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ZOOM

in on america

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President John F. Kennedy and his son, John Jr., 1963 (AP Photo)

In this issue: President John F. Kennedy

Zoom in on America

The Life of John F. Kennedy

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on May 29, 1917 as the second of nine children born into the family of Joseph Patrick Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. John was often called "Jack". The Kennedys had a powerful impact on America. John Kennedy's great-grandfather, Patrick Kennedy, emigrated from Ireland to Boston in 1849 and worked as a barrel maker. His grandfather, Patrick Joseph (P.J.) Kennedy, achieved success first in the saloon and liquor-import businesses, and then in banking. His father, Joseph Patrick Kennedy, made investments in banking, ship building, real estate, liquor importing, and motion pictures and became one of the richest men in America.

The family moved to an upper-class New York City suburb in 1927.

The Kennedys were not negatively impacted by the Great Depression and even provided financial backing to Franklin Roosevelt's successful presidential campaign in 1932. Roosevelt appointed Joseph P. Kennedy to chair the Securities and Exchange Commission (1934), the Maritime Commission (1937), and, in December 1937, made him ambassador to Great Britain.

It was the father's dream to establish political careers for his sons, including making Joe Junior president of the United States. Both brothers graduated from Harvard. John wrote his senior thesis on Britain's unpreparedness for war, which was published as "Why England Slept".

During WWII John applied and was accepted into the navy, despite a history of poor health. He was commander of PT-100, which on August 2, 1943, was hit and sunk by a Japanese destroyer. Despite injuries to his back, an ailment that would haunt him to the end of his life, Kennedy managed to rescue his surviving crew members and was declared a "hero" by the New York Times. A year later Joe was killed on a volunteer mission in Europe when his aircraft exploded.

Joseph Patrick now placed all his hopes on John. In 1946, John F. Kennedy successfully ran for the same seat in Congress, which his grandfather held nearly five decades earlier. He entered the world of politics as a congressman relying at the beginning on his name, youth, war record, family connections, and personal charisma.

But his health problems mounted. During a recovery after two serious operations for his ailing back, he wrote a book *Profiles in Courage* with the help of several aides. Kennedy received the Pulitzer Prize for the book in 1954, but was also criticized for taking all the credit himself and not recognizing input from his associates.

In 1952 Kennedy won a seat in the U.S. Senate and became an important politician of the Democratic Party. At the 1956 Democratic Convention, Kennedy came close to winning the vice presidential nomination, but lost to Estes Kefauver, only to win the presidential nomination from his party four years later. His campaign slogan was a "New



John F. Kennedy, just returned from Berlin and London, reads the inevitable news, in 1939. (AP Photo)



John F. Kennedy as a 26 year old Navy lieutenant in Los Angeles, January 10, 1944. (AP Photo)

Frontier” and a call to “national greatness”. He promised to “get America moving again”. He criticized president Eisenhower for permitting communists to gain a foothold in Cuba after Fidel Castro’s revolution.

The 1960 presidential election race was a close one and Kennedy defeated Nixon by 12,000 votes. He was president for only 1,000 days, but his impact on American and world politics was huge. The campaign was a novel one in that it employed television to an unprecedented extent. Kennedy and Nixon appeared in four televised debates. John F. Kennedy’s charisma, a natural attitude, as well as several well-timed political moves, such as telephoning Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. to console her on her husband’s false imprisonment, appealed to an average American.

Kennedy was very considerate of America’s foreign policy. At the time of the Cold War, he had this message for the Soviet Union: *Let us begin anew -- remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.* However, in an effort to avoid any sign of weakness in relations with the Soviet

Union, in April 1961 he authorized a Central Intelligence Agency plan to support anti-Castro forces to invade Cuba. The invasion at the Bay of Pigs was a failure.

Kennedy’s presidency coincided not only with the Cold War but also with global crises in Laos, Vietnam, Berlin, Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the Congo. A massive buildup of nuclear missiles and an increase in conventional military armaments was the result of these tensions. The specter of nuclear confrontation between the U.S. and Russia occurred in October 1962 and the world came dangerously close to a confrontation. John F. Kennedy’s thoughtful and responsible decision, as well as consideration on the part of the Russian leader, Nikita Khrushchev, prevented a catastrophe that might have annihilated life on our planet. A compromise was reached: in consideration of the Soviet withdrawal of missiles in Cuba, the United States withdrew its missiles in Turkey.

After overcoming the nuclear crisis, Kennedy’s approval rating increased from 66% to 77%. He was successful in building positive response in both domestic and international arenas by creating such institutions as the Peace



George McGovern, then congressman, joined Senator John F. Kennedy on the campaign trail in June 1960. Both went on to victory, Kennedy as president and McGovern as senator. (AP Photo)

Corps, Food for Peace, and the Agency for International Development, which improved America's image in emerging nations of Africa and Asia. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress raised hopes in Latin America. The atmospheric test nuclear ban treaty of 1963 was a hopeful first step toward arms controls.

