

**TOM PUTNAM:** Good evening. I'm Tom Putnam, the Director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. And on behalf of Ken Feinberg, Chair of the Kennedy Library Foundation Board of Directors, and Lee Fentress, Chair of the Board of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for The United States Senate, I thank you for coming to this very special forum, and thank those watching on C-Span, NECN, or listening on WBUR.

For me, this hall will forever be a sacred space, the site chosen by Senator Kennedy himself and then duly consecrated by the tens of thousands who came to pay their last respects to him while he was lying in repose in the center of this room. It was an honor for all of us associated with this institution to work with the Senator's legendary staff, many of whom are here with us tonight, and to be part of those hallowed days in August.

When people ask me how we did it, I give the credit to Senator Kennedy's wife, Vickie. Your strength and dignity, Mrs. Kennedy, and the indefatigable graciousness you extended to each person in line emboldened all of us here as well as a grieving nation. And so we thank you. [applause]

My role this evening is to explain how the forum and book signing will unfold and briefly introduce our panelists. Let me begin by acknowledging the generous underwriters of the Kennedy Library Forums, including lead sponsor, Bank of America, represented here tonight by Anne Finucane, Bank of America's Global Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer, the Corcoran Jennison Companies represented by Otile McManus, the Lowell Institute and the Boston Foundation. Our media sponsors are *The Boston Globe*, WBUR, and NECN.

Our focus this evening is Senator Kennedy's legendary life, extraordinary career and enduring legacy, especially as told through his bestselling memoir, *True Compass*, which is on sale in our bookstore. Following the forum, Mrs. Kennedy has graciously agreed to

sign your copies. A line will form in the Pavilion and when this forum is completed, we ask that you exit at the back of the hall, walk through the bookstore, and then use the stairs or the elevator to get there.

With such an outstanding array of speakers to hear from, I will be brief in my introductions. Additional biographical information is listed in your programs.

Doris Kearns Goodwin has endeared herself to this Library and our wider audience in many ways – through her groundbreaking history, *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, her many appearances on this stage -- whether discussing her most recent book, *Team of Rivals*, honoring Arthur Schlesinger, or moderating a once-in-a-lifetime conversation with her husband, Richard Goodwin, who served in the Kennedy Administration. For me, as a lover of personal memoirs, it's the image of her childhood enlivened by books and baseball to which I'm drawn in those bleak October days when the Red Sox fall short, recalling the heartbreaking season-ending losses she endured as a young fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

As her title to that memoir suggests, her writing and historical commentary are infused by her own boundless optimism. And whether it is baseball or national politics, she often leaves us with hope that one needs only to “wait ‘til next year” for another chance at a winning season or the advancement of a political ideal.

When Al Hunt introduced Michael Beschloss at a forum to discuss Michael's most recent book on presidential courage, he relayed a story told to him by John Meacham, the editor of *Newsweek*, who has what he calls a Michael Beschloss six-month rule. Every time Mr. Meacham or any of his colleagues writes a new book on presidential history, they will not see Michael for six months because they invariably find that he knows more about the subject than they do. After hearing that line, Michael retorted, without missing a beat, “Now you see why I'm so much fun to be with.”

In addition to being an author of nine books and a commentator on PBS and NBC, Michael Beschloss serves this institution as a member of the Profile in Courage Award Committee.

When EJ Dionne was here last month to moderate a fascinating forum on justice with Harvard professor, Michael Sandel, he shared an anecdote of once meeting then Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld and informing him, “I’m a single issue voter and fortunately you are on the right side of that issue.” EJ explained he could see the gears turning in Weld’s mind when he left him off the hook saying, “You reappointed my mother to the board of the Bristol Community College.” Perhaps in the same manner in which Tim Russert’s childhood in Buffalo infused his career, EJ’s legendary work, including his columns in *The Washington Post* and his commentary on National Public Radio, is informed by his past and present connection with Fall River, this Commonwealth and its people.

A couple of years ago when Ken Burns produced his monumental documentary on World War II, we turned to Mike Barnicle to facilitate a conversation with Mr. Burns. Not surprisingly to those of us who have read his columns over the years and listened to his analysis on MSNBC, during the conversation Mike not only brought out the best in Mr. Burns, but through his own comments eloquently captured the ethos of the shared sacrifice that defined that era and is perhaps lacking in our own. When assembling this panel, we knew he was the perfect choice to serve as this evening’s moderator.

I know I speak on behalf of everyone at the Library, the Institute, and members of the extended Kennedy family in expressing how deeply honored we are to have all four of you here with us this evening. At the conclusion of the panel discussion, we’ll hear closing words from the new chairman of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation Board, Kenneth Feinberg. Mr. Feinberg is a former Chief of Staff for Senator Kennedy, was

appointed Special Master of the U.S. government's September 11<sup>th</sup> Victim Compensation Fund, and currently serves as the Special Master for TARP Executive Compensation, popularly known as President Obama's pay czar. He succeeds Paul Kirk who sends his regrets for not being able to join us. As this Commonwealth's junior senator serving in an interim appointment in the seat held by his friend and mentor, Senator Kirk must attend to important votes that are scheduled this evening, which precludes his being with us.

The panel discussion will begin immediately following remarks made by Mrs. Kennedy. And here this evening to introduce her is the CEO of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, a member of the Kennedy Library Foundation Board of Directors, a dear friend, colleague, and soon to be next door neighbor, Peter Meade. [applause]

**PETER MEADE:** Thank you very much. I think for those who know (and it's mentioned in the book) -- by the way, did Tom mention that the book is on sale at the bookstore? -- Senator Kennedy wrote about his mother having him at St. Margaret's Hospital just up the street. You can almost see the hill from here. And it's St. Mary's Center for Women and Children now, a very important institution. And just a couple hundred yards from here, the Bethlehem of community health centers -- the Geiger Gibson Community Health Center -- is here. It was the first in the country, and -- you guessed it! -- Senator Kennedy was a major force in creating it, and then all of the other health centers.

