



Lion of the Left

"The foundation of national morality must be laid in private families. ... Public virtue cannot exist in a nation without private, and public virtue is the only foundation of republics." --John Adams

Have you ever attended a funeral service out of respect for a friend or colleague, and left perplexed as to whom the eulogy was referring? Just once, I would like to go to a service for some disreputable rogue and have a clergyman deliver a eulogy that was faithful to the facts rather than full of fiction. (Hopefully, that won't be my own!)

I am certainly not suggesting that we should stand in judgment of any man, for that is the exclusive domain of our Creator. However, we should never abandon our responsibility to discern right from wrong.

On that note, Edward "Teddy" Kennedy (22 February 1932 -- 25 August 2009) died this week at age 77.

Kennedy spent the last 47 of his years as a senator, having been perpetually re-elected by the people of Massachusetts. This made him the third-longest serving senator -- behind Robert Byrd (D-WV) and Strom Thurmond (R-SC) -- in that chamber's august history.

Of course, a fawning Leftmedia will inundate us with non-stop coverage of Kennedy's life, featuring interviews with his political sycophants up to, and probably well after, his interment at National Cemetery. The airways and printed pages are already sodden with accolades, mostly framing the senator's life as one of great personal tragedy but great public success.

Let's take a look at both.

Kennedy was born into great wealth, privilege and political influence, the fourth son and ninth child of Joseph and Rose Kennedy. He never worked a day in a private-sector job, and like his brothers before

him, he owed his political career to his father's considerable political machinations.

But, the mainstream media's reference to TK's life as one punctuated by personal tragedy is an understatement.

Before the age of 16, he had suffered through the death of his brother Joseph Kennedy Jr. (his father's heir apparent), who died when his B-24 bomber exploded over Surrey, England, during World War II, and the death of his sister Kathleen Agnes Kennedy, who died in an airplane crash in France.

In 1941 his father ordered a lobotomy for Ted's sister, Rosemary Kennedy, then age 23, because of "mood swings that the family found difficult to handle at home." The procedure failed and left Rose mentally incapacitated until her death in January 2005 at age 87.

Ted, like his brother John, developed a reputation as a serial womanizer in college. Unlike his Ivy League brothers, however, Ted was kicked out of Harvard for cheating, though allowed to return a few years later to complete his undergraduate degree.

Thanks to some election-night manipulation of returns by Old Joe, JFK was elected president in the closest race of the 20th century (49.7 percent to Richard Nixon's 49.5 percent). That paved the way for TK's victory in a 1962 U.S. Senate special election in Massachusetts.

The thrill of victory was brief, however. On 22 November 1963, during a political visit to Dallas, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

In June 1964, Ted Kennedy was flying with friends on a private plane that crashed on a landing approach, killing the pilot and a Kennedy staffer. Kennedy survived but suffered severe injuries.

On 4 June 1968, Robert Kennedy, then a candidate for the Democrat Party's nomination for president,

was assassinated after a Los Angeles political event. The political baton then went to Teddy, the last of the four Kennedy brothers, but his alcohol abuse and philandering would keep the presidency out of reach.

In 1969, on one of his infamous junkets to "the island" (Martha's Vineyard and Chappaquiddick), Kennedy's moral lapse would cost a young staffer her life, and would cost him any chance of becoming president.

On the night of 18 July, Kennedy left a party with an attractive young intern en route to a private secluded beach on the far side of Dike Bridge. Kennedy lost control on the single-lane bridge and his vehicle overturned in the shallow tidal water. (Note: I drove across this bridge in a large 4x4 truck a few years after this incident, and it was not difficult to keep it out of the water -- but then, I was not intoxicated.)

Kennedy freed himself from the vehicle leaving his passenger, 28-year-old Mary Jo Kopechne to suffocate in an air pocket inside the overturned car. After resting at the water's edge, he walked back to the party house, and one of his political hacks took him back to his hotel.

Nine hours later, after sobering up and conferring with political advisors and lawyers, Kennedy called authorities to report the incident. Kopechne's body had already been discovered.

With the help of Father Joe's connections, Kennedy was charged only with leaving the scene of an accident. In his testimony, he claimed, "I almost tossed and turned... I had not given up hope all night long that, by some miracle, Mary Jo would have escaped from the car." He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to serve two months in jail -- sentence suspended.

With Joan, his pregnant wife of 10 years, and their three children by his side, he claimed that charges of "immoral conduct and drunk driving" were false and he was promptly re-elected to his second full Senate term with a landslide 62 percent of the vote. However, his responsibility for the death of Kopechne would all but disqualify him from ever holding national office. Indeed, the moral composure of the nation differs significantly from that of his Massachusetts supporters and defenders.

Kennedy's political advocacy swung evermore to the left in the years that followed, and his personal conduct led the way.

In January 1981, Joan announced she had had enough, and they divorced.

Two Senate terms later, Kennedy was partying at the family's Palm Beach compound with his nephew, William Kennedy Smith, who was charged with the rape of Patricia Bowman during that evening. The Kennedy machine was able to undermine Bowman's charges by assassinating her character ahead of the trial.

Not surprisingly, Kennedy was an ardent backer of his friend Bill Clinton after the latter lied about sexual encounters with a subordinate White House intern in 1998.

In turn, Clinton awarded Kennedy the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which, along with the Congressional Gold Medal, is the highest civilian award in the U.S. It is designated for individuals who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors."

Setting aside all of his personal tragedies, what about the tributes and rave reviews of Kennedy's public life, his success as a legislator?

