

**Charles B. Garabedian Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 5/15/1964**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Charles B. Garabedian

**Interviewer:** Ed Martin

**Date of Interview:** June 19, 1964

**Place of Interview:** Boston, Massachusetts

**Length:** 18 pages and appendix

**Biographical Note**

(1917 - 1991). Massachusetts political figure; professor of law, Suffolk University; close friend of Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. at Harvard, discusses personal relationship with the Kennedys and participation in JFK's campaigns, among other issues.

**Access**

Open.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed March 27, 1968, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

**Copyright**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

**Transcript of Oral History Interview**

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

**Suggested Citation**

Charles B. Garabedian, recorded interview by Ed Martin, June 19, 1964, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Charles B. Loxabedian

to the

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Charles B. Loxabedian, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.
2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.
3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.
4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

Signed Charles B. Loxabedian  
Date March 20, 1968  
Accepted James B. Rhodes  
Acting Archivist of the United States  
Date March 27, 1968

Charles B. Garabedian – JFK #1

Table of Contents

| <u>Page</u> | <u>Topic</u>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1           | Friendship with Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. at Harvard Law School                                    |
| 2           | Life at Harvard and Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.'s participation in Law School activities             |
| 2           | 1940 Democratic National Convention in Chicago  |
| 3           | Meeting and spending time with the Kennedy family   |
| 4           | Meeting John F. Kennedy [JFK] at Harvard and first impressions of him                           |
| 5           | Getting involved in JFK's 1946 campaign for Congress  |
| 7           | Promoting JFK in Charlestown and his campaign strategy  |
| 9           | Celebrating the election victory  |
| 9, 15       | Visiting JFK in Washington  |
| 10          | Conducting surveys for JFK on certain issues in Massachusetts                                   |
| 11          | Participation in the campaign for re-election and eventual election to the U.S. Senate          |
| 13          | Accompanying and representing JFK at events put on by the Armenian communities in Massachusetts |
| 14          | Participation in the presidential campaign of 1960  |
| 15          | Attending the Inaugural in January, 1961  |
| 17          | Comparing Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. to JFK   |
| 18          | Comments on JFK's leadership qualities  |
| 18          | Personal stories involving the Kennedy family   |

Oral History Interview

With

Charles B. Garabedian

June 19, 1964

Boston, Massachusetts

By Ed Martin

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MARTIN: Charley, your memory of the Kennedys goes back to your days at Harvard when you were attending that institution with—was it Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.]?

GARABEDIAN: Joe Kennedy, Jr., yes.

MARTIN: Were you a roommate with him?

GARABEDIAN: No, I was close by. We were in a different dormitory than him, but we were friends. We used to study together, and we were very friendly, and always went out together. We were a very, very closely knit group. And in that group were Dick Flood [Richard Flood], Joe Kennedy, Jr., Tom Killifer, Bob Taft, Jr. [Robert Taft, Jr.] when we studied, and Nathan Steadman, Jr. from Florida.

MARTIN: What years were those?

GARABEDIAN: 1939, 1940, and then Joe went into the Service after that.

MARTIN: Can you tell us, what was it was like over at Harvard in those years? This was on the eve of

[ -1 - ]

an impending war and . . .

GARABEDIAN: Yes, and we always used to study in the old library at Harvard there where we could smoke and talk. We didn't go into the new library because over there you had to be a little more quiet, and we used to have a little more freedom in the old library, and the librarian was very friendly to us and very helpful and assisted us in finding the books. And we used to have good deliberations together and study together, and if one of us wanted to go out at night, we borrowed one another's cars and so forth. We were very, very close and helped one another as much as we could.

MARTIN: What were the types of social events you'd go to over there?

GARABEDIAN: Well, Joe, Jr., always used to go to the Ace of Clubs Dance, and that was a big event. And we used to go to the Law School affairs, and then they used to hold Democratic rallies at Faneuil Hall, and Joe was the speaker there the first year he was in law school, and we all went there and he told us to be very polite and we weren't, and he was kind of peeved at us, but afterwards we made up and still were friends to the end. He was always the politician of our group, and he was very aggressive and forceful, fearless, and in my opinion he had a great future ahead of him in politics if that unfortunate incident hadn't occurred.

MARTIN: Well apparently he showed indications of making a career in politics.

GARABEDIAN: I think he was bound for that. In fact, I remember going to the National Democratic Convention in Chicago with him in 1940, I believe, at which his father was for Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] and he was for Farley [James A. Farley], and he got up on the floor and even stated, "I came pledged for Farley and I'll vote for Farley."

