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# The UMass/Boston Friday Report

Volume 2, Number 5  
September 25, 1992

News and information about and for the  
University Community from the Chancellor's Office

## UMass/Boston Visiting Scholar Completes First Volume Of Revealing Biography on John F. Kennedy

A new biography of John F. Kennedy written by a visiting scholar at the University reveals much about the late president's formative years and covers his life through his election to Congress in 1946. *JFK: Reckless Youth*, to be published by Random House, is written by Nigel Hamilton, the John F. Kennedy Scholar and a senior fellow at the McCormack Institute. The book is the first of several volumes Hamilton plans to write on the life of President Kennedy. The biography is scheduled to go on sale in bookstores throughout the United States beginning November 23rd.

Hamilton came to UMass/Boston in 1989 and has used the McCormack Institute as a headquarters while he pursues his extensive research at the Kennedy Library. "Despite my English accent," Hamilton says, "I was immediately adopted by New England's foremost political institute, as well as being asked to run a post-graduate seminar on JFK in the University's history department -- which was tremendous fun and produced some magnificent research papers. Somehow half of the University became involved, for the chance to rechronicle and reassess a United States president who had represented Boston and Massachusetts as congressman and senator was like asking people to talk about their own family. Many of my interviews were conducted at the McCormack Institute, and I hope, in terms of scholarship and scope, that this 1,000-page first volume will be a work of which the University is justly proud."

*Kirkus Reviews*, a journal for librarians and the book trade, calls Hamilton's first volume "perhaps the most revealing biography yet of Jack Kennedy coming of age ... Hamilton has made the most of interviews with JFK's closest surviving relatives and friends, newly opened FBI and medical files, and, most importantly, unusual access to the future President's often raunchy, irreverent letters. Hamilton gradually develops JFK in all his charm and intelligence, an American Prince Hal awakening to his destiny: A young man cracking jokes at agonizing physical pain that would depress anyone else; engaging in bawdy boarding-school high jinks; soaking up political knowledge at college; and emerging carefully from the shadow cast by bullying father Joe and the equally narrow-minded, doomed heir apparent, Joe Jr."

Hamilton, a widely-respected British biographer, is the author of *The Brothers Mann* and three books on British World War II hero Field Marshal Montgomery. Hamilton's *Monty* received the Whitbread Award, England's equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. According to Hamilton, he at first encountered resistance while researching the late president from various friends of the Kennedy family and keepers of JFK's personal papers. But eventually, Hamilton says, as people became convinced of the integrity of his work, barriers began to fall. What resulted was access to a gold mine of biographical information to dig through, including hundreds of JFK's early letters made available by a niece of Kennedy's closest lifelong friend; a scrapbook containing all the letters written to JFK by his wartime mistress, Inga Arvad; U.S. Navy medical records; and the testimony of many of JFK's closest friends and colleagues.



**Paralympics Athlete To Appear on Campus** -- The Student Arts and Events Council will be presenting a lecture by **Bill Demby** at 2 p.m., Wednesday, September 30, at the Clark Athletic Center. Demby, a disabled veteran, is best known for his appearance in a 1987 television commercial for DuPont, the company that created the resin from which his artificial legs are made. The commercial showed him in a basketball game competing against several able-bodied players. Demby lost both his legs from the knees down when a rocket hit the truck he was driving in Vietnam in 1971. He is an active athlete and has competed in the Paralympics with the U.S. Amputee Athletic Association and the National Handicapped Sports & Recreation Association. A counselor on disabilities in Maryland, Demby spends part of his time lecturing on the issues of the disabled to colleges and corporations.

**Campus Notes** -- **Padraig O'Malley**, a senior fellow at the McCormack Institute who has written several books on the conflict in Northern Ireland, was appointed last spring to the International Opsahl Commission of Inquiry established to find ways in which the conflict can be resolved. The commission will hold public hearings throughout Northern Ireland, and next June plans to publish its findings and recommendations. *Homelessness: New England and Beyond*, the special issue of the institute's *New England Journal of Public Policy*, which was edited by O'Malley, is being distributed next month by the University of Massachusetts Press.

- History Professor **James M. O'Toole's** *Militant and Triumphant: William Henry O'Connell and the Catholic Church in Boston, 1859-1944*, which was published several months ago, has been extensively and favorably reviewed in various newspapers and periodicals.
- Emeritus Professor of