But we are beside or will be beside the John F. Kennedy Library where Senator Kennedy wanted to be, and an important part of the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Senator Kennedy said, "If you want to see the future of Massachusetts, you go to UMass Boston." And that's really where the future of Massachusetts and Boston is. And so we're proud to be part of the neighborhood and to be a brother of the Kennedy Library and UMass Boston.

There are three things that the Senator brought to the table every day. He was the best prepared in the room. He did his homework. Secondly, he had respect for other people and other people's ideas. He knew how to reach across the aisle. And thirdly, he knew how to get the deal done. And if we can impart to young people today as they study the U.S. Senate those three items to bring with you, in whatever your task, we will have succeeded in Senator Kennedy's dream of explaining the U.S. Senate, teaching young people the importance of understanding how a democracy works and about how you get it done, which was what the Senator did all the time.

He was blessed. He had a partner who had the same zeal about the important issues of justice in healthcare, justice in education, justice in all of the labor issues. It's interesting. People talk about Senator Kennedy as the health senator. And then the labor guys stand up and say, "But he was the labor senator." And the education people say, "He was the education person." He was a senator who was an extraordinary performer. He had a partner who understood how important that work was -- his most important advisor, his best friend, his partner, our friend, Vicki Reggie Kennedy. [applause]

**VICKI KENNEDY:** Thank you. Thank you so much, Peter. Thank you for those wonderful warm words. Thank you and Rosanne for your friendship. Teddy was so delighted with the leadership that you were going to be giving to the Institute, as am I. So thank you so much.

It is such a pleasure to be here at the Kennedy Library. Ted loved this place. And he would have agreed that this is the perfect place to discuss his memoir, *True Compass*, especially given the role the Library has played over the decades in fostering debate on critical issues and informing the American people about what Ted loved to call "our march of progress."

I am delighted that the Library is co-hosting tonight's forum with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for The United States Senate, which will be built just a stone's throw from here. I thank Ken Feinberg, the chair of the Kennedy Library Foundation, also Lee Fentress, the chair of the EMK Institute, and Peter Meade.

And if you'll indulge me just a moment, I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Tom Putnam, the Director of the JFK Library, Tom McNaught, and everyone here at the Library and the Library Foundation who were so extraordinarily helpful to me and to all our family last August. On very short notice, they did the impossible, helping us to prepare the way for the people of the Commonwealth to come here to pay their respects to Ted. Fifty thousand people came through the Library last August. And that would not have been possible without their tireless efforts. Thank you so much. [applause]

I'd also like to say a brief word about the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for The United States Senate. Ted loved the Senate. He called it one of our forefathers' most brilliant democratic inventions. About seven years ago, Ted and I started talking about the idea of a living institution to educate and inform generations of Americans about the critical role of the Senate in our democracy. He had a clear vision of a place where young people could visit and see firsthand the role the Senate plays in our system of government and where Americans could come and participate in the debates of the day. He wanted to build a place to train our next generation of leaders.

In his last fifteen months, Ted had three long-term goals – launching the Institute, finishing *True Compass*, and passing national health reform. With the Institute on its way to breaking ground next spring, *True Compass* on the bestseller lists, he accomplished two of these goals. And we're closer than ever before to achieving the most comprehensive and ambitious health reform since the creation of Medicare. [applause]  
He would be thrilled at this progress and focused on getting it done.

But we're here tonight to talk about *True Compass*, Ted's memoir. The completed book arrived at our home on August 25<sup>th</sup>, Ted's last day. He didn't have the chance to see it in final book form, but he knew every word. We had read the entire book aloud to each other. For as long as I knew him, I knew that Teddy wanted to tell his own story for history. For fifty years, really longer, he kept contemporaneous notes of critical meetings with presidents, historic debates in the Senate, conversations with world leaders, and many personal impressions of events in his life. He was an eyewitness, an active participant in the greatest moments of our collective history over the last half century. And he preserved his memories for the ages.

About five years ago, Ted started an oral history project with the University of Virginia. And these notes really started to come alive during this oral history project. And I think it was through the process of mining his memories, during those hours and hours and hours of interviews that Ted started to reflect on his life in a different, deeper and more open way. And it was during that time that his concept of what his memoir would be really shifted to something much more personal.

And so *True Compass* was born. Ted was well into the project when he became ill. But he was determined to continue. So many others had written their version of Ted's story, and he wanted to tell it as only he could. *True Compass* is a candid and personal look at his life as he lived it. As Ted said many times during the writing of this book, he wanted to get it right for history. I hope you'll agree after reading it, that he did.

I want to thank Mike Barnacle for moderating our discussion tonight, EJ Dionne, Doris Kearns Goodwin and Michael Beschloss for participating in it. They too have been participants in and students of this country's historic march to progress. And I'm looking forward to their thoughts on *True Compass* and Ted's efforts to get it right for history. Thank you very much. [applause]

**MIKE BARNICLE:** This is quite an amazing biography. There have been other political biographies. One of the best was written by former President and General Ulysses S. Grant. And he too finished his memoir while dying of cancer, and it's well worth the read.

One of the things that struck me about this book is that everyone here in this room and everyone in the world knows a great, great amount about Ted Kennedy's outer life. But he had an inner life that was riveting. And it's all here – all of the warts, all of the promise, all of the hope, all of the dreams. It's all here in this book.

And I'd like to begin by talking (even though it might mean that I might not be able to go to communion in Rhode Island) about Senator Kennedy's faith. For those of you who have not read the book or who are not privy to certain aspects of the man's life, he was a man of deep faith. And there's a quote, "Atonement is a process that never ends." EJ, let's start with you. Ted Kennedy – catholic, small 'c', Catholic, big 'C'. What evidence did you see or were you aware of, of Teddy's deep faith?