MARTIN: That was in 1940?

GARABEDIAN: At the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

[ -2 - ]

MARTIN: Did he every talk to you or express any sentiment about politics that he was . . . Did he ever tell you when he was going to leave Harvard that he would . . .

GARABEDIAN: He never expressed the sentiment, but you always could draw an inference from the way he spoke and talked, you knew he had that ability and caliber, and that he was versatile and a good administrator

and there was a future for him in politics. I mean, you didn't have to ask him. It was so obvious to the intellectual person and people that associated with him.

MARTIN: Charley, how about his athletic career over there?

GARABEDIAN: Well, Joe was very good in athletics. He was a good football player. He was a good swimmer. He played an excellent game of tennis. I played tennis with him quite often.

MARTIN: How about rugby?

GARABEDIAN: He was good in rugby. When he went over to England, he played quite a bit of rugby, from what he told us.

MARTIN: Well in those undergraduate days at Harvard, Charley, did any of his family or his father come up to visit him and spend any time with him?

GARABEDIAN: Yes, his sisters came up, and we met Jack, John F. Kennedy, our late President. We met him, and we met the two sisters and of course we saw Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] when he was young. He was a baby, then.

MARTIN: Well, on weekends in those years did you get down to the Cape?

GARABEDIAN: Well, I went down to the Cape a few times to see Joe, and I played tennis with him down there.

[-3-]

And then later on when Joe was killed in the War, I went down to see Jack a few times down Hyannis Port, and I always kept up my friendship with him.

MARTIN: What was a weekend at Hyannis Port like in the late thirties? When you were invited down there did you eat in the main house?

GARABEDIAN: Well, you would have a cook-out or if it was raining or anything like that, you'd eat inside. And, as you know, the hospitality of the Kennedys is unequalled. They are very gracious people, and once you're a friend, you're always a friend with them, and they never forget their friends and their friends never forget them.

MARTIN: Now you mention about meeting the President. What were the circumstances of that first meeting over at Harvard? He was a student there?

GARABEDIAN: He was a student at Harvard College, and we were students at Harvard Law School and naturally being brothers John would come over and visit his oldest brother and vice versa, Joe would go over and visit John. Ever so often we would be studying, and John would drop in, and the first night he dropped in we all met one another. Of course we were studying arduously, and he, being in the undergraduate school, had more nights off than we did.

MARTIN: What was he like, Charley, then?

GARABEDIAN: Well, he was always a gentleman; affable, intelligent in my opinion, and he had an affinity for making friends. Even in the undergraduate days from my observation he had that extraordinary power of making people like him and he never did anything to hurt anyone or say a harsh word to anybody.

MARTIN: Now I would imagine even in your law school days, when you people got a chance to relax you'd get out and get into some sports or something.

[-4-]

Did you ever get involved in any cut-ups or anything over there that Joe would....

GARABEDIAN: Well, one night we were studying and it was on the night of the Max Schmeling...

MARTIN: Primo Carnera?

GARABEDIAN: No. Max Schmeling was fighting Joe Louis.

MARTIN: Joe Louis.

GARABEDIAN: And everybody was picking the winner, and we all picked Schmeling to beat Louis and Joe, Jr. said that Louis would knock Schmeling out in the first round, and we all laughed at him. And we had just put down our books and started to gaze at them and study, and the fight started and the bout was over in seconds. Joe won the bet. We all had to admire him for being the only one who picked the winner.

MARTIN: Charley, when you finished law school, did your direction go opposition to that of Joe? What happened?

GARABEDIAN: Well, Joe of course was killed in the early forties on a mission from England. And after graduating and passing the bar around 1946, I bumped into Tony Galluccio [Anthony Galluccio], and he told me that

Jack was going to run for Congress and he'd need some help. And I told Tony that anything I could do I would be very happy to do, and from that day on we started to work for Jack to win the Congressional seat.

MARTIN: Charley, in that 1946 campaign, you said you had met Jack many times while you were at law school and now you offered to do anything you could for him. What specifically did you do for him in that campaign?

