

Study Tells How Children Reacted to President Kennedy's Death

A revealing inquest into how school children reacted to the assassination of President Kennedy a year ago, was reported this week by a Wayne State University political scientist.

During the 21-day period following the assassination, 1,549 Detroit area children in grades four to 12 were interviewed by a team directed by Dr. Roberto Sigel, 19372 Woodingham, as-

sociate professor of political science. Her report analyzed three areas: children's views on the president and of the slain president; his relationship to

government in general; and their reaction to the Oswald-Ruby affair and the role of justice, trials, due process of law and the value of human life.

Their emotional reactions—shock, grief and fears—to the events of last November 22 and the long weekend that followed, were generally underestimated by parents. Children reported headaches, loss of appetite and trouble going to sleep.

However, they professed to have cried less than adults. "And, if we are to believe the majority, all the crying was done by girls. Boys all categorically denied crying," Dr. Sigel said.

But, researchers discounted the children's answers on crying because the contrary was reported by teachers and parents.

The assumption that a child's emotional behavior becomes more similar to adults as they grew older, did not prove to be true according to Dr. Sigel's data. It indicated that younger children behaved more like adults. Teenagers were much less emotional.

"This we believe is in keeping with the adolescent's desire to seem 'cool,' tough or 'un-emotional,'" Dr. Sigel said. Regardless of whether they came from a Democratic or Re-

publican household, most of the youngsters indicated a "loss of someone very close and dear" when they heard of the President's death. Almost all felt "very sorry for his wife and children" and were "mad that anyone should do such a terrible thing."

More than 75 percent expressed shame that this could have happened in the United States.

Both adults and children worried about the country but children seemed to worry more—especially the younger ones. Most were upset about the country's future and how it would get along without its leader.

According to Dr. Sigel's re-

port, most children think of the president as strong, knowledgeable, loved and admired. In the political sphere, the most salient authority figure is the president. So, when this adult authority is shaken, it especially bothers young children.

Few adults hoped Oswald would be shot down, but 41 percent of the children did—again it was expressed by the young ones. And yet a majority knew it was wrong of Ruby to kill Oswald even if he was the assassin.

The revenge aspect of the youngsters' thinking declined steadily the older they were. Rejection of aggression and acceptance of American con-

cepts of justice is also related to a child's social class, according to the report. Youth from lower income backgrounds at all age levels condoned aggression more readily than upper class children.

In the minds of Negro children, President Kennedy was intimately associated with the fate of their people. Many small children wrote spontaneously on their questionnaire that they or their mother worried "how my folks will now get along."

One Negro girl attending school in a poor section of Detroit wrote: "It was as though my father had died all over again."

Four Redford Students Place High In Tests

In addition to Don Bone, recently named a semifinalist in National Merit Scholarship competition by that organization, Thurston High School this week counted more honors from the qualifying tests given last spring.

Frank D. Block, principal, has announced four students who were granted a status shared by only two per cent of all high school seniors. Given ratings of commendation for excellence in the examinations were Susan Dean, Kris J. Hornyak, Joan M. Krejci, and Constance S. Ward.

Similar letters have been given to 38,000 students throughout the country. According to John M. Stalnaker, president of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, the award calls attention to high academic achievement.

"Although they did not reach the status of semifinalists in the current Merit Program, they are very capable students." He terms their success a "noteworthy accomplishment."

The National Merit Scholarship Corporations give recognition to two groups of students who achieve high scores on the NMSQT. The semifinalist group is composed of the highest-scoring students in each state and in U.S. territories. Some 14,000 semifinalists take a second examination to establish further their eligibility to be-

Bennett Tells Goals For Legislature

Redford Township's new State Representative promised this week to introduce legislation that would "save \$391,980 to Redford Township over the next 20 years."

John Bennett, Democratic Township Treasurer, who was named legislator in the Nov. 3 general election, said the savings could result from laws permitting the Township to invest pension funds in FHA insured mortgages and utility corporation bonds.

Under present statutes, Michigan townships are permitted to invest pension funds only in government issues. According to Bennett, the higher interest returns which city governments now gain through investments in mortgages and utility bonds could also be enjoyed by Townships if his proposed legislation is passed.

The new State Representative, who represents Redford Township alone in the new 34th District, outlined other legislative goals he has for the coming term in an interview with The Observer.

"The problem of taxation is the most serious one facing Michigan," he said. "I am hopeful that Governor Romney will put forth a good fiscal reform program and if he does, I'll support it."

"This means a program with an end to the unfair business activities tax—which taxes gross receipts, not profits, of small businesses—, and which provides property tax relief."

Bennett also said he would introduce legislation to place Township employees under civil service protection. "This will work in the public interest of the community."

The new Representative will sponsor legislation that would return Justice Court fines to the Township treasury. "Right now," he said, "we pay \$100,000 a year to Wayne County because we are a township. This is another case of discrimination, because city governments are permitted to keep their municipal court fines."

Another measure proposed by Bennett concerning local courts would be raising the jurisdictional level for local court cases from its present \$300 to \$2500. "By giving more cases to local judges, we'll help relieve the crowded dockets in Circuit Court," he said.

Bennett has asked for assignments to four legislative committees—Education, General Taxation, Retirement and Tourist Industry Relations.

"The Teachers Pension Fund has \$144 million outstanding in secured liabilities," Bennett said. "If I receive appointment to the Retirement Committee," he added, "I will work to set up a long range program to put the fund in such a condition that we will make certain there is enough money to pay teachers when they retire."

Bennett has already spent one day in Lansing, and will meet Dec. 4 with Governor George Romney. On the same day, he'll meet with other Democratic legislators for a party caucus.

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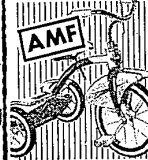
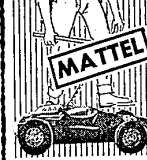



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