**EJ DIONNE:** Well, first of all, you actually saw him in church, which should say something in principle. I just want to say, by the way, before I begin, I have to report my favorite line in the book, which is when Ted Kennedy was quoting Vicki Kennedy and they were having dinner in that early phase. And he is worried about a poll which showed his approval rating down to 48%. And Vicki Kennedy said, "Well, that's fortunate, because I never go out with a guy whose approval is below 47%."

You know, you saw him in church. That's part of the real deal. I think there was a connection to the church and to his faith that came very much down from his mother. And I think it was something intimately connected in that relationship and his attitude toward faith. I think you saw it also in his constant engagement in religious issues and in the dialogue among religious people.

There's a great story in the book where one day he gets a mailing from Liberty College, Jerry Falwell's university, making him a member of Liberty College. It includes a line that says, "Join us to fight ultra-liberals like Ted Kennedy." And so he saw this and thought, you know, "I can do something with this." And so he leaked something to a columnist (it may have been you) and a little item appears. And then Jerry Falwell's guy calls him and they make light of it. And he says, "Well, you should come down here and talk. You should come down and visit with us." He said, "I not only want to do that, I want to go down and talk." They had him come down. And he gave a talk about how his religious faith led him to the conclusions that he did. And he said, you know, it looked to some people like it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a Kennedy to go to Liberty University. By the end of it, I think even the people at Jerry Falwell's university realized that there was an organic link between his Catholic faith and how he approached public life.

And then the last bit of evidence I mentioned that he went to Mass. There was a Sunday in 1994 and the church -- we went to the same church for a while -- and there's a wonderful priest there called Father Percy DeSovo(?) who's very close to them. And we were at a Mass where there were tons of kids. It's a kids' Mass. And there he was with Vicki. And my mom was visiting us. And her last vote in 1994 was for Ted Kennedy. And it was before the election. I said, "Mom, you should go visit with your Senator." So after Mass, she goes up, greets him, says, "I'm voting for you again. Good luck." He's very pleased. And then he turns to Vicki Kennedy and she turns to Vicki Kennedy, and then looks at him and said, "This woman has been very good for you. You be very good for her. You be very good to her." And the evidence of that is in the book.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Michael, one of the elements of Senator Kennedy's faith, you could see it quite often in politics and in the course of his campaign, in the course of his almost daily, sometimes visits back here to this state where he would tour the state. And

it's the element of compassion, the element of forgiveness, the element of a deep belief in redemption. Could you speak to that?

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** I think it had more to do with his Catholic faith than I realized during his lifetime. I thought it might. The first hint I had was a letter that he wrote to the Pope at the very end, in which he essentially explained his career within the context of his Catholic faith. I thought that was so moving. And, you know, two of the hardest things to figure out about a politician in real time are what his marriage is like and what his religious views are like. And on religious views, usually political figures pretend to be more religious than they really are. This would be a shock to you, Michael. But occasionally it happens.

Harry Truman once said that his grandfather always said, "If you hear a politician praying too loud, go home and lock your smokehouse," which was advice he took. And Truman was more religious, too. But I think if you read the book, you get the sense that his Catholicism was not only very basic to him and very connected to that compassion, but much more connected than I realized to a lot of the decisions he made in his political career.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Doris, I think very few people realize (they know on the periphery of it) Ted Kennedy's deep devotion to his family, to his parents, to his brothers, his sisters. And it's a devotion that seems to have begun quite early in life. And part of it revolved around his grandfather, Honey Fitz. And I'd like to read this paragraph from the book about Teddy and Honey Fitz, who he spent enormous amounts of time with as a young man.

"My memories of this good, grand old man have restored hope in me when things have been darkest in my life. He was a constant in my life during the difficult, nomadic years

of boarding school. His simple request to me has been more precious than any fortune: 'Love life and believe in it.' And he did."

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** He was a great character, Honey Fitz. I mean, he used to go down to the Breaker Hotel in Palm Beach. And they said he would sit in the big couches there, waiting for anybody from Massachusetts to come in so he could talk to them. He had that tenor voice. Those songs that Teddy used to sing all the time, that all came from Honey Fitz.

But I think what's so interesting about the memoir is that it really is a family story underneath it all. I mean, nobody else was able to write the Kennedy Family story, because Bobby died, because Jack died, because Joe, Jr. died. Yes, Rose Kennedy could write it, but nobody could write it from inside the way that Teddy Kennedy did. And the story is a story of a family that has captivated our interests, our sadness, our emotions, our happiness for almost a century. And to be able at the last years of his life to bring that story out, he was more open than he could have been before. It's an unusual memoir because of its openness.

You know, most characters when they're writing memoirs, they're thinking about the future. They're balancing things. I remember when I was helping LBJ on his memoir and he wanted to say something mean about Bobby Kennedy with whom he had a difficult relationship. He said, "Okay, in the next sentence I'll say something good about Jackie Kennedy," as if you could somehow balance these things. There was another moment when he had this great comment about Wilbur Mills who would never let a bill out of the committee unless he was certain that it would actually pass on the floor. So LBJ had this great comment that he's going to be so concerned about saving face, he's going to lose his ass someday, which is exactly what happened to him, because he lost his ... you know, that woman in ...

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Fanny Fox.

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** Fanny Fox. That's right. What you see here is ... he tells a great story in the memoir about a time when he was really upset with his father. And he decided to run away from home. So Jack Kennedy is the one, like a second father to him, who comes and says, you know, "Why don't I just meet you at the movies," you know, as if not telling him you have to come home yet, but a way station: "We'll go to the movies." And of course by the end of the movies, "Well, maybe we'll just go home," you know?