[-5-]

GARABEDIAN: Well, I did a lot of leg work in the beginning. He started to set up an office, and we helped as much as we could on that. And then there was a lot of research in regard to speeches, and sometimes a legal question would come up. I did a lot of research on legal matters. And sometimes questions came up regarding Jack's domicile on Bowdoin Street, and I did a lot of research on that. And we proved that Jack was a legal resident of Massachusetts. We made his intention and his act coexist and that satisfied the requirement that he was a resident of Massachusetts and domiciled in Massachusetts.

MARTIN: Who raised the question, Charley, his opponents?

GARABEDIAN: His opponents raised the fact that he wasn't domiciled in Massachusetts, and we solved that once and for all, and then...

MARTIN: How did you solve it?

GARABEDIAN: By research and law, showing that if a man had a place to sleep and his intention was to sleep there, live there, and reside there, and vote there, that satisfied the legal requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that a person is a resident and a voter in the Commonwealth, and domiciled in the Commonwealth.

MARTIN: Now when you say a place to sleep, what place are you referring to?

GARABEDIAN: 122 Bowdoin Street.

MARTIN: Oh, he had that apartment at the start of the campaign?

GARABEDIAN: Yes, that's right.

MARTIN: Did you live in the district that he campaigned for?

[-6-]

GARABEDIAN: My family originally was from Charlestown and then they moved to Everett, and while I was helping Jack, we were residents of Everett, and of course I knew most of the people in Charlestown: Frankie Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey], Billy Sutton [William J. Sutton]; I knew the Glynnns from over there; most of the families that traded with my father, because my father had a meat market during World War I and prior to World War I, and we were very friendly with the families over there, and I knew most of the people over there, and I worked in that area to put the people's confidence in Jack, and we did everything to aid and assist, and Jack finally was elected a Congressman because of the work of all his friends who participated and helped him, and because of his ability and because of his affinity for the people. And the people always reposed their confidence in him and that is shown by the fact that he ascended to the highest office of this land.

MARTIN: How did you sell him in those early days? Did you go to your friends...

GARABEDIAN: Well, here was a young man who wasn't well known or not even known at all. He was a total stranger in the beginning to Massachusetts, having graduated from the Harvard undergraduate school and then having gone on to England and taken courses over there at the London School of Economics, and he came back to Massachusetts. And we just told them: here was an educated boy who was going to dedicate his life to do all he could for humanity and the good of the people; and he was fearless, courageous, and had ability.

MARTIN: What were some of the criticisms that were leveled at him by...

GARABEDIAN: Of course they put out the fact that he didn't have to work too hard; that he didn't know anything about the problems of the people; that he didn't have any administrative experience; and of course all those things were accusations by people who didn't know Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy was a very able administrator; he knew the people; he had the know-how of making friends; and he understood the problems of the people because he started in the grass roots.

[-7-]

Jack Kennedy covered this Congressional District from top to bottom. He met the people. He went from door to door, knocking on the door, meeting the people, seeing the condition their homes were in; he saw everything from top to bottom. Jack Kennedy understood the problems of everyone in his district, and his ear was always open to listen to all the problems of the people, and if anyone had a complaint, Jack was ready to listen, and if he could do anything for them, he always did it.

MARTIN: Was this your first political campaign?

GARABEDIAN: Yes, it was my first involvement in a major political campaign. And as I say I wasn't an experienced man in those affairs, but if you have a product that you can sell, you don't have any difficulty in selling it, and Jack Kennedy was the top product. He was very easy to sell to the people.

MARTIN: Charley, did they hold strategy meetings in those days? And if they did, where, and who attended them?

GARABEDIAN: Well, there were strategy meetings for different things. If there was a certain district, they held a meeting. For Cambridge they'd hold it with John Droney. Johnnie Droney would be the Cambridge person, and there probably would be an office in Central Square or Harvard Square or in a dormitory, and Droney and Jack and all of Droney's aides or assistants would sit down and figure out the problems for that particular area; and for Charlestown there would be another man; and in the North End there'd be another man. But I mean in those days there wasn't any real steering committee because it was more a person-to-person campaign. Jack Kennedy made it a point to visit practically everybody in his district, and I think he did it. And he had coffee hours and tea hours, and he made it a point to come down to earth and let the people know who he really was, and they really got to know him.

[ -8 - ]

MARTIN: Charley, not too many people, and even those who worked closely with him in that campaign, remember the circumstances on the day he was elected. This now would be primary day and that is tantamount to election over in that district. Can you recall that particular day, when the votes were counted, and Jack...

GARABEDIAN: I don't exactly remember.

MARTIN: Was there any kind of a celebration? I mean, did he go around and thank the voters?

