

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

1917 - 1963



- John F. Kennedy was born at 83 Beals Street in Brookline, Massachusetts on May 29, 1917.
- He had three brothers and five sisters. He was the second of nine children. His family called him Jack.
- Although he was a healthy infant, Jack endured many illnesses during his childhood.
- Reading was Jack's favorite pastime. He especially liked adventure books. His favorites were *Billy Whiskers* and *King Arthur and the Round Table*.
- Jack's father, Joe Sr., held high expectations for his children, especially his two eldest sons. He wanted the boys to win at sports and be successful at everything they tried.
- Jack attended several schools growing up: Edward Devotion School (grades K - 2), Dexter School (grades 3 - 4), Riverdale Country School (grades 5 - 7), Canterbury School (grade 8), and Choate School (grades 9 - 12).
- Jack was not the best student and didn't always work as hard as he could. His father once wrote to him, *"...if I didn't feel you had the goods I would be most charitable in my attitude toward your failings. After long experience in sizing up people I definitely know you have the goods and you can go a long way...I am urging you to do the best you can."*
- Jack attended and graduated from Harvard College (1936 - 1940).
- During World War II, Jack joined the Navy and was assigned to the South Pacific. While commander of a patrol torpedo boat, the PT-109, he helped save crew members after the boat was destroyed by a Japanese warship. Jack was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his leadership and courage.

- Jack began his political career in 1946 by running for and winning a seat in Massachusetts' eleventh congressional district. He served three terms (six years) in the House of Representatives.
- In 1952, Jack was elected to the US Senate.
- At age thirty-six, Jack married Jacqueline Bouvier, a photographer for the *Washington Times-Herald*.
- While recovering from back surgery, Senator Kennedy wrote *Profiles in Courage*. The book was about several senators who had risked their careers to stand up for what they believed. *Profiles in Courage* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1957.
- As Kennedy's popularity grew, he decided to run for president. In 1960, the Democratic Party nominated him as its candidate.
- John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon by a slim margin on November 8, 1960. President Kennedy delivered his inauguration speech the following January.
- John F. Kennedy was the 35th president of the United States.* He held the office for almost three years. During this time, he molded a sweeping Civil Rights bill, launched the Peace Corps, promoted the Space Race, and negotiated a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
- John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, TX on November 22, 1963.

To read a short biography on the president, visit **The John F. Kennedy Library and Museum** website, http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/jfk_biography.html.

* He was the youngest and the first Catholic president ever elected to the office of president.