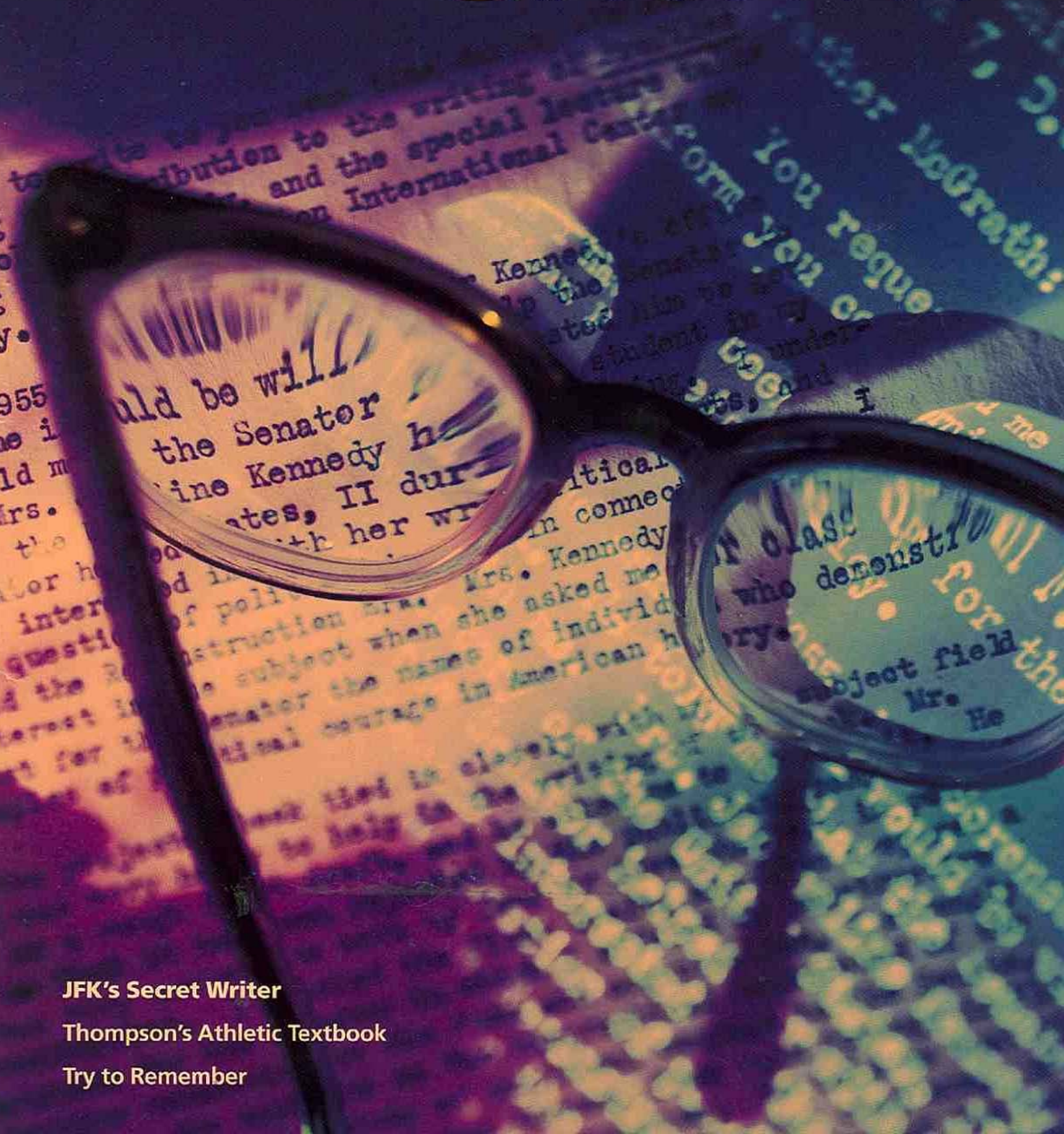


Georgetown

FALL 1997

M A G A Z I N E



JFK's Secret Writer

Thompson's Athletic Textbook

Try to Remember

Georgetown

M A G A Z I N E



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The legacy of John Thompson is more than just championship banners.