GARABEDIAN: Well, he went around and thanked.... In fact, all the supporters, the people who really worked for him were in the campaign headquarters, and when the news came, I just remember there was a thundering noise. Everybody was so happy and elated that Jack won, and Jack was very gratified, and I think there were tears in his eyes when he saw all these workers around him, and....

MARTIN: Where was this campaign headquarters? Was it in Charlestown?

GARABEDIAN: We had so many different campaign headquarters that I really couldn't say, but my recollection is that it could have been in Charlestown, but it probably was in Boston although I am not sure.

MARTIN: Well, now he went down to Washington. While he was a Congressman down there, Charley, do you remember any occasion when you either talked to him or went down to visit him, or did he...

GARABEDIAN: I made one or two visits to Washington. Of course I didn't have occasion in those days to get down too often, but I went down once and I was extended kindness and good hospitality, and I was given passes to visit all the places I wanted, and Jack was a gentleman all the way. And I know that everybody else that went down to Washington came back and said that they were very happy and glad that they

[ -9- ]

elected Jack and that he was going to be a good Congressman, and that if he kept the good work up, he would go further in political life, and this prophecy came true.

MARTIN: Did he ever call on you for advice on issues and legislation from time to time?

GARABEDIAN: Well, ever so often I'd get a call from one of his secretaries that Jack was going to speak to this organization or that organization and what should be said and what shouldn't be said, and if I had any ideas to put them down on paper, and once or twice I did a little research for him on certain projects. Any time that Jack called upon me I was always ready and willing to do anything that he asked me to.

MARTIN: What were some of the projects? Can you recall any of them now? Was it in connection with legislation pending before Congress?

GARABEDIAN: Well, I didn't do too much on that end of it, as I recall. But every so often there would be certain things in regard to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or any ideas of certain distress areas or anything like that, and I would make a survey for him. I did that once or twice for him. Survey certain parts of the Commonwealth with regard to labor problems and non-labor problems.

MARTIN: These weren't polls, were they?

GARABEDIAN: No, no, there was probably legislation they were going to draft in Washington and he wanted to get a bird's-eye view of what was going on.

MARTIN: How would you do these surveys?

GARABEDIAN: Well, we'd go to the particular area and visit. If it was a labor problem, go right to the labor people, and then visit the plants and go to the public officials in charge, or any of the information bureaus of the government, and see what we could get and then talk directly to the people involved.

[-10-]

MARTIN: Charley, when he ran for reelection to Congress, was there much of a campaign?

GARABEDIAN: Well, the Kennedys always believed that you should never give up the fight even if you knew you were going to win. They always believed in working hard. My observation has been, even with Joe, Jr., that they never wasted a minute of their time. Every minute counted, and it was their philosophy that you should make every minute in life count because we have so short a life to spend, and while you have that valuable time, make every minute count. And Jack Kennedy believed in that philosophy, too, and I think that even though he knew he would win, he still would campaign just as if he was in a new campaign. And he would give it all he had and would go out and get the vote.

MARTIN: Actually for his reelections they weren't much of a fight.

GARABEDIAN: No, he wasn't opposed by too many strong candidates because the strong candidates knew that they couldn't lick him.

MARTIN: Do you remember who would be on the Republican side. Would there be a perennial candidate?

GARABEDIAN: Well, I don't remember whether it was the Senatorial or Congressional fight of Vincent Celeste...

MARTIN: That was in the Senatorial fight.

GARABEDIAN: Senatorial fight.

MARTIN: I'm thinking of the Congressional fights.

GARABEDIAN: The names escape me. If you mention the names, I would remember them.

MARTIN: Then Charley coming up to the Senate fight, did you also participate in that campaign?

[-11-]

GARABEDIAN: Yes, I participated in that one a little more fully than in the other ones because this was the big fight and he needed... This was something big he was going after the Senatorial fight and this was statewide.

MARTIN: What did you do in that campaign?

GARABEDIAN: Well, we were on organizational committees; we set up district committees and captains here and all over the state and went and helped him as much as we could.

MARTIN: Who were some of the people? Can you recall the names?

GARABEDIAN: Well, I remember Frank Morrissey did a lot of work; Billy Sutton; there was Al Voke [Alfred Voke] who was Mayor of Chelsea; and Eddie Gallagher [Edward M. Gallagher]; and his cousin Fitzgerald, Eddie Fitzgerald; and Jim Kelly....