Internal affairs were marked by endeavors to end racial discrimination. John Kennedy endorsed and supported the August 1963 March on Washington, during which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered the famous "I Have a Dream" speech to hundreds of thousands of civil rights advocates. It was Kennedy who introduced a comprehensive civil rights bill in June 1963. Speaking about it on national television he said: *A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all.* Unfortunately, he did not live to put his signature under the Civil Rights Act that ended segregation on February 10, 1964.

Kennedy brought elegance and style to the presidency. His good looks, intellect, humor, manner, and wit were

hallmarks of his presidency. His beautiful, well-bred, and stylish wife, Jacqueline Lee Bouvier, became an icon and an influence for American women in terms of vogue and style. An artistic personality herself, she transformed the White House into a hub for art and culture.

John Kennedy had a history of extramarital affairs which, carefully camouflaged during his presidency, were disclosed long after his death and marred the formerly spotless image of this extremely popular American president. However, even after these affairs became known, a *Newsweek* and Gallup poll of 1983 revealed Kennedy was still America's most popular president.

John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963 at the peak of his political power. The mystery of his death has never been solved despite hundreds of studies and eight investigations. The man arrested following the assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald, was shot to death in the Dallas police station by Jack Ruby, a nightclub owner who had connections to organized crime.



Top: Pres. John F. Kennedy and first lady Jacqueline Kennedy at one of five inaugural balls, January 20, 1961. (AP Photo)

Bottom: Pres. and First Lady with their son, John F. Kennedy Jr. on December 8, 1960 (AP Photo)

Top: John F. Kennedy, on crutches, greets ladies at a Boston tea party he gave in connection with his campaign for the U.S. Senate position representing Massachusetts, circa 1952. (AP Photo)

Bottom: Pres. John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy as they prepare to leave Vienna June 4, 1961. after the summit meeting with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. (AP Photo)

President Kennedy Creates the Peace Corps

After a long day of campaigning for the presidency, Senator John F. Kennedy arrived at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor at 2:00 a.m. on October 14, 1960, intending to go straight to sleep. Instead, he saw that 10,000 college students had waited up to see him. He stood in front of them to give an improvised speech, long after members of the press had gone home for the day. It was in this speech in which he asked the question, "How many of you, who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world?"

It was this challenge from Kennedy to the students of the University of Michigan that spurred the founding of America's most famous international volunteer organization. In response to his speech, more than 1,000 students signed a petition saying they would serve abroad. Two weeks later, when giving a speech at the Cow Palace in San Francisco on November 2, 1960, Kennedy spoke of "a peace corps of talented men and women" who would pledge themselves to the cause of promoting peace and development. Inspired by the more than 25,000 letters from students expressing interest in serving abroad, Kennedy vowed to make the creation of the Peace Corps a priority in his presidency.

The establishment of the Peace Corps was also a reaction to the current political climate of the Cold War. Kennedy observed that the Soviet Union "had hundreds of men and women, scientists, physicists, teachers, engineers, doctors, and nurses...prepared to spend their lives abroad in the service of world communism." The United States didn't have a program in place that could compare to that, and Kennedy wanted to create a venue for the active involvement of Americans in promoting global democracy, peace, and development.

In order to set this vision in motion, Kennedy asked his brother-in-law, R. Sargent Shriver, to lead a Peace Corps Task Force, which outlined seven steps for forming the Peace Corps and then present it as a memorandum to the

newly elected President Kennedy. On March 1, 1961, the Peace Corps was created by an executive order. Thousands of young Americans volunteered for the Peace Corps, and in August, President Kennedy held a White House ceremony to honor the 750 volunteers who were chosen as the inaugural Peace Corps class.

Since 1961, more than 225,000 Americans have served in 141 countries all over the world and learned over 200 languages and dialects. Each Peace Corps volunteer is an American citizen, usually with a college degree, who volunteers abroad for a period of two years following three months of training. Life in the Peace Corps is by no means easy. Volunteers face challenges like language barriers, poor conditions, and remote access. There is no salary, only a monthly stipend for room, board, and a few essentials. Peace Corps volunteers work to establish a relationship of trust with the local community and to utilize their skills to find solutions to the challenges faced by communities in the developing world. Volunteers from many different backgrounds lend their skills in areas like education, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS training, agriculture, business, community development, forestry, and environmental protection. Members of the Peace Corps today are often older and more experienced in specific fields than their predecessors. More than fifty years after its creation by President Kennedy, the Peace Corps still plays a vital role in promoting the ideals of world peace and friendship through volunteer service abroad.