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LEARNING TO REMEMBER

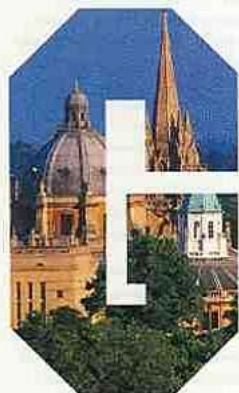
Psychology professor Darlene Howard knows first-hand the power of memory.



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PROFILES IN HUMILITY

Did the late SFS professor Jules Davids play a larger role in helping John F. Kennedy with "Profiles in Courage" than previously known?

Cover photo by Taran Z

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SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
37TH AND O STREETS, N. W.
WASHINGTON 7, D. C.

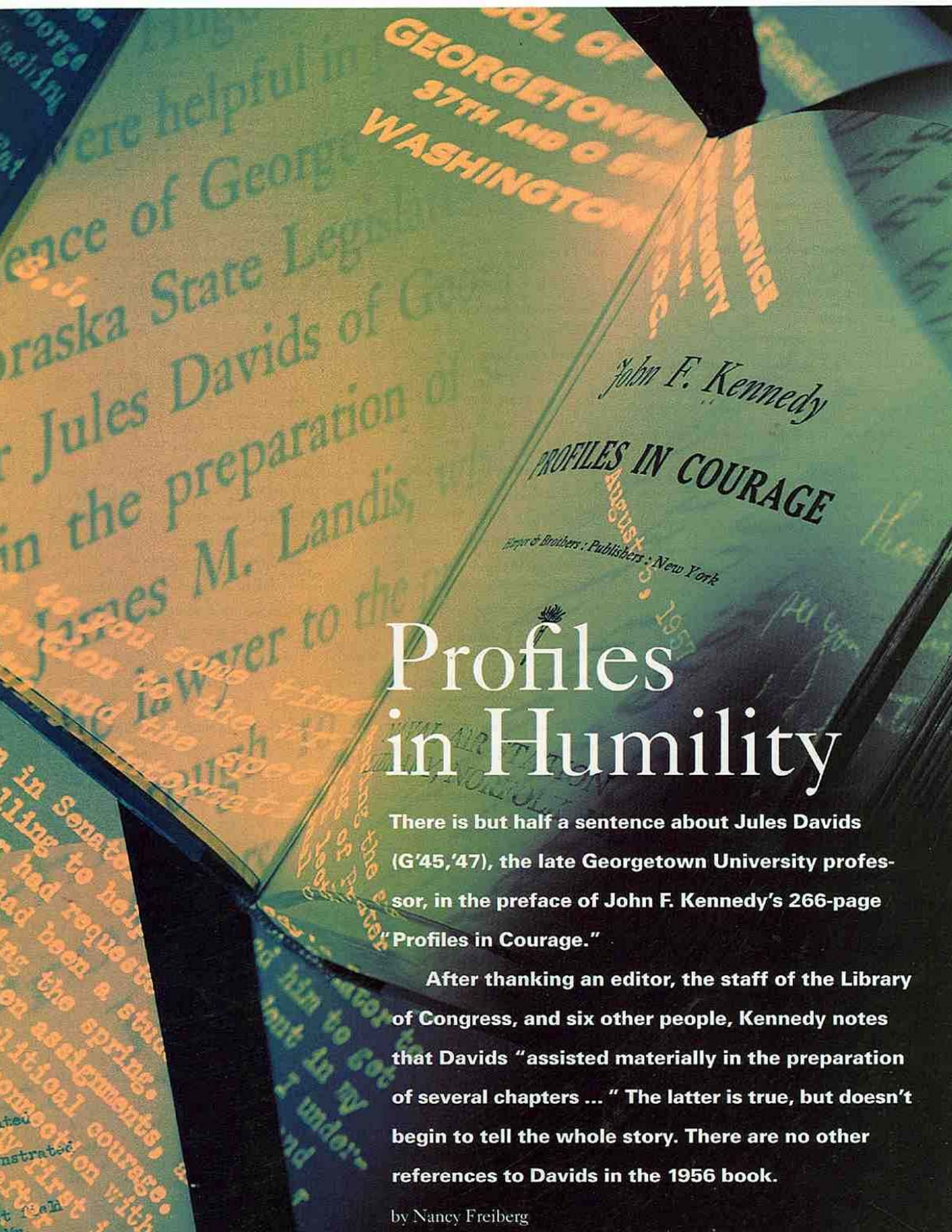
August 5, 1957

Brian McGrath, S.J.
President
University

Dear Father

You r
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Policy.
195

In January, 1953 called me and asked me write a book. He told in touch with me. Mrs class in History of th stand that the Senator in so doing became in had discussed the que Andrew Johnson and th his intere



Profiles in Humility

There is but half a sentence about Jules Davids (G'45,'47), the late Georgetown University professor, in the preface of John F. Kennedy's 266-page "Profiles in Courage."

After thanking an editor, the staff of the Library of Congress, and six other people, Kennedy notes that Davids "assisted materially in the preparation of several chapters ..." The latter is true, but doesn't begin to tell the whole story. There are no other references to Davids in the 1956 book.

by Nancy Freiberg

Many have said that "Profiles" played a crucial part in propelling Kennedy to the presidency. It won the Pulitzer Prize, despite disagreement — which continues among scholars today — about who developed the original material and participated in the writing and editing.

At least one Kennedy scholar — Herbert Parmet — gave Davids some credit. Equipped with a written statement he requested from Davids in 1978, Parmet wrote in "Jack: The Struggles of John F. Kennedy" that in early 1955, Davids was asked to review material gathered in a "black, loose-leaf notebook" given to him by Kennedy aide Theodore C. Sorenson at Kennedy's request. Davids wrote a critique of it, and then, again at Kennedy's request, proceeded to draft four chapters (on Daniel Webster, Sam Houston, Lucius Q. C. Lamar, and George W. Norris), and an essay on political courage. Parmet (and Davids) said Sorenson wrote all but one of the other four chapters. Sorenson has never confirmed this and has insisted over the years that Kennedy wrote the book himself with the aforementioned "material assistance" from Davids.

It may never be known whether Kennedy wrote the material in the loose-leaf notebook, and in fairness, Davids, Parmet and a host of other scholars agree that Kennedy closely supervised all phases of the book's production.

But with new information that has recently surfaced, it seems safe to say that Kennedy got the idea for the book from Davids, who may go down in history for not claiming his place in a field he loved and taught at Georgetown for 40 years.

The 13-page chapter in Parmet's book is not well known. Even *The New York Times*' Dec. 12, 1996, prominent obituary stated, "... it was a reflection of his comparative obscurity that Mr. Davids has been all but overlooked in the persistent rumors that someone other than Mr. Kennedy wrote the book. The chief suspect has always been Theodore C. Sorenson. ..."

Though many who work at Georgetown today never knew Davids personally, most know about his academic reputation at the university. A history professor beginning in the late 1940s, he is known among alumni as one of Georgetown's "greats." Many alumni can still recall his lectures in the way that President Bill Clinton, a 1968 alumnus of Georgetown, quoted the lectures of Davids' colleague, Carroll Quigley, during his presidential campaign. "He was a wonderful professor, and I will

always be grateful for all that he taught me," Clinton wrote to Davids' widow, Frances, the day his obituary appeared in the papers.

Another alumnus, Warren F. Kimball (G'65, '68), also has fond memories of the late professor.

"I recall one night as a graduate student [at Georgetown] when I was obsessed with finishing my dissertation," recalled Kimball, now a professor of history at Rutgers, at the campus memorial service for Davids. "I had wrestled for days with how to present a congressional debate about my topic. Should I do it topically or chronologically?