And then he talks about how much he loved Jack, how much he loved Bobby, what Jack's death meant to Bobby, what Bobby's death meant to him, but more importantly, what they made him want to do when he got to that Senate. You're so right about the love of the Senate. He loved looking at the Capitol in the distance. He loved looking at the scratches on the desk doors. And somehow that institution became part of his faith, to go back to your earlier question, believing that he could cross party lines, that there could be friendships that would be forged, that somehow it could make a difference in the social progress of the country. So the faith and the family, all became caught up in doing things for the country. And it's an extraordinary legacy.

The last thing I'd just like to say is, you know, it's an interesting thing. Jack Kennedy in the 1950s created a committee where they were going to have statues for all the best senators. So they picked who's the best orator (which would be Daniel Webster), who was the best committee chairman (maybe Estes Kefauver) who was the best constituent service person, who was the best person who was able to bring things across party lines like Vandenberg. You look at Ted Kennedy and he is every single one of those things, which means that in a certain sense, his legacy is larger than any one thing. Nobody had constituent service like he did. Any of us who were here during the time when he was here, laying in state, saw those people coming, one after another, telling what he had

done for them. I think it was Deval Patrick who said, “I knew him before I knew him,” or something like that, meaning, “I’d heard of everything he’d done before that.”

And then what a great orator, what a committee chairman, what all those things are in one. And all of that comes out in this book: his love of the Senate, his love of family. And most importantly, as people have said, he couldn’t have done this book without, as he says in the beginning, Vicki opened him to me.” He said, “She made me understand me,” which is what love is all about, so that’s the end.

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** Well, perfectly said. And, you know, the other thing about the book is that we have all read many politicians’ memoirs. And if we were in a different line of work, we probably wouldn’t read a lot of them. But the thing is that a lot of these books, you know, they’re interesting if you’re interested in the time or the career or the issues. But the ones that are really great are ones that are universal, where you don’t have to be a political junkie to get something out of the book. And you read this book from beginning to end if you’re not interested in politics and if you’re not interested in the things that we all are. You know, there are so many things that are there early on (and Vicki knows this) you know?

When Ted Kennedy was talking about writing this book (I’m sure he said it to you and he said it to me), he said, “Well, one model I have is Katherine Graham’s book *Personal History*. Because, you know, she was so candid.” And I told him a story that around the time that book came out, I was in Chicago and I ran into a woman who was about 22 years-old. And, as those of us who write books know, a 22 year-old person is not exactly at the center of our core audience for hardcover history. But she came up to me and she said, “You live in Washington, don’t you?” And I said, “Yes.” And she said, “Do you know Katherine Graham?” I said, “Yes, a little.” And she looked at me as if she was seeing a relic of the true cross. And the point is that that book was able to speak to

someone of a totally different experience who was not a billionaire, who had inherited a newspaper and had this grand life. *True Compass* does the same thing.

You know, just a couple of things that really stand out: how you motivate children. I once asked him, “Actually Senator Kennedy, I’ve got two boys. How was it that your father was able to motivate you kids to do so much in your life?” And he told me a little bit about it. But it’s just captured in the book when he’s talking to his father. I’m not going to get the quote exactly right, but his father came to him at a crucial moment and said, “Ted, essentially you can do what you want with your adult life. That decision is open to you. But you should know, if you do not use your life to do something serious, I’m not going to have a lot of time for you because there are other siblings of yours who will.” And he writes about what an enormous influence that had on him. You know, that’s the kind of lesson you can get from reading this book.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** A lot of you, many people probably think this book is all about politics. It’s much more about Ted Kennedy, the human being, than it is about politics. You’ve mentioned the family, his father, his brothers. And I think all of us as witnesses to his life and to our own lives are sometimes staggered by how one would cope with the sense of loss and the reality of loss that Ted Kennedy and his family endured across the years.

And there was a moment in Denver, Colorado, just prior to his speech to the Democratic National Convention, when he was troubled with gallstones. And, of course, he was fighting what he was fighting. And he sucked it up. He “manned up” as they would say today, saying to himself and to the people around him, “I can handle this. I can handle this.” And he handled that well as he handled almost everything extraordinarily well.

There’s a passage in the book that I’d like you to reflect on as I read it and speak to it. And it has to do with dealing with loss. And it has to do with the events of the summer of

1968. And it has to do with Teddy's love of the ocean and his love of sailing and the fact that when he would be out on the ocean, especially at night, he would look for the North Star to steer him. And here's the passage.

“And that is the truly magical time of sailing because the North Star appears, the North Star, which has been the guiding star for all seamen through time. The North Star guides you through the evening. Its light is the most definite thing you can see in the surface of the dark water. And so you have the North Star and the sound and swell of the shifting water. And sometimes the fog will come in and you must go by the compass for a period. But you are always waiting to see the North Star again, because it is the guide to home port. It is the guide to home. And so the voyage becomes all inclusive. You are enveloped in the totality of it. You are a part of the beginning. You are a part of the end. You are a part of the ship and a part of the sea. I gazed at the night sky often on those voyages and thought of Bobby.”

**EJ DIONNE:** I found that chapter particularly affecting, partly for what he didn't say. In other words, I thought in that chapter you had this sense of foreboding he had about that campaign from the very beginning. And, of course, folks, some folks old enough to remember that Bobby Kennedy didn't want to get into that race. He thought it would be seen as part of a personal fight with LBJ, not about the Vietnam War, which would be one of the reasons he was waging the race.

And he describes the process of Bobby Kennedy thinking about getting into that race. And as 1967 goes on, more and more of the Kennedy insiders and friends want him to run. And in the end, he is one of the only holdouts who, until the very last moment, he does not really want him to run. And in the book he talks about how politically it would just have made more sense for him to run in 1972. Either LBJ would win again and it would be open, or he'd lose and the party would turn to him. But there is just this sense of foreboding as he describes this very straightforwardly, that he sensed that some

tragedy could happen. Sort of you feel that sense of tragedy at many moments in the book, but I don't think any more poignantly than he is discussing the run-up to the '68 campaign.

