

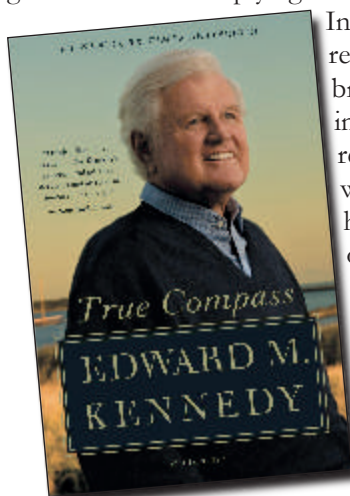


Senior Moments Book Review



True Compass Edward M. Kennedy—a Memoir

As all the world knows, Joseph Kennedy had four sons. The first, Joseph Jr, was killed in action at twenty-nine in 1944. The second, John, president of the United States, was assassinated aged forty-six in 1963. Robert, the third, was murdered five years later, aged forty-two. Only Edward, the youngest, was spared to die in his bed of natural causes, aged seventy-seven, in August 2009. And only Ted, therefore, left a volume of Kennedy memoirs. For that reason alone, this book stands out, even in the ever-green and still-multiplying forest of Kennedy literature.



In this historic memoir, Ted Kennedy remembers life with his parents and brothers and explains their profound impact on him. For the first time, he recounts his years of struggle in the wake of their deaths. Through it all, he describes his work in the Senate on the major issues of our time—civil rights, Vietnam, Watergate, Northern Ireland—and the cause of his life: improved health care for all Americans, a fight influenced by his own experiences in hospitals. His life has been marked by tragedy, perseverance, a love of family, and an abiding faith. There have been controversies, too, and Kennedy addresses them with unprecedented candor.

At midlife, embattled and uncertain if he would ever fall in love again, he met the woman who changed his life, Victoria Reggie Kennedy. Facing a tough reelection campaign against an aggressive challenger named Mitt Romney, Kennedy began one of the great third acts in American politics, sponsoring major legislation, standing up for liberal principles, and making the pivotal endorsement of Barack Obama for president.

After he received his brain cancer diagnosis in May 2008, Kennedy halted work on the book for a while, but then returned to it with renewed vigor and as one of his top priorities. He died the day a final copy of the book was delivered to his Hyannis Port, Massachusetts home.

“True Compass” will endure as the definitive account from a member of America’s most heralded family, an inspiring legacy to readers and to history, and a deeply moving story of a life like no other.

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The Everly Brothers—Harmonies from Heaven

COMPILED BY BRUCE MENZIES

The Everly Brothers were American country influenced rock and roll singers perhaps best known for their skin-tight harmony. Don Everly, born 1937, and his younger brother, Phil, born 1939, comprised The Everly Brothers.

Their father, Ike Everly, had a show on radio and sang with his wife and their sons. The brothers sang as “Little Donnie and Baby Boy Phil.”¹ The family sang as the Everly Family. While living in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1953, the brothers caught the attention of family friend Chet Atkins, manager of RCA Victor’s studio in Nashville. Don and Phil became The Everly Brothers and moved to Nashville.

The Beatles wouldn’t be crossing the pond to America for another few years, but all over the country radios were blasting an infectious new tune that signified the arrival of a new sound. The song was called “Wake Up, Little Susie.” Soon came hits like, “All I Have to Do Is Dream,” “Bird Dog,” and “Till I Kissed You,” which hit number four on the United States pop charts.²

Don and Phil enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserves in October 1961,



A “screen shot” from YouTube video of the Everly Brothers performing on the Ed Sullivan show in uniform.



“It’s like a third person. When Phil and I sing, there are times that what comes out is not either of us, but the voice of a third person.”—Don Everly

which took them out of the spotlight. One of their few performances during their military service was on The Ed Sullivan Show in February, 1962.

They performed “Jezebel” and “Crying in the Rain” in their uniforms.

Following active duty they resumed their career, but with little success in the United States. Of their twenty-seven singles from 1963 through 1970, only three made the Hot 100.

In the 1970s tensions between the Brothers surfaced and Don told a reporter he was tired of being an Everly Brother.³ During the show, Phil smashed his guitar and walked off while Don finished the show, ending their collaboration.

On September 23, 1983,

the Brothers held a reunion concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London, England. A decade later, on August 8, 1993, the Brothers came to Branson, Missouri, for a fabulous concert at the Grand Palace. Twyla and I had second row seats in the center. I realized then, there was more to Don and Phil Everly than “Wake up Little Susie.” Local reporter Mary Marymont posted, “They’re chunkier now, and the slightly haunted look is gone. But they have lots of hair and their tight harmonies continue to evoke the loneliness of the Kentucky hills and the angst of a mooning teenager.”

The effect the Brothers had on other musicians was significant. Everyone from The Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Neil Young have said



they were influenced by The Everly Brothers. CNN reporter Bob Greene quoted Vince Gill, “I honestly believe I’ve spent the last forty years, on every record I’ve been part of for somebody else, trying to be an Everly. I’ve spent my whole life chasing that beautiful, beautiful blend.”

1. Pareles, Jon, “Phil Everly, Half of a Pioneer Rock Duo That Inspired Generations, Dies at 74.” *New York Times*. (Retrieved January 4, 2014.)
2. Whitburn, Joel, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits*, Billboard Books, NY (1992) p. 165.
3. Marilyn and Hy Gardner, *“Everly Brothers Too Close for Too Long.”* Springfield (MA) Union, August 24, 1973 p. 27.