

New Kennedy data no big deal, local buff says

By VALERIE OLANDER
STAFF WRITER

A local researcher and JFK buff said there's no reason to get all excited about the 90,000 documents released by the federal government Monday concerning the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

"If I thought it was worth it, I'd be there," said Craig Ciccone, a Birmingham businessman who is writing a book about the political assassinations of the 1960s. The papers aren't going to reveal anything new or confirm any of the various conspiracy theories regarding the assassination, he said.

But thousands of others were at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., when files from the CIA, Warren Commission and various congressional committees became public.

"Ciccone called it another 'paper snafu' that researchers will

have to thumb through only to find the most important documents haven't been released or have been destroyed in the past 30 years.

Ciccone, 26, a graduate of Seaholm High School in Birmingham, became interested in the Kennedy assassination after doing a report on it in high school. He since has obtained numerous files through the Freedom of Information Act regarding the death. He also has contacted eyewitnesses from all over the country who were at Daley Plaza in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

From the eyewitness interviews he has published a schematic drawing of where the 300 witnesses were standing in the plaza on the day Kennedy was assassinated.

Ciccone, who is studying to be a teacher at Wayne State University, has lectured at area schools on the subject.

"I don't know who killed Kennedy, but I do know who didn't do it — and Oswald didn't," he said. "What is still in dispute is how many shots were fired and the direction of the shots."

To prove Ciccone's theory, Kennedy's body would need to be exhumed since Ciccone believes an important piece of evidence was buried with him when his grave was moved 20 feet from its original location in April 1967.

According to Ciccone, three pieces of evidence from the autopsy are missing: Kennedy's preserved brain, microscopic slides of the brain tissue and the entry and exit wounds and, finally, photographs of the interior of the torso.

He believes Robert Kennedy either took and destroyed the evidence because he didn't want his dead brother's brain on display or buried it in JFK's grave when it was moved in 1967. Suspicious, Ciccone can't find an explanation for why the grave was moved.

Ciccone said he believes Robert Kennedy didn't think Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone either and buried the metal box with the preserved brain in it in the grave. The only way to investigate the assassination was for Robert Kennedy to become president and



STEPHEN CANTRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kennedy buff: Craig Ciccone wasn't one of the thousands of JFK researchers who lined up at the National Archives to see the 90,000 newly released documents.

do it himself, Ciccone said. However, Robert Kennedy never became president since an assassin's bullet ended his life.

The Kennedy family was given other evidence from the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington, D.C., including 52 photographs and X-rays of the dead president. Five years after

the assassination, the family donated the photographs to the National Archives but after pressure from researchers the family retained control over who would be allowed to view the material. Only certain pathologists have been given permission, Ciccone said.

In mid-1992 the Dallas police files were released. No new information

came forward, he said. The same will be true of the 90,000 federal government's documents.

"The only way to find out is to release all the files or to have a federal grand jury," Ciccone said. "There are still witnesses alive that haven't been mysteriously killed over the past 30 years."

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