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** And the sense of loss that you mention. I keep coming back to a quote that Ernest Hemingway wrote where he said, "Everyone is broken by life. But afterward, many are strong in the broken places." And that, in a certain sense, is the theme of *True Compass*. Because there are many times when Teddy and the family are broken by life, but then they're strong in those broken places. When he describes his responsibility to tell Joe Kennedy, Sr. that Jack has been assassinated, there's such a realness to it because he says he was lying there, and his father, even though the father had had a stroke, he understood what was going on. And his father's eyes were closed. So he decided, "I've got to wait a few more minutes. Let him have a little more peace before he had to hear this news."

And then he is the one who has to tell him. And then when Bobby dies, he's the one who has to tell some of Bobby's children that Bobby has died. To think about that man, still retaining that optimism, that joyous buoyancy ... In fact, not long before he died -- it was actually just before he was diagnosed with the cancer -- my husband and I were in a car and for some reason "My Wild Irish Rose" came on the radio. And we called him up and Teddy answered the phone. And there was that booming voice once again, just singing these ridiculous songs that he would sing. It just shows you that loss is connected to life, and that if you have a sense, as he does, of nature in that passage you read, if you have a sense of the seasons being renewed over time, if you have a religious faith of renewal, then you keep going. And more than keep going, you more than survive, you thrive. And that's the main message, I think, of this book, that goes beyond -- you're absolutely right -- politics. It's human response to love and loss.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** And also if you want to connect to other human beings. You know, at the other end, Richard Nixon once said (I think this was in 1972 after he won this landslide reelection), “I had to go out campaigning and shaking hands on these ropelines, shaking hands with these people when I really felt like kicking them.” Ted Kennedy, the exact opposite. This is someone who ... that had a lot to do with him being so buoyant. And it also affected his career because that was a lot of the way he was a senator for a half century. He never compromised in terms of his liberalism. He was absolutely happy to be a maverick on issue after issue.

But at the same time, he had these great friendships across the aisle with people like Orrin Hatch and others. And that was very much of the spirit of the founding period. The Founding Fathers always hoped that members of the Senate and all of us Americans would duke it out during the day and disagree strenuously, but at the end of the day have a glass of ale together and say, “We’re all Americans and this doesn’t get personal.” It’s a quality that’s not very present in the Senate now.

**EJ DIONNE:** It’s interesting, that whole notion of Ted Kennedy, the guy I worked with. I don't think there was a Republican in the Senate he didn't work with on something at some point. I tried to make a list once and it just was ...

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Even some fairly odious people.

**EJ DIONNE:** And you asked the question, what is it about this guy who was such a strong, in principle, liberal? How could he do that? And I think that’s actually the paradox, one of the paradoxes of politics is precisely because he knew where he wanted to go, he knew what he wanted, he knew where the country should move, that only someone with that clarity can actually enter into compromises. Because in the end, I want to get here. And if I can only get here this time, I’ll get there. And if I can get help from

Orrin Hatch (who was one of his great partners on a lot of things, particularly on children's healthcare) I'm going to go with them.

And so, you're right. The times were different. But it wasn't because he was unprincipled or completely flexible. It was actually because he had a set of principles that he could take those steps ...

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** ... and knew you couldn't do it all at once.

**EJ DIONNE:** Right.

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** And also I think this connects to what we were saying earlier. Why did he become more liberal as time went on? That was not necessarily true of JFK, RFK, became more liberal, but Ted Kennedy more so than either of his brothers, I think had a lot to do with the adversity he suffered and his identifying with people who had suffered and who were left out, locked out, almost in the way that Franklin Roosevelt's polio gave him a degree of empathy that he might have lacked.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** One of the things about him as a human being and as a politician, as an elected official, I've always felt that his empathy was natural. Because like so many among us, he knew what it was like to be hurt, to be damaged. And he had tremendous identification, sympathy, and a desire to improve the lives of those who have been damaged. Do you agree with that?

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** Oh, absolutely. What's interesting, there is history made in this book as well as the personal stuff we're talking about, though. He tells really interesting stories about LBJ and the fact that LBJ had offered or Bobby had offered to go and negotiate the Vietnamese situation for LBJ. And had he ...

**MIKE BARNICLE:** ... which had not been known.

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** ... which had not been known at all. And had he done that, what Teddy says is he would have then been so caught up in the peacemaking process that he would not have run for the primaries. He would not have been killed possibly. The connections of all these things. On the other hand, he gives LBJ much more credit than I think one would have imagined he would have for the extraordinary domestic achievements and says, "Closest to FDR is LBJ." And interestingly, I know from my own experience with LBJ, he always liked Teddy. I mean, he may have had trouble with other members of the family, but Teddy he understood ...

**MIKE BARNICLE:** You have anyone particularly in mind, Doris?

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** No, no. I'm just saying in general. The one thing that's fun, though, is that even though he has nice things to say about LBJ, and he has nice things even about Reagan, that Reagan despite having all the wrong goals could be charming, and Clinton had magnetism. Carter does not escape him. Listen to these things. I love what he says about Carter, because it shows that you've got to have a little anger in you when you, as a politician, and not real meanness but just sort of putting him in his right place.

He says that, "Carter baffled me. In 1976, he claims he won without any help from me or many Democrats." Then he said, "But he seemed to have this special animus toward me." Anyway. He says they never really did get along on things. He said, "The trouble was, he liked to claim he was a great listener, but he only gave the appearance of listening. He served no liquor when anybody was around. He sold the Sequoia, this great boat the Presidents love. He would hold seminars in which he would show off how much he knew in the seminars." And then he says -- the one thing that really got to him which is so understandable was when -- "Carter refused to support Archibald Cox because Cox had

supported Morris Udall in the primary.” He said, “That kind of grudge is a ridiculous thing for anybody to have.” And Teddy did not hold grudges in that way. But you can feel that little zinging at Mr. Carter who deserved it.

