and around the world—children who had no part in and knew nothing about the crisis—but whose lives would be taken.

On November 6, 1962, President Kennedy knew he had reversed the "off" year trend, because the Democrats had gained four Senators and only lost four Representatives.



Odds and Ends

"And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

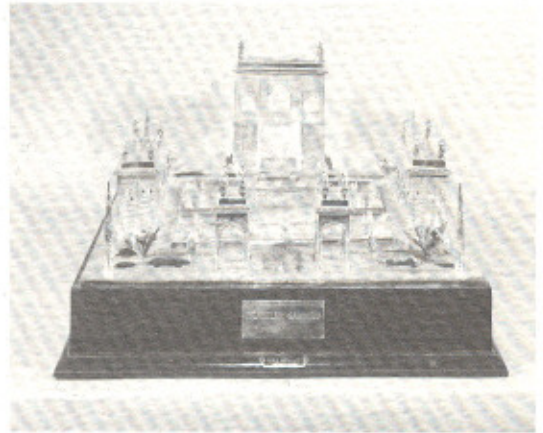
President John F. Kennedy
American University
June 10, 1963

In response to our request that Honorary Fellows share some of their memories of President Kennedy, we received many interesting comments such as the following:

"Just two weeks ago, I spent most of a day at the John F. Kennedy Library looking, learning, and remembering. . . In his too short time in office, President Kennedy gave to the nation a spirit of greatness, concern for others, and dedication to the principles upon which this country was founded."

*Kimball Winn
Falls Church, Virginia*

This silver replica of Shalimar Gardens was given to Mrs. John F. Kennedy by the citizens of Lahore, Pakistan on March 21, 1962. The terraces and gardens of Shal Jahan's palace were built in 1637.



Volunteer Opportunity

The Library is seeking some able volunteers to help guide visiting classes through the Museum. The Education Department organizes programs for as many of these groups as possible, but with limited staff resources and thousands of students coming on field trips each year, there are many classes which do not have the benefit of a friendly and knowledgeable adult to assist them. If you are interested in working with students between the ages of 10 and 18, and would like more information, please call the Education Department at 929-4500.

Kennedy Library Events

October

14

"Massachusetts Referenda Questions," the second in a series of evening programs for the general public will be held at 5:00 p.m.

21

"South Africa: Conflict Without End?"—a conference from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., primarily for university students and faculty.

21

"Boston Harbor/Massachusetts Bay Pollution," the third in a series of evening programs for the general public will be held at 5:00 p.m.

22

"Community Service and Schools"—a conference from 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., primarily for teachers, students and social service administrators.

28

"Organized Labor in Massachusetts," the fourth in a series of evening programs for the general public will be held at 5:00 p.m.

November

5

"Massachusetts Political History, 1896-1932," the fifth in a series of evening programs for the general public will be held at 5:00 p.m.

12

Epilepsy Association of Greater Boston, a public fund raiser at 6:00 p.m.

18

"United States Immigration Issues," the sixth in a series of evening programs for the general public to be held at 5:00 p.m.

29

Massachusetts Adoption Resources Exchange, a public fund raiser at 6:00 p.m.

Museum Hours

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed Thanksgiving,
Christmas, and New Year's.

Reservations are required for all events. For further information, please call the Kennedy Library at 929-4500.

Designed by Kate Arnold
Produced by Independent Design

The John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library
Dorchester, Massachusetts 02125

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Boston, MA