"With what is now embarrassing arrogance, I telephoned Jules at home, ignoring the fact that it was after midnight. If he was annoyed, it never showed, nor did Mrs. Davids scold me later. ... His response to my dilemma was to ask the question that should have been obvious to me: 'Which way would be the greater contribution to scholarship, Warren?' he asked gently. So I did it the hard way, the better way. That was the question he always asked of himself, his students, his colleagues, his fellow professionals. It was the right question. He was one of the good guys."

Frances Davids lives in Bethesda, Md. An elementary school teacher for many years, she spoke in a kind, intelligent voice about Davids, her husband for 55 years. Calling him a loving and devoted father, she said she could count on the fingers of one hand the number

Davids and his daughter, Jeanie, share a moment before a swim meet in the 1960s.



"What was of utmost importance to my father was scholarship, teaching and helping his students achieve their goals, which he would do at any time without hesitation."

of times he expressed anger. When she and others talk about him, the words "modest" and "gentle," in the old-fashioned sense, invariably are used.

Mrs. Davids generously provided this magazine with the letter Davids wrote to Parmet, the letter from Clinton and other material, but was reluctant to speak much about Davids' involvement in "Profiles in Courage," other than to say Parmet's book is the most accurate printed description.

Her reluctance was understandable. Helping with "Profiles in Courage" was a very small part of Davids' life.

"What was of utmost importance to my father was scholarship, teaching and helping his students achieve their goals, which he would do at any time without hesitation," says his daughter, Jeanie Dwyer. Dwyer, who attended Georgetown in the 1970s, remembers slipping unnoticed into the back of her father's classroom to hear her father lecture.

"The students gave him a standing ovation at the end of one lecture I attended," she said. "Students near me expressed awe, and, not realizing I was his daughter, one turned to me and to others and said, 'can you believe it? Dr. Davids didn't use any notes for that lecture.'"

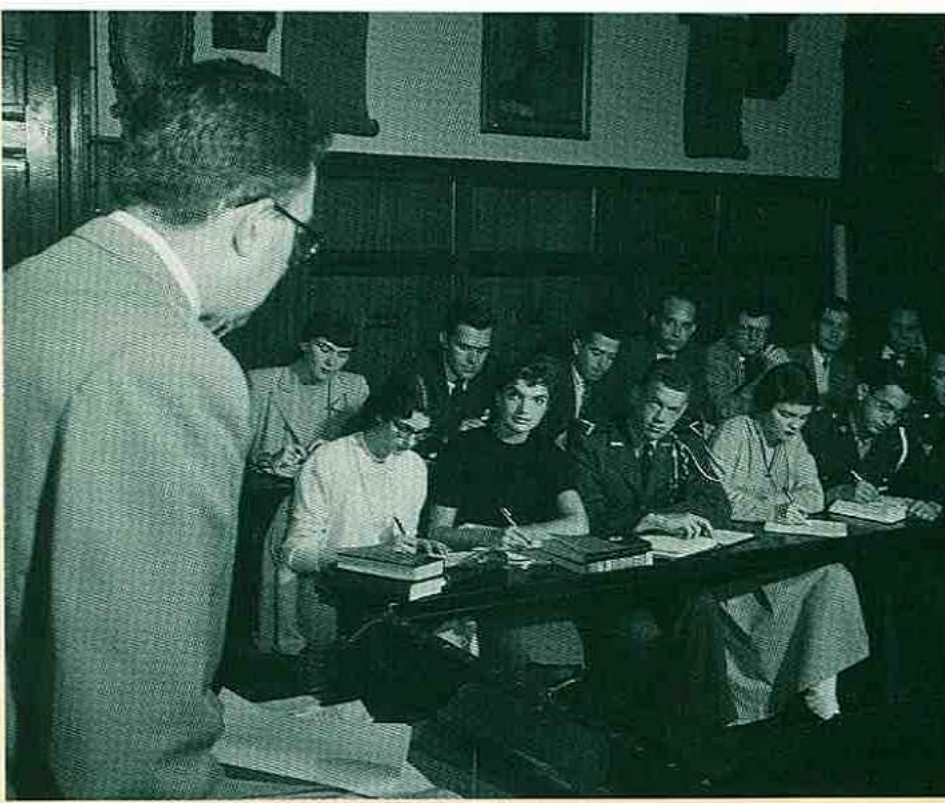
Davids was a 34-year-old untenured assistant professor when Kennedy

