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TRANSCRIPT OF RADIO TAPE OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

Eulogy to President John Fitzgerald Kennedy
November 24, 1963

President and Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Kennedy, members of the Kennedy family, my fellow Americans, all:

There was the sound of laughter and, in a moment, it was no more. And, so, she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.

There was a wit in a man neither young nor old; but a wit full of an old Man's wisdom and of a child's wisdom and then, in a moment, it was no more. And, so, she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.

There was a man marked with the scars of his love of country, a body active with the surge of life far from spent, and, in a moment it was no more. And, so, she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.

There was a father with a little boy and a little girl and the joy of each in the other and, in a moment, it was no more. And, so, she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.

There was a husband who asked much and gave much, and, out of giving and the asking, wove with a woman what could not be broken in life, and, in a moment, it was no more. And, so, she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands, and kissed him and closed the lid of a coffin.

A piece of each of us died at that moment. Yet, in death he gave of himself to us. He gave us of a good heart from which the laughter came. He gave us of a profound wit, from which a great leadership emerged. He gave us of a kindness and a strength fused into the human courage to seek peace without fear.

He gave us of his love that we, too, in turn might give. He gave that we might give of ourselves, that we might give to one another until there would be no room, no room at all, for the bigotry, hatred, prejudices and the arrogance which converged in that moment of horror to strike him down.

In leaving us...these gifts John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States, leaves with us. Will we take them, Mr. President? Will we have, now the sense and the responsibility and the courage to take them? I pray to God that we shall and under God we will.