According to Barack Obama, "Our country has lost a great leader, who picked up the torch of his fallen brothers and became the greatest United States Senator of our time."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi insists, "No one has done more than Senator Kennedy to educate our children, care for our seniors and ensure equality for all Americans. Ted Kennedy's dream of quality health care for all Americans will be made real this year because of his leadership and his inspiration."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid adds, "Ted Kennedy's dream was the one for which the Founding Fathers fought and for which his brothers sought to realize. The Liberal Lion's mighty roar may now fall silent, but his dream shall never die."

Oh, really?

Kennedy has a very long legacy of legislative accomplishments, but not one of them is expressly authorized by our Constitution, that venerable old document he has repeatedly pledged by oath "to support and defend."

Kennedy's long Senate tenure was, in fact, defined by hypocrisy.

For example, consider that this fine Catholic boy's advocacy for abortion and homosexuality was second to none.

In regard to Operation Iraqi Freedom, consider his claim during the Clinton years: "We have known for many years that Saddam Hussein is seeking and developing weapons of mass destruction." A few years later, with his cadre of traitorous leftists at his side, Kennedy claimed, "The Bush administration misrepresented and distorted the intelligence to justify a war that America should never have fought."

Who can forget Kennedy's outrageous 2006 inquisition into the integrity of then Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito? In 1987 when Ronald Reagan nominated Alito to be a U.S. District Attorney, Kennedy's vote was among the Senate's unanimous consent. And when Sam Alito was nominated for the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in 1990, he again received Kennedy's vote and unanimous consent from the Senate. But after impugning Alito's character in his Supreme Court hearings, Kennedy blustered, "If confirmed, Alito could very well fundamentally alter the balance of the court and push it dangerously to the right."

Of course, Kennedy was an expert at "borking" judicial nominees. Indeed, he is responsible for the coining of the term. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan nominated an exceptional jurist, Robert Bork, to the Supreme Court. During Bork's confirmation hearings, Kennedy proclaimed, "Robert Bork's America is a land in which women would be forced into back-alley abortions, blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters, rogue police could break down citizens' doors in midnight raids, schoolchildren could not be taught about evolution, writers and artists could be censored at the whim of the Government, and the doors of the Federal courts would be shut on the fingers of millions of citizens." Despicable.

No agenda was more sacred to Kennedy than opposing Constitutional Constructionists in order to con-

vert the Judiciary into what Thomas Jefferson called the "Despotic Branch" stacked with jurists who subscribe to the notion of a so-called "Living Constitution".

But among über-leftists like Kennedy, there is perhaps no greater hypocrisy than the fact that they are among the wealthiest of Americans but pretend to be advocates for the poor. Of course, they never give up their opulent trappings and lifestyles while pontificating what is best for the masses. (I have written on the pathology associated with this hypocrisy under the label "Inheritance Welfare Liberalism, or "rich guilt" if you will.)

And there is a long list of Kennedy legislation that has proven disastrous.

Second only to the looming disaster of his pet nationalized health care promotion, Kennedy led the charge for the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, ending quotas based on national origin. He argued, "[O]ur cities will not be flooded with a million immigrants annually. The ethnic mix of our country will not be upset. ...[T]he bill will not inundate America with immigrants from any one country or area..."

How did that one turn out?

Kennedy also had some dangerous dalliances with the Soviets in 1983, endeavoring to undermine Ronald Reagan's hard line with the USSR. Fortunately, his efforts did not prevail.

But Kennedy did have one thing in common with his older brothers: He had powerful oratorical skills.

At the 2004 Democrat Convention to elect his lap dog, John Kerry, Kennedy, who wrote the book on political disunity, declared to delegates, "There are those who seek to divide us. ... America needs a genuine uniter -- not a divider. [Republicans] divide and try to conquer."

Fortunately, the American people weren't buying his rhetoric -- at least not until the 2008 convention, when Kennedy joined Barack Obama's "hope 'n' change" chorus: "I have come here tonight to stand with you to change America.... For me this is a season of hope -- new hope for a justice and fair prosperity for the many, and not just for the few -- new hope. And this is the cause of my life -- new hope

that we will break the old gridlock and guarantee that every American -- north, south, east, west, young, old -- will have decent, quality health care as a fundamental right and not a privilege."

Predictably, and before the man has even been laid to rest, there is already a rallying cry from Ted Kennedy's grave: The Left and their mainstream media talkingheads are exhorting us to fulfill the late senator's misguided mission to nationalize health care. (I checked, and the Constitution doesn't authorize this either.)

As I contemplate the life of Ted Kennedy, I am left with two primary conclusions.

First, Ted Kennedy was no JFK.

In his 1961 Inaugural Address, John Kennedy said famously, "My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country." Ted Kennedy inverted that phrase to read, "Ask not what you can do for your country, ask what your country can do for you," and in the process, turned the once-noble Democrat Party on end.

Second, a man who can't govern his own life should never be entrusted with the government of others.

One of our most astute Founders, Noah Webster, wrote, "The virtues of men are of more consequence to society than their abilities. ... In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate -- look to his character."

In Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language, the first use of "government" is defined in terms of self-government, not the body of those who govern.

Despite the Left's insistence that private virtue and morality should not be a consideration when assessing those in "public service" (unless, of course, they are Republicans), the fact is that the two are irrevocably linked.

Finally, in 1968, when Ted Kennedy delivered the eulogy for his brother, Robert, he said, "My brother need not be idealized, or enlarged in death beyond what he was in life..."

I would hope that whoever is slated to deliver Ted Kennedy's eulogy follows that advice because we do a disservice to him and our country to suggest Kennedy was anything more than he was.

I do not know who will bestow his final tribute, but I do know it will not be Mary Jo Kopechne.

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis!

Mark Alexander
Publisher, PatriotPost.US

(To submit reader comments visit our Letters to the Editor page.)

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)