

Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy on Young People and International Service

By John F. Kennedy
1960

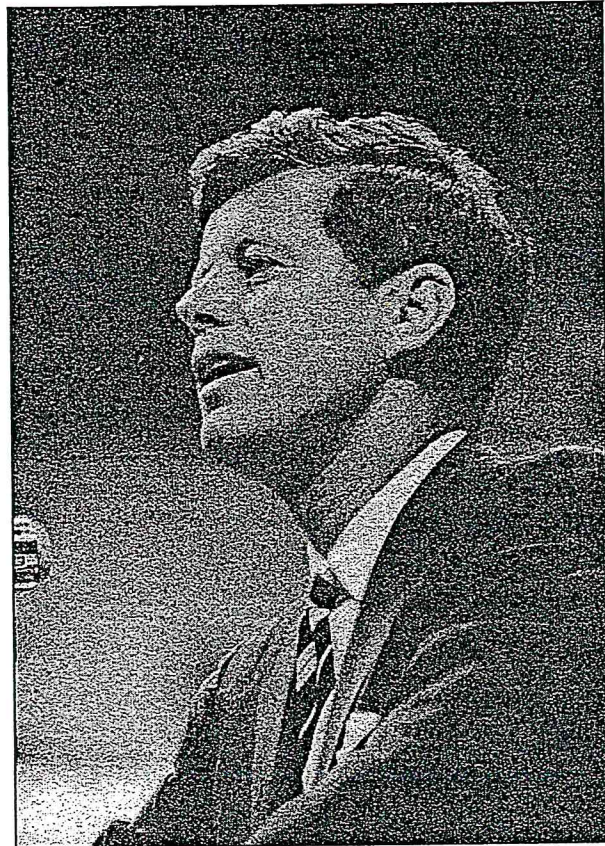
John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963) represented Massachusetts in the United States Senate before becoming the 35th President of the United States. Kennedy's brief speech at the University of Michigan was the beginning of his proposal for the international volunteer program, the Peace Corps. As you read, takes notes on what Kennedy is asking of students.

- [1] "I want to express my thanks to you, as a graduate of the Michigan of the East, Harvard University.

I come here tonight delighted to have the opportunity to say one or two words about this campaign that is coming into the last three weeks.

I think in many ways it is the most important campaign since 1933, mostly because of the problems which press upon the United States, and the opportunities which will be presented to us in the 1960s. The opportunity must be seized, through the judgment of the President, and the vigor¹ of the executive,² and the cooperation of the Congress. Through these I think we can make the greatest possible difference.

How many of you who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service³ and spend your lives traveling around the world? On your willingness to do that, not merely to serve one year or two years in the service, but on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think will depend the answer whether a free society can compete. I think it can! And I think Americans are willing to contribute. But the effort must be far greater than we have ever made in the past



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- [5] Therefore, I am delighted to come to Michigan, to this university, because unless we have those resources in this school, unless you comprehend the nature of what is being asked of you, this country can't possibly move through the next 10 years in a period of relative strength.

So I come here tonight to go to bed! But I also come here tonight to ask you to join in the effort...

This university... this is the longest short speech I've ever made... therefore, I'll finish it! Let me say in conclusion, this University is not maintained by its alumni, or by the state, merely to help its graduates have an economic advantage in the life struggle. There is certainly a greater purpose, and I'm sure you recognize it. Therefore, I do not apologize for asking for your support in this campaign. I come here tonight asking your support for this country over the next decade.

Thank you."

Senator John F. Kennedy October 14, 1960