approached him to help with "Profiles." Five years later his own book, "America and the World of Our Time," was lauded by *The New York Times* as one of best books of the year on foreign affairs. Davids served as a senior staff member of the Council on Foreign Relations from 1963 to 1965. Between 1973 and 1981, he edited the staggering, 53-volume, "American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China," which covers the history of the two countries' relationship from 1842 to 1905. The volumes were soon after purchased by nearly every major university in the United States and abroad. He also wrote numerous articles, frequently lectured at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute, and was the founder of the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations. His last project was a biography of W. Averell Harriman, but the book was never completed.

"He was very active and respected in the profession for many, many years," says professor Dorothy Brown, who taught history alongside Davids for two decades. "Jules was one of our strong publishers and one of our great



Davids and his wife, Frances, in 1947.



Davids teaching the recently married Jacqueline Kennedy in 1954.

teachers. And he was always available for students."

Davids continued to teach at Georgetown until he elected to retire in 1986. He had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. His wife said Davids was sweet and gentle up until the very end — some nurses even wrote her letters lamenting the loss of her husband. "He demanded nothing and gave so much to everyone," one letter says. "I believe that this is the legacy of a truly great man."

Peter F. Krogh, dean emeritus of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, called Davids "equable, gentle and helpful," and compared him to the "redoubtable, formidable, colorful Carroll Quigley."

"Carroll took full credit for his contributions," Krogh said at a campus memorial service for Davids. "Sometimes more than full credit (God rest his magnificent soul). Jules took less than full credit. Not simply to balance Carroll, but because Jules was the very soul of modesty."

Krogh's comments echoed those made in his 1986 Dean's Report, in which he said, "Professor Davids established himself as the class teacher-scholar in the finest tradition of faculty whose continuing inspiration and reward are their students. Jules Davids was the unpretentious, caring accessible mentor to generations of [SFS] students. They properly remember him as exemplifying the very meaning of the word 'mentor.'"

But was Davids so modest that he never felt the need to make the world fully understand his role in the making of a president? Too unassuming to claim his own place in history, a subject he loved and taught for four decades?

After poring over 40 years of material on Davids in Lauinger Library's archives, this writer came across a letter dated Aug. 5, 1957, that she sensed had never before been entered into the debate. A former academic vice president of the university — Brian A. McGrath, S.J. — apparently had asked Davids to explain his contribution to the writing of "Profiles in Courage":

"In January, 1955, Mr. Sorenson in Senator Kennedy's office called me and asked me if I would be willing to help the Senator to write a book. He told me that the Senator had requested him to get in touch with me," the letter states.

"Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy had been a student in my class in History of the United States, II during the spring [of 1954]. I understand that the Senator helped her with her writing assignments,

and in so doing became interested in the subject of political courage. I had discussed the question of political courage in connection with Andrew Johnson and the Reconstruction Era. Mrs. Kennedy first indicated the Senator's interest in the subject when she asked me after class if I could suggest for the Senator the names of individuals who demonstrated outstanding examples of political courage in American history."

The letter also indicates, for the first time, that "Profiles in Courage" had originally been rejected in some form by the publisher. "Mr. Sorenson gave me a rough first draft, and he asked me to go over it," the 1957 letter notes. "He explained to me that it had been rejected by the publishing company, and the Senator was very anxious to work up four or five chapters in published form to be resubmitted. I studied the first draft, and then prepared a lengthy memorandum for the Senator in which I offered my constructive criticism. Besides commenting on the form and organization, I strongly recommended placing the emphasis on the biographical background of the individual, and limiting the study of political courage to the Senate."