**EJ DIONNE:** I read that. I wondered if Carter had named Archie Cox to that judgeship, would he have reconsidered running for President? Because he describes it as a particularly [simultaneous conversation]. The other thing, just on your point, he’s candid about are his faults. There’s one moment where he says, “There are so many stories about me. Unfortunately, some of them were true. Some of them were embellishments of the truth. And some of them were so amazing I couldn’t believe anyone believed I would do that, even me.”

But I think that that is also a piece of him. You know, it creates an unusual kind of humility in a public figure. Because when you talk about empathy for the suffering, which he had, but it’s also a sense of human frailty. And I think having a sense of human frailty is a very useful thing in confronting the world. And being honest about it in yourself actually, I think, can make you a far more understanding and decent person. And he wasn’t somebody who judged everyone else by some other standard. I was struck at many moments about his own candor about himself.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Let’s talk about that. Let’s talk about that, though, in terms of biography and autobiography, a political autobiography. Ninety-nine percent of people who write political autobiographies about themselves, they lie. And it’s ridiculous. This book is amazingly self-revelatory. You’d be surprised at the level of truth that he sees and saw when he looks in the mirror. And I think you will be amazed in reading the book that there are many moments in the book when you can hear his voice. And here might be one of them, to your point.

“I am an enjoyer. I have enjoyed being a senator. I have enjoyed my children and my close friends. I’ve enjoyed books and music and well prepared food, especially with a generous helping of cream sauce on the top. I’ve enjoyed the company of women. I’ve enjoyed a stiff drink or two or three. And I’ve relished the smooth taste of a good wine. At times, I’ve enjoyed these pleasures too much.”

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** We all look at the Kennedy Family from the outside, in. What an extraordinary thing it must have been to be a Kennedy. But he, as the youngest member of that family, said he was at a constant state of catching up, that he always felt he was behind the 8-ball, that he wasn’t as talented, he wasn’t as handsome, he wasn’t as intelligent as his brothers, who were older than he in various stages of life.

And then, as he says, being sent to ten different boarding schools when you’re young and you’re overweight, as he was at that time, you have to make friends over and over and over again, how hard that is for you. So the family became his lodestar. But yet on the other hand, it also hurt him because of having the ... What happened is when they gave up Bronxville after World War II, they only had Palm Beach or Hyannisport, neither one of those fit the normal school schedule. So he was sent off at seven, eight, nine years-old to boarding school. And right from the start he’s so honest about how difficult that was, that you pull for him. You know? I mean, the great glory of writing a narrative story is the reader has to pull for the person. And because he’s honest and because you see the pain he’s feeling from the time he’s a little kid, that then he then becomes this overwhelmingly friendly person in order to make his way in each one of these boarding schools. That’s where it’s built-in. But you pull for him from the beginning to the end.

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** And another thing, it works wonderfully on that level. And the other level is political history because this is a guy who knew the people around Winston Churchill. And he knew Barack Obama. I mean, that’s a pretty large slice of world history. And if you had to find one figure who could really cover that whole gamut,

Ted Kennedy's just about the only one. So in a way in reading this, it's not only the interesting story of a life and inspiring and tells us all in many ways how to live our own lives, but it's a history of that period.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** What is also interesting, to the points that you just raised, Teddy's youth. It was lonely, I mean, bag and baggage, this school to that school. I can remember one time him telling me that he was very excited that on his eighteenth birthday, he received a set of luggage from his parents with the letters, his initials embossed upon the luggage, EMK. And the luggage was placed on the second floor in the house in Hyannisport. And they went down and had dinner, and he came back up the stairs and Eunice had taken the luggage because those are her initials.

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** Even better, in terms of the tribulation of living in that family, he tells this wonderful story, as you all know, he's on an Army base in Europe, and he's trying to fit in. He doesn't want to be thought of as the young millionaire with a brother who's a senator, and so on. And his mother makes him go out to this very fancy dinner, which he does. And he comes back and near the gate to the base, his mother comes running out of the limousine yelling within earshot of his friends at the Army base, "Teddy dear, you've let your dancing shoes behind," after which he writes for the rest of his time on that base, everyone referred to him as 'Teddy dear'.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Let's talk for a couple of minutes about Teddy's relationship with his mother and his father. History is replete with stories of, especially the Ambassador, Joseph Kennedy. And you'd read stories and anecdotes about him. And you'd go, "Oh, Jesus." But Teddy had enormous and lasting love for his parents. Here's a story about Teddy and his mother, the aforementioned Rose Kennedy. Teddy's in McLean, Virginia, and he had lost the Iowa caucuses. And he came on the phone to tell his mother about losing the Iowa caucuses and she said, "Oh, that's all right, Teddy dear," she replied. "I'm sure you'll work hard, and it'll get better."

“And then she said, ‘Teddy, do you know that nice blue sweater I gave you at Christmastime? Do you remember that?’ I said I remembered it, yes. It was a turtleneck and it had a small pocket on the front. It’d been made in France. ‘Have you worn it?’ I said, ‘Well, I’ve not worn it.’ She said, ‘Is there something special about it? Because I just got the bill for it and it was \$220 dollars. Will you check it out, Teddy? And if you haven’t worn it, will you send it back because I’ve got another blue one here that I think is just as nice and is not nearly as expensive.’” His parents.