MARTIN: Jim Kelly, yes.

GARABEDIAN: And a lot of the names escape me, but those are the names that I remember. And there was a Lynn Johnson, one of his father's associates, brought in from New York; and of course Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] was the campaign manager, and he was on the job all the time, as he always is. He put in more hours than anybody, I think, Bobby did.

MARTIN: Well, Charley, were you given a specific function? I mean...

GARABEDIAN: No. While I was a practicing attorney, I had told Jack that I would be teaching and I couldn't stay in headquarters and participate like other people, but if any problems came up, I was always ready to help. I had to practice law and I had to teach and I had obligations there, but if it came down to the Kennedys' needing me I was there. Any time they called on me, I would always go out in the field, and I

[-12-]

would help at night time, and whenever I had a free moment, I'd go down to headquarters and see if there was anything I could do.

MARTIN: Now during this campaign, Charley, you say some of the functions you served in—what's one of them specifically?

GARABEDIAN: Well, of course, Jack would receive invitations to speak at all these various ethnic groups and various social and fraternal organizations from the time he was a Congressman to the day he was elected

President of the United States, and of course when he became President of the United States he couldn't attend all these functions. But when he was a Senator and a Congressman, usually if he received a request from an Armenian organization or Greek or Syrian organization, he'd call upon people who were familiar with that group and where I was familiar with the Armenian group, many times he was invited when he was a member of the Board of Overseers of the Harvard Corporation to speak at the National Association of Armenian Research and Studies which established a Harvard Chair for Armenians at Harvard College, and Jack couldn't speak to that group, but he asked me to represent him. And at Harvard Memorial Hall in the presence of fifteen hundred people, I represented him as a member of the Board of Overseers, and I delivered the speech which he had written himself and asked me to deliver on his behalf. And I delivered that speech. And I also represented him on other occasions to ethnic groups and I always tried to let people know that it really was Jack Kennedy speaking to them, not Charley Garabedian. And I enjoyed doing it for him and the people enjoyed it because they were Jack's words that were being spoken through me.

MARTIN: Well some of these various Armenian groups, did you speak the language to them?

GARABEDIAN: No, it was written in English. I spoke in English.

MARTIN: Oh, I see.

GARABEDIAN: The only thing was I took Jack to the largest Armenian picnic in the United States at Camp Ararat in Maynard, Massachusetts, and I don't think Jack ever forgot that

[-13-]

day because there were fifteen thousand people at the picnic, and he shook hands with practically everyone there. And he had prepared six or a seven page speech, and I told him that he was going to be the first speaker at this picnic, and Governor Herter [Christian A. Herter] was there and the Governor had to wait because my promise to Jack Kennedy held. He was the first speaker and I taught him three or four Armenian words to speak and when he spoke three or four Armenian words he took the crowd by storm, and did not use his speech. They acclaimed him, and he shook hands with everyone and took pictures with them, and even when I visited him in October of 1963 at the White House, he told me that he never forgot that crowd. And three weeks later he was visiting Haverhill, and someone from that crowd went up to him and said "I shook hands with you, Senator." And Jack never forgot that. He really enjoyed it, and Jack's father told me that Jack had never forgotten that, and that made me feel good because he told me that was one of the biggest picnics he had ever attended in his life.

MARTIN: Charley, did you also participate in the campaign, the national campaign?

GARABEDIAN: Yes, in the national campaign I tried to set up all the Armenians in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for Jack. In fact, I prepared a mailing list of approximately thirty to forty thousand Armenians in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. They loved Jack, and at the Armenian Democratic Liberal Union's Convention in Swampscott in 1959, Jack was invited to speak, and since Jack couldn't come, Steve Smith promised me that he'd have a member of the Kennedy family there. And young Teddy came and spoke there, and he opened the speech in Armenian, and the crowd roared because Teddy Kennedy said that if his Armenian was not perfect to blame it on Charley Garabedian, who wasn't a very good teacher. And Teddy also danced at that affair, did some Armenian dancing, and when we came back to Boston, I met the Ambassador at the headquarters on Tremont Street and he thanked me personally because he said Teddy had the most wonderful time of his life and that he had learned a new dance.

MARTIN: Charley, during that campaign you say you focused your participation within the State.

[-14-]

GARABEDIAN: Yes.

MARTIN: And then of course...

GARABEDIAN: Well, I was asked to go out of the State, but I couldn't leave my practice and teaching. If it had been in the time when I could have left school, I would have gone out of the State, but Jack understood that I couldn't give up my teaching.