President John F. Kennedy gives a personal farewell message to 80 Peace Corps volunteers on August 28, 1961 in the White House Rose Garden in Washington. (AP Photo)

Foreign Policy Challenges

The Cold War era that shaped the world's stage during John F. Kennedy's presidency had a huge influence on his foreign policy. It included what was possibly the most dangerous moment in the history of the world when a nuclear war that could have annihilated human life on our planet was closer than ever. Kennedy's wisdom, deliberation and humanity was a decisive factor in overcoming this danger. His children often came to the Oval Office and played while he was at work. His role as president was to ensure that children all over the world have a future. It may well be that all of us, born during and after October-November 1962 owe something to John F. Kennedy.

Aside from avoiding the crisis situation in November 1962, Kennedy continued to work towards diminishing the threat of nuclear tests. He was able to secure an agreement with Great Britain and the Soviet Union to limit the testing of nuclear weapons in the earth's atmosphere. It meant the reduction of nuclear "fallout." Also, constructive negotiations and reducing Cold War tensions became possible.

His foreign policy was not free from blunders. One of them was the Bay of Pigs invasion, which began under President Eisenhower. The Bay of Pigs invasion was a failed attempt in 1961 to overthrow Cuban premier Fidel Castro by a CIA-sponsored paramilitary group mainly made up of Cuban exiles who traveled to the United States when Castro took over. Castro had formed strong economic links to the Soviet Union, and this worried the American Government. Eisenhower had decided it was necessary to act, and Kennedy was convinced to continue with the plan once he took office. However, the Cuban government knew about the plan, and many of the Cuban paramilitary fighters and the American agents who also participated were killed during or after the failed invasion. The Bay of Pigs embarrassed the Kennedy Administration and made Castro wary of future interventions by the US in Cuba. However, Kennedy showed his skills as a leader when he said in response to the fall-out from the Bay of Pigs, *There's an old saying that victory has a hundred fathers and defeat is an orphan ...*



In this June 3, 1961 photo, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and President John F. Kennedy talk in the residence of the U.S. Ambassador in a suburb of Vienna. (Photo AP)

Further statements, detailed discussions, are not to conceal responsibility because I'm the responsible officer of the Government...

The 1960s were a time when the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union was in full swing. President John F. Kennedy made it a goal that American astronauts land on the moon before 1970. This is how the Space Center (later renamed in honor of President Kennedy,) and the Apollo program started. Kennedy agreed that, though the rockets would be launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida, the headquarters of the NASA would be in Houston, Texas.

In order to prevent communism from taking root in impoverished countries in Latin America, Kennedy created the Alliance for Progress, which was a plan to improve the region's social and economic standing. It helped strengthen the America's position in the region.



In this October 7, 1963 photo, President John F. Kennedy signs the Limited Test Ban Treaty during a ratification ceremony in the White House Treaty Room in Washington. (Photo AP)

ACTIVITY PAGE

JULY-AUGUST 2017 TRIVIA QUESTION

What was the name of
John F. Kennedy's wife?

Send the answer
(with your home address) to:
KrakowAIRC@state.gov

The 1st, the 8th and the 9th
correct answer will be award-
ed with a book prize

Deadline: August 31

May-June 2017

Answer:

Her story was the first of his
photographic essays that
received recognition.

The winner is:

Maria from Lima

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The prize will be sent to you
by mail.



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John F. Kennedy's Famous Quotes

"Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind."

"The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth."

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

"Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

"And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

"A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on."

"Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly."

"Let us not emphasize all on which we differ but all we have in common. Let us consider not what we fear separately but what we share together."

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

"Tolerance implies no lack of commitment to one's own beliefs. Rather it condemns the oppression or persecution of others."

DON'T MISS THIS EXHIBIT IN KRAKOW

AMERICAN VISIONARY: John F. Kennedy's Life and Times

Photo Exhibit

The exhibit is hosted by Mini Galeria, Krakowskie Forum Kultury,
Mikołajska 2, Krakow (formerly Śródmiejski Ośrodek Kultury)
from July 19 to August 31, 2017.

An extraordinary photo exhibit of the 35th President of the United States.
Organized by The Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. as part
of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum's yearlong
celebration of President Kennedy's 100th birthday. The exhibit is based
on the book *JFK: A Vision for America*. It features 77 iconic images that
capture the dramatic scope of Kennedy's life.



Caroline Kennedy peeps over the shoulder of her father, Senator John F. Kennedy, as he gives her a piggy-back ride November 9, 1960 at the Kennedy residence in Hyannis Port, Mass. It was the first chance hard-campaigning Kennedy has had to relax with his daughter in weeks. (AP Photo)