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** I think the really interesting part of the book about his parents is about the father. Because everybody has for a long period of time put Rose Kennedy on a rightful pedestal. But in a certain extent what he does here is, dad was the one that he truly loved as well. You know, everybody I’m sure said to him, “When you’re writing a memoir, you’ve got to talk about your father’s isolationism, what he did during World War II.” And he just says right there, he says, “I was too young to comprehend my father’s attitudes toward England and Germany in the months prior to World War II. In some persistent region of my mind, he remains to me eternally and solely my dad.”

And then he counters the idea that the father pushed him into this or that. He shows that the father was the one who kissed him when he came home from school. The father was the one who made all of his home games at Harvard football. And then finally when he was running for the Senate, he said, “I felt the full measure of my father’s respect for me as a man.”

So again, you can imagine what it was like for him, knowing that he then was the caboose in this family as he often said. He had to become the engine of this family. When Jack dies, Bobby’s there. When Joe Jr. dies, Jack is there. When Jack dies, Bobby’s there. When Bobby’s dies, it’s Teddy. And he has to become then the father, as his father was

to him, for that whole generation of the Kennedy children. And that, again, is an effecting part of the book. He had to be at their weddings. He had to take them when things happened. He had to be with his own children who suffered difficulties and illnesses, and became the father that he loved in his own father. So in a certain sense, he wrote this book, I think, to put JPK in a different light since most people don't see him that way.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** I think right. And another element of it, another way you can read this is that, how many here are the youngest child in the family that they were born into? More than a few. Well, present company excluded, but a lot of youngest children that I know talk about (especially if it's a large family) the fact that they had to work really hard to be noticed, to be taken seriously, and even when they appeared on the scene, to even be accepted into this family that already existed.

And one of the most interesting things I found in the book is when he talks about -- around 1960/1961 -- he thought very seriously about moving way beyond Massachusetts, maybe to the southwest and starting to work out there, maybe running for office on his own. The aforementioned JPK I think was not too wild for that, because I think he wanted him to run for the Senate from Massachusetts in 1962. But you can read that on this level, too, that this is someone who is a little bit ambivalent about the legacy, but finally takes it on and finishes it with flying colors.

**EJ DIONNE:** There are two sentences that sort of underscore your point about the youngest and the dad. He describes his dad and talks about his politics and said he might have a lot of questions about his politics. But then he says, "In some persistent region of my mind, Joseph P. Kennedy remains to me eternally and solely my dad, just as I remained the ninth and youngest child of all the Kennedys." All that's going on there.

But he's also quite candid, as that story you told earlier said, that this guy was a pretty stern taskmaster, what he said about, "Well, you can live an interesting life or not," you know? And then he just tells this story: his dad was an early riser. "You can come riding if you are downstairs in five minutes.' He meant exactly that. If I were late, he would be gone. I was seldom late."

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** But the interesting thing is that on paper, if we were just told without names that there was a father who was that intense and who demanded so much from these children, you would think out of nine children at least one of them would rebel and it wouldn't be a happy story. And you have to assume that because he combined it with that kind of love and that kind of a commitment, unconditional love (I don't think they called it that in the 1930s, but sure do now), that's why it succeeded.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** And that's a huge part of the book, the core of Ted Kennedy: his love for his wife, his love for his family, his complete joy in recollecting all sorts of things about his brothers and his sisters and his nephews and nieces. And he was filled with stories. And it was mystifying to me in a sense that a man like this had never once ceded to bitterness or resentment over events that had taken place in the course of his lifetime. He loved telling stories. And the stories are all here in this book.

One of the best, at least to my mind, is not in the book, but it gets to his joy of his family and his memories of his brother. And he told me once that in October of 1963, President Kennedy's last appearance here in the state of Massachusetts, was when he came to attend a fundraiser up at the old Commonwealth Armory where the BU hockey rink is now, way up Commonwealth Avenue. And he was arriving, of course, as President of The United States. And the three statewide office holders, as well as many other local minions and politicians, were invited to meet and greet the President. And they had two choices, those attending the dinner. They could either meet the President at the airport, shake hands and have their picture taken with him, or meet him at the Armory which is a

black-tie event, where they would meet, shake hands, and have their picture taken with the President there — couldn't do both.

The three statewide Democratic office holders at that time -- John Volpe, Republican, was governor -- three statewide Democratic office holders were Lieutenant Governor Eddie McLaughlin, the Attorney General Frank Bellotti, and a young Secretary of State by the name of Kevin White. Air Force One comes into Logan Airport. Kevin White, Frank Bellotti have chosen to greet the President at the airport. They're there. Just as the plane is taxiing down the runway for a landing, Lieutenant Governor Eddie McLaughlin shows up. He's in black tie. White and Bellotti immediately hate him because he's clearly going to do both. As Kevin White explains the story and as Teddy explains the story, the door to Air Force One opens. President of The United States, John F. Kennedy, is standing there on the top of the steps. He looks like a sun king. He is so handsome, so charismatic. He bounds down the steps. Lieutenant Governor, being the top constitutional officer, is first in line in his black tie. President Kennedy reaches out, takes his hand, grabs it, looks at him, touches his lapel, and says, "Red" (that was Eddie McLaughlin's nickname) "Red, taking the job kind of seriously, aren't you?"

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** We have to mention also for those who don't know it, they went on to the dinner. And that was where JFK said that he had been talking to Teddy, and Teddy had told him that he was tired of always running on the family name. So he was going to change his name from Teddy Kennedy to Teddy Roosevelt.

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** Yeah, the one funny thing about the name is because he was born on February 22nd, Jack, his older brother, wanted to call him George Washington Kennedy ...

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** ... at the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth, which is an amazing coincidence.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** So let's, before we close out, and we have a few questions from the audience that we'll get to, let's bring it right up to today. EJ Dionne, you first met Barack Obama in 1997 when he was a young state senator from Illinois, the only member of the legislature not indicted out there. Do you think that any part of Senator Kennedy's endorsement of Barack Obama for President was rooted in the possibility that he heard his brother's voice in Barack Obama?

**EJ DIONNE:** That's a really interesting question. You know, you mention Illinois. I always say I'm from Massachusetts. We have had our problems in this sphere. I always like to say, thank god for Louisiana -- for the sake of us all, a wonderful state. What I was struck by during the campaign is how many people I knew who, as kids or young adults, had worked for Bobby Kennedy's campaign, who ended up supporting Barack Obama, and heard this sense of JFK in the cerebral and cool part of him, and some of the RFK in the more passionate part of him. And I think different people who are out of the Kennedy tradition, some saw him more as JFK; some saw him more as RFK. And I think that's possible. But you gave me an opening to do one thing I wanted to do before we close.

By chance, I was looking up something in Arthur Schlesinger's great journals. If you ever looked at those, they're fantastic. There's a lot of great gossip in them. There are a lot of very shrewd political observations. And I happened upon this passage in 1963. So it's actually Ted Kennedy's first year after getting elected to The United States Senate. It's not about Ted Kennedy. And this does go to your question, I promise.

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** It's okay if it doesn't. You tell the story.

**EJ DIONNE:** Schlesinger was in The White House, April 1963. And he was talking about the problem that old New Dealers and New Frontier people just seemed to come from a different tradition. Of the New Dealers he said, "The heart was worn much more

on the sleeve then. The New Frontier has a deep mistrust of what it regards as the pat liberal sentimentalities and clichés of the '30s. I sympathize with both sides and can see all too clearly why each is baffled by the other, all the more baffled because of the substantial agreement on policy, though the New Dealers are still more audacious, less impressed by business wisdom, and more willing to damn the torpedoes and go ahead.” He goes on. “The difference in rhetoric does probably signify a deeper difference in commitment, a change, in a way, from evangelists who want to do something because it is just and right, to technocrats who want to do something because it is rational and necessary. The New Frontier lacks the evangelical impulse.” And then he closes, “I wish I could figure out the terms in which the idealism and imagination of the New Deal could be infused into the anti-sentimental, anti-rhetorical, understated mood of the New Frontier.”

And it occurred to me when I read that that in some ways, Ted Kennedy’s life was working out those two streams of liberal thought. He was very much out of the New Frontier, but he also represented in so many ways that more audacious part of the New Deal. And I have a hunch he might have seen that very tension and effort to work things out in Obama.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** We have a couple of questions from the audience that we’ll get to. The first question is, what do you think, or what does Mrs. Kennedy think would be Senator Kennedy’s position on President Obama’s announcement of a troop surge in Afghanistan?

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** We’re in bad territory here. It’s like when Abraham Lincoln’s granddaughter announced in 1952 that if her grandfather were alive, she was sure he’d be a Taft Republican. It’s hard to say.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Doris, you want to take a stab at that?

**DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN:** No.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** EJ?

**EJ DIONNE:** What about, where fools fear to tread?

**MICHAEL BESCHLOSS:** There's no way you'll be wrong.

**EJ DIONNE:** I think there are three Democratic camps on this. There are the hawks -- which he wouldn't have been -- who just were for what Obama did because they wanted to commit the troops. There are very staunch doves, who are against what President Obama did. And then there's a group where ... I ran into several different Democrats whose reaction was, "God, I hope he's right," who are very uneasy about this choice but think he may have had no better choice. I think Kennedy might be suspended somewhere between the dove and the "God, I hope he's right" camp.

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Oh, I don't think so.

**EJ DIONNE:** You think he would have disagreed with it?

**MIKE BARNICLE:** I think he would have driven down to The White House and sat in the Oval Office and asked the President of The United States, "Do you really think that Afghanistan is going to look any different three years or five years from now than it does right now?" [applause]

We have one last question that I don't think any of us can answer. And it is this. And it's to Vicki Kennedy. Senator Kennedy's dogs, Splash and Sunny, was touching, the relationship. We miss them. How are they doing?

**VICKI KENNEDY:** Well, they are doing fine. We did get another puppy and they are all fine..

**MIKE BARNICLE:** Thank you to the panel, because it is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the pride of Brockton, Massachusetts, and the scourge of corporate America, America's favorite pay czar, Ken Feinberg. [applause]

**KEN FEINBERG:** Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Just before we conclude, I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to thank my friend, Lee Fentress, who's here this evening representing the Kennedy Senate Institute. I also want to acknowledge the absence (but his shadow is all over this place) the man I replaced, junior senator Paul Kirk, whose shoes as the new Chairman of the Foundation Board, I could never fill. I'll just do the best that I can.

I also want to express what an honor it is for me to serve as the Chairman of the Foundation and to have as my first public appearance being here today at this forum discussing my former boss, my friend, my mentor Senator Kennedy. It is an extreme honor for me as Chairman to spend my first official visit to the Library as Chairman at a public event honoring this great, great man.

I also want to remind all of you (as if you needed any reminding) that this forum today is very, very memorable. I don't know when we'll be able to get this group of panelists back together on the same stage. It may be that you will tell your family and your grandchildren that you were here, that you were here this evening to hear from this extraordinary quartet that's been up here this evening. [applause]

Just two final points: first, inevitably in the decades ahead, years from now, there will be books written, histories written about Senator Kennedy. It won't be political science. It

won't be current events. It'll be real history as people will look back decades from now about his extraordinary impact. And I guarantee you that when those books are written, ten, twenty, thirty more years from now, there will be a huge chapter, not yet written, about the impact on Senator Kennedy's personal and public life, the critical impact of Vicki Kennedy. And I think we all ought to acknowledge that. [applause]

Finally, I hope that you'll take advantage at the conclusion of this forum to go downstairs, buy a book, see Vicki. Let me tell you about buying this book. The Library supply of this book is virtually inexhaustible, so don't worry. Thank you all for coming. [applause]

THE END