

*John F. Kennedy Jr. on Robert McNamara. I thought these comments were especially striking because no one else of his public visibility ever said anything remotely comparable.*

**Time Magazine's 75th Anniversary Celebration Toast  
by John F. Kennedy to Robert S. McNamara 3/3/98**

PERHAPS NO TWO PRESIDENTS LINKED BY HISTORY HAD LESS IN COMMON THAN LYNDON JOHNSON AND JOHN KENNEDY. BUT ONE THING THEY DID SHARE WAS AN ENDURING RESPECT AND AFFECTION FOR ROBERT MCNAMARA.

MR. MCNAMARA SERVED AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE IN THOSE ADMINISTRATIONS FOR SEVEN YEARS. YEARS THAT WERE AMONG THE MOST TUMULTUOUS IN MODERN AMERICAN HISTORY. DURING THAT TIME, HE SERVED HIS COUNTRY WITH EXCEPTIONAL LOYALTY, INTEGRITY, DEDICATION.

AFTER LEAVING PUBLIC LIFE, HE KEPT HIS OWN COUNSEL, THOUGH IT WAS BY FAR, THE HARDER CHOICE.

YEARS LATER, ROBERT MCNAMARA DID WHAT FEW HAVE DONE. HE TOOK FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS DECISIONS AND ADMITTED THAT HE WAS WRONG. JUDGING FROM THE RECEPTION HE GOT, I DOUBT MANY PUBLIC SERVANTS WILL BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE.

SO TONIGHT, I WOULD LIKE TO TOAST SOMEONE I'VE KNOWN MY WHOLE LIFE, NOT AS A SYMBOL OF PAIN WE CAN'T FORGET, BUT AS A MAN. AND I WOULD LIKE TO THANK HIM FOR TEACHING ME SOMETHING ABOUT BEARING GREAT ADVERSITY WITH GREAT DIGNITY. AN ADVERSITY ENDURED ONLY BY THOSE WHO DARE ACCEPT GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.