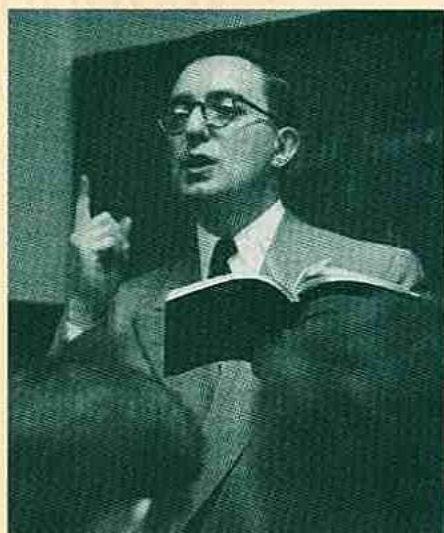
Dauids then offers Kennedy's response: "I received a prompt reply from Senator Kennedy from Palm Springs in Florida where he was recuperating from a painful operation. He told me that my suggestions were 'excellent,' and to start reworking the chapters. All of my recommendations were later used in the final drafting of the book."

Some of the latter information is reiterated by Davids in his 1978 statement to Parmet: "I gave a lecture in this course on John Adams that I believe had a connection with Profiles and my involvement in the preparation of the book. I stressed rather dramatically John Adams' act of political courage in opposing Alexander Hamilton's 'war plans' and Adams' decision to send a second peace mission to Paris in the spring of 1798, following the XYZ affair – and how this decision ultimately led to Adams' political ruin, partly as a result of Hamilton's

vindictiveness. ... It was several weeks later that I received a call from Theodore Sorenson. He told me that Senator Kennedy was planning to write a book, and asked whether I would be willing to help on it. I feel quite sure that Jacqueline recommended me to Kennedy, and this led to Sorenson's call. Since the book was to be on political courage, I have always felt that my lecture, and Jacqueline's presence in my class were connected directly with triggering John Kennedy's interest in the subject of political courage in American history. It is conceivable that this was coincidental; but I believe not likely."

While Parmet concluded in his book that "Sometime that spring [1954] the idea [for "Profiles"] began to form in Jack Kennedy's head. Its origin is

"Carroll took full credit for his contributions ... Jules took less than full credit. Not simply to balance Carroll, but because Jules was the very soul of modesty." – Peter F. Krogh



traceable to no other source," it can be argued, with the 1957 letter and other material, that *Davids* was the source.

The professor could only have further suspected his true role in providing the idea after reading the first sentence of the preface to "Profiles in Courage": "Since first reading – long before I entered the Senate – an account of John Quincy Adams and his struggle with the Federalist party, I have been interested in the problems of political courage in the face of constituent

Dauids strikes a classic pose teaching his students at Georgetown.



pressures and the light shed on those problems by the lives of past statesmen. A long period of hospitalization and convalescence in October, 1954, gave me the first opportunity to do the reading and research necessary for this project."

For whatever reason, Davids didn't mention to Parmet that an early draft of "Profiles" was rejected in the mid-1950s by Harper & Brothers, the same publishing company that eventually accepted it. An archivist at HarperCollins, which absorbed the company, said any existing files that would corroborate Davids' statement would have been shipped to Columbia University's John F. Kennedy files. Davids also didn't refer to Jacqueline Kennedy's after-class request about courageous individuals in his 1978 letter to Parmet, who never mentioned the Adams lecture in his book.

Parmet's book does mention Davids' "detailed critique, [of "Profiles"] which stressed the weakness of the organization and urged a more clearly defined approach," but doesn't delve, perhaps because of space constraints, into the substance of Davids' memo to Kennedy, which Davids had given him.

In the two-and-a-half page memo dated Feb. 24, 1955, Davids told Kennedy there were too many examples of political courage in the material provided to him and that the examples "varied in quality and value."

"The total impression is that of a cataloguing of personages with the same point emphasized over and over again," Davids wrote. "The result is that many of the chapters tend to become repetitious without any transition from one individual to another."

