In Memoriam: J.F.K.

D.N. Goldstein, MD, Editorial Director

Editor's note: The following is an editorial published in WMJ, Volume 62, p. 515, December 1963.

The few weeks that have elapsed since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy have done nothing to dim the horror of that tragic Friday noon. When the chilling news flashed through the country, most Americans asked themselves the most unanswerable of all questions: why? Why—in the most civilized country in the world, with the longest history of democratic process—is the head of state removed by violence? Why—in the Ultimate Plan—is a young, deranged punk with a mail-order rifle permitted to snuff out the life of the man that the majority of people in this country had elected as their leader? Why?

All that sad weekend millions of Americans listened to radio reports and watched the same news films on television, even though it was known the terrible fact would be unchanged the fourth, fifth, or sixth time the same story unfolded. It was as though some hint could be found to the Why question in the numberless retelling of the story. But the hint never came, and the answer will always elude us.

But now that the deed is done and the body of John F. Kennedy is at rest, perhaps we can take a moral step forward as a result of the assassination. We can determine to hate hate as much as the haters hated him and the socially oriented program he stood for. We can strive to eliminate the curse of extremism from our midst which created the poisonous atmosphere that nourished that deranged mind in Dallas.

We do honor the memory of John F. Kennedy by extirpating in ourselves, as a starter, those unreasonable impulses of enmity that grow to frenzied passions. We can calm the extreme statement that creates the rationale for acts of violence. In memory of J.F.K., we can resubscribe to the moral system he represented.

“Teach us, O Lord, to hate evil.”

—D.N.G.
The mission of WMJ is to provide a vehicle for professional communication and continuing education for Midwest physicians and other health professionals.

WMJ (ISSN 1098-1861) is published by the Wisconsin Medical Society and is devoted to the interests of the medical profession and health care in the Midwest. The managing editor is responsible for overseeing the production, business operation and contents of the WMJ. The editorial board, chaired by the medical editor, solicits and peer reviews all scientific articles; it does not screen public health, socioeconomics, or organizational articles. Although letters to the editor are reviewed by the medical editor, all signed expressions of opinion belong to the author(s) for which neither WMJ nor the Wisconsin Medical Society take responsibility. WMJ is indexed in Index Medicus, Hospital Literature Index, and Cambridge Scientific Abstracts.

For reprints of this article, contact the WMJ at 866.442.3800 or e-mail wmj@wismed.org.

© 2013 Wisconsin Medical Society