MARTIN: Well, now when he became President, did you get down to the Inaugural?

GARABEDIAN: Yes. In fact that's quite a story. As you know it was a stormy day, and Thursday afternoon at four o'clock, five of us decided to go, and Friday morning we arose at seven o'clock and we drove. We got as far as Deep Water, New Jersey, and the State Police made us put up at the Colonial Arms Motel in Deep Water, and the next morning the New Jersey State Police came and cleared our car and gave us a set of chains and we arrived in Washington just in time to attend the Inaugural. It was the happiest day of my life to see Jack Kennedy inducted into the highest office of the land.

MARTIN: Charley, you subsequently went down and visited them at the White House?

GARABEDIAN: Yes, the strange thing that occurred was that Dick Flood and I had been members of the bar since, well, approximately twenty-one years. Dick and I had been practicing attorneys, and Ted Kennedy had been admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States, and Dick Flood and I had not been admitted to practice. So we requested Senator Edward M. Kennedy to be our sponsor for admittance to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States. The Senator cordially responded that he would be very happy to sponsor Richard and I to be admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States, and on October 17, 1963, Senator Edward M. Kennedy sponsored Richard M. Flood and Charles B. Garabedian on motion to be admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the

[-15-]

United States, and the coincidence is that we were the first on the list to be inducted by motion, and a group of lawyers from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts being sponsored by Edward M. Dangel of the Massachusetts Trial Lawyers' Association sat in the audience and saw us being sponsored by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, and it was a very happy occasion for us to be sponsored by Teddy. And after we were sworn into office, Dick and I congratulated Teddy that he won his first Supreme Court case without any objections whatsoever.

MARTIN: Charley, going back to the early years...

GARABEDIAN: Oh, excuse me, and then after that, Dick Flood and I telephoned Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.], Special Assistant to the President of the United States, and also a classmate of the President, to ask if we could see the President of the United States, and he said, "Well, there is no harm in trying." He called Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] and told her that two personal friends of the President would like to see the President and she said, this was six o'clock that evening, that the President had Sean Lemass the Prime Minister of Ireland in the office with him, but that she would write the names down on a piece of paper and take it in. She did, and evidently the President requested our presence, and we were so notified and Ted Reardon and Dick Flood and Mrs. Flood and I were escorted into the President's office, and he came out, and we were the happiest people in the land. We shook hands with the President, reminisced, and John John came into the room and Mrs. Flood, Dick and I played with him, and Ted and the President and I reminisced about the old days. And then I asked Mrs. Lincoln if she would be kind enough to mail me a picture of the President because everyone used to say, "the President's a real close friend of yours and you don't even have a picture of him in your room." So on November 18, I believe, I received a picture in the mail with a letter from Mrs. Lincoln stating that the President enjoyed reminiscing with us and thanking us for playing with John John. And on the day the President was assassinated, early in the morning, I dictated a letter thanking the President for his picture and sending it to Mrs. Lincoln, and that was one of the most tragic days of my life when I heard in the afternoon what had happened.

[-16-]

MARTIN: Going back, Charley, to the early years at the Harvard Law School, can you give us a comparison of Joe and his brother, John F. Kennedy? How did they compare? There was an age difference there, but do you think Joe could have ascended the heights like his younger brother did?

GARABEDIAN: I personally felt that Joe was the person who was going to be the politician in the family, and I always thought that Jack loved writing. I knew that Jack was interested in writing, reading, and in history, and I always thought that Joe was going to be the politician in the family. Of course Joe was very active, and he had a little more forcefulness, I think, in doing things. But Jack, when Joe was killed, took on some of those characteristics because he became the eldest in the family and it was his, shall we say duty, to carry on the tradition, and since Joe was going to get into politics now, it became Jack's duty and the Kennedys have that ability to carry on. One passes it on to the other, and as we all know, Jack became the fearless, dauntless candidate for political office and finally became the President of the United States, which the Ambassador had planned for Joe, Jr.

MARTIN: You think the Ambassador planned.... You're not...

GARABEDIAN: No, I'm just guessing that. I don't know if there was any plan, but I mean I think that the Ambassador wanted one of his sons to become President of the United States eventually.

MARTIN: Did you ever have occasion to discuss the plans of the...

GARABEDIAN: No we never discussed plans because...

MARTIN: With the Ambassador, I mean.