He also said, "None of the Senators become sufficiently alive so that we know them as a person ... it does not

give us insight into the character of the individual, nor the sufficient, historical perspective. As a result, I believe the book loses its appeal to the general reader, and becomes too superficial to the professional historian. Where the Senators are vital and alive, and the issues crucial, the material is excellent, e.g., the chapters on Senators Thomas Hart Benton, Sam Houston, and Edmund Ross; but in most of the other cases the information becomes dull and uninteresting."

Davids unequivocally summed up his thoughts on the material with the comment that "the beginning is weak, the middle is strong, and it falls to pieces in a hodge-podge at the end."

"To integrate the book more soundly, I would suggest the following," he explained. "(1) The examples might follow a historical chronological order (which appears to be the intention of the book). Each Senator could then be used as a springboard to develop a historical period; the issue pointedly worked out, and greater emphasis might be placed on the personality and character of the individual. Some care would have to be taken to make sure that there is some balance in the structure ...

I believe that with a more clearly defined approach, and a better handling of the organization, the book would be able to stand on its own two feet."

As Davids noted in several letters, most of his recommendations were well-received.

Frances Davids revealed a copy of a handwritten response from Kennedy.

"Dear Dr. Davids:" it begins, "I was delighted to learn from Ted Sorenson that it would be possible for you to arrange your schedule to assist us in the preparation of the book. I thought your memorandum was excellent and should prove most beneficial. I will be in touch with you and I will look forward to seeing you in April. Sincerely, John Kennedy."

Davids plunged into the drafting of a chapter on Daniel Webster shortly afterward, a chapter that was not, Davids stated, "worked-up in the loose-leaf book." He said he finished each chapter in about two to three weeks.

"I later learned that my chapter on Webster was critiqued by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.," Davids wrote to Parmet. "I did not do any editing or revisions on chapters that I wrote, nor did I see Schlesinger's comments at any time. I presumed that Sorenson worked on redrafting my chapters, as well as others that I did, based on the annotations and criticisms that were received. I know that all of his time from roughly January,

Davids was paid a total of \$700 for his work on the book. "In view of the subsequent success of 'Profiles in Courage,'" Davids said in his 1957 letter to Father McGrath, "I have, of course felt, that the remuneration was pitifully small."

1955 to June, 1955 was spent on the project, and that Sorensen (sic) put in at least twelve hours a day on the book, working well into the night. All the chapters for the book were completed in this six month period. The manuscript, I assume, then went to Harper's for editing by Evan Thomas, and its preparation for publication. The book was released, I believe, the first week in January, 1956, with a glowing review in *The New York Times Book Magazine*."

Davids noted in the same letter that he believes Kennedy wrote Chapter 1 on "Courage and Politics," and that he also combined essays that Davids and Sorenson wrote on "The Meaning of Courage."

Davids was paid a total of \$700 for his work on the book. "In view of the subsequent success of 'Profiles in Courage,'" Davids said in his 1957 letter to Father McGrath, "I have, of course felt, that the remuneration was pitifully small."

Journalist Drew Pearson wrote that Kennedy used most of a substantial publisher's advance to market the book. Still, Davids apparently was dignified enough to compliment Kennedy on the book after its completion.

"Many thanks for your letter of recent date and your very kind remarks concerning my book," reads a typewritten letter from Kennedy to Davids dated Feb. 27, 1956. "I certainly appreciate your writing me and I wish to thank you for your assistance in the writing of the book. It was very helpful. Again, many thanks, and with every good wish, Sincerely yours, John Kennedy."

Davids' polite complaint in his 1957 letter to Father McGrath at Georgetown seems to be the most he had to say on the issue. He was not a man interested in fame. "Jules didn't recognize Jackie Kennedy her first day in class," Frances Davids told me. "In those days, in the 1950s, Georgetown was principally an all-male school. When Jackie came in, the class applauded, and he thought it was simply the young fellows applauding the presence of an attractive young woman in class. He didn't realize until after the lecture that she was the senator's wife." ■