

HYANNISPORTER

Official Newsletter of the Kennedy Political Items Collectors
Founded in 1974

August 2017

DIRECTOR &
NEWSLETTER EDITOR
HARVEY GOLDBERG



IN MEMORY OF
BONNIE C. GARDNER,
1932-2003

JFK-100

William R. Rice

It was a hot 1960 September night and I had just returned home, put my camera gear away, kicked off my shoes and started to relax. Just hours before I had been asked to photograph Vice President Richard Nixon for his Presidential Campaign visit to Westgate Park in San Diego. Many film stars were there to support the Vice President on his road to the White House. Along with Nixon's wife Pat, Robert Young, Ginger Rogers, John Payne, Mitzi Gaynor and several others made the evening a gala affair.

As I sat down on my couch and turned on the television, I saw and heard a young man with a 'Boston Accent' proclaiming his desire and views to take America in a new direction. I immediately began to realize how different this new voice was compared to the speech I had just heard a few hours earlier down at the Padre Baseball Park in Mission Valley. I found myself being drawn into a new and exciting vision of what America could become. As the days grew closer to election time I listened to every speech I could from this new candidate and even though I had moved to California years earlier, He was from Massachusetts and I was also a 'New Englander' from Maine.

As I entered the JFK Presidential Library on his 100th birthday I thought back to that night when his vision reached out through that television screen so long ago and how he had grabbed my heart and aligned his spirit with my own.

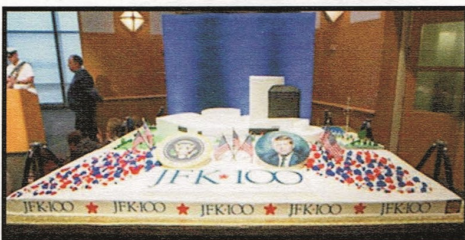
Now so many years have passed and my service to him is now a faded memory. [he was my Commander-In-Chief when I was in the Air Force] My Evergreen Tribute book to his metallic art was published after almost 40 years of research and here I now am as a witness to his 100 year birth celebration.

My friends, Peter Klages and Peter Engels, had flown to the United States from their homes in Germany, also to attend this historic event. Upon entering the Library one could feel the excitement in the entire building. Conversations were spirited and lively everywhere as we started our tour. The Library Staff was well equipped to serve and answer any and all questions for old and new visitors alike. Right away we met with the Library Director Steven Rothstein who was very gracious and pleased to see and meet us. I presented Mr. Rothstein with a copy of my book and he asked to be photographed with the three of us.

After the Library tour we retired to the lounge and had a bite to eat and continue our conversation. Several more photographs were taken followed by a walk through the museum store, Peter Klages and Peter Engels said their farewell as they headed off to the Kennedy Compound in Hyannis Port for a special invitation visit to the Kennedy Family Home.



L-R: Peter Engels, Steven Rothstein, Peter Klages, and William Rice at the JFK Library



400-Pound 8 ft. x 7 ft. Birthday Cake at the Kennedy Library's JFK-100 Celebration

I returned the next morning to the JFK Library to attend the continuing celebration events. The President's birthday cake was something to behold. A 400 pound work of art by the same baking family that years before made the President's Inaugural cake. The frosting alone on the birthday cake weighed over 100 pounds. The birthday cake would serve over a thousand people.

How pleased President Kennedy would have been seeing the US Navy raise the American Flag over his Library grounds while the Bel Canto Singing group sang America The Beautiful. Seeing and hearing that was pure American Patriotism at it's best.

While riding the Down Easter train back to my home in Maine...the past two day memories rolled through my mind like the sway of the train on the rails below. I met so many friendly and gracious people who worked and attended the birthday event. It was a memorable experience attending and having the ability to say "Happy Birthday" to the 35th President of the United States will always be a treasured memory. In retrospect, I did not just go to a birthday party, it was more like a pilgrimage to honor a man who's life made a mark on the hearts of millions around the world who love the free human spirit.

Editor's Note:

William Rice is the author of *The Kennedy World in Medallion Art* (2014), a brilliant compilation of John F. Kennedy and His Family in Medals, Coins, Tokens, and Other Collectibles. A limited number of copies are available from Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. He is pictured (right) with JFK Library Director Steven Rothstein near the Museum Store. Pictured in the background behind Bill is another KPIC member-Steve Russell.