GARABEDIAN: No. No.

[-17-]

MARTIN: Charley, if somebody were to ask you why you would volunteer to sacrifice time and energy to work for John F. Kennedy and remain with him all through his career, what kind of an answer could you give?

GARABEDIAN: Well, the answer I would give is that in this world of ours, if we want to exist, we have to recognize in a person the qualities of leadership, courage, and love of mankind that Jack Kennedy had. If anyone spent at least two or three minutes and conversed with Jack Kennedy, he would see these qualities and he would know that here is a man who would do things to benefit mankind and make sure that this was a world worthwhile living in. He was not selfish; he did everything to help

mankind and nothing to hurt mankind. And when you see qualities like that in a person, what's a little time to give to preserve and foster those ideals?

MARTIN: Charley, do you recall any other incidents in your association with the Kennedy family?

GARABEDIAN: Well, I remember one incident where I received a telephone call from Frank Morrissey, who at that time was the Secretary to Congressman John F. Kennedy in his Boston office, and Frank called me and said that the following morning there was going to be a mass held in St. Francis' Church in Hyannis in memory of Kathleen Kennedy [Kathleen Kennedy Cavendish] and Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., and Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy had donated \$250,000 for the Church for this high mass which was to be said at six o'clock in the morning. Frank said to me that he'd like to have me go down with him and John Droney and his wife, and Bart Brickley was going to drive down on his own. So I had just purchased a new 1947 Cadillac, and I picked up Frank Morrissey and John Droney and his wife, and we drove down. And as we were driving down and getting closer to the Church, a humorous anecdote occurred in the car. Frank said, "Don't drive up in front of the Church in this car because if the Ambassador sees me coming out of a new Cadillac, he'll be wondering where I got it." So we parked the car a little ways down from the church, and we stepped out and walked up, and we noticed that Bart Brickley drove up in a new Cadillac right in front of the church and stepped out and Frank said, "See what I mean? Everybody working for the Kennedys will be driving up in a new Cadillac." So we got quite a kick out of that story.

[-18-]

## APPENDIX

### RECOLLECTION OF FOLLOWING INCIDENTS

I recall that when John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States, the Massachusetts Democratic Party sponsored a birthday party for the President in the Commonwealth Armory in Boston on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May. John F. Kennedy never forgot his friends and this is substantiated by the fact that my sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Kolligian and I were guests of the President that evening sitting at Table Number 3 approximately in front of the head table where the President was sitting. The closeness of my friendship with the Kennedy Family is demonstrated by the fact that my sister and I were sitting at a table consisting of the President's Aunt and Uncle and his first cousins—the Fitzgeralds. I also can never forget the inscription that Senator Edward M. Kennedy wrote on his photograph which he gave me—the inscription read as follows: "To Charlie Garabedian, From the oldest to the youngest you have always been a true friend." To me this demonstrates the feeling and affinity that the Kennedys have for their friends.

Charles B. Garabedian Oral History Transcript – JFK #1  
Name List

**B**

Brickley, Bart A., 18

**C**

Carnera, Primo, 5  
Cavendish, Kathleen Kennedy, 18  
Celeste, Vincent, 11

**D**

Dangel, Edward M., 16  
Droney, John J., 8, 18

**F**

Farley, James A., 2  
Fitzgerald, Eddie, 12  
Flood, Richard, 1, 15, 16

**G**

Gallagher, Edward M., 12  
Galluccio, Anthony, 5  
Glynn, 7

**H**

Herter, Christian A., 14

**J**

Johnson, Lynn, 12

**K**

Kelly, Jim, 12  
Kennedy, Edward M., 3, 14, 15, 16, appendix  
Kennedy, John F., 3-18, appendix  
Kennedy, John F., Jr., 16  
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., 14, 17, 18  
Kennedy, Joseph P., Jr., 1-5, 11, 17, 18  
Kennedy, Robert F., 12  
Killifer, Tom, 1  
Kolligian, Elizabeth, appendix

**L**

Lemass, Sean F., 16  
Lincoln, Evelyn N., 16  
Louis, Joe, 5

**M**

Morrissey, Francis X., 7, 12, 18

**R**

Reardon, Timothy J., Jr., 16

**S**

Schmeling, Max, 5  
Steadman, Nathan, Jr., 1  
Sutton, William J., 7, 12

**T**

Taft, Robert, Jr., 1

**V**

Voke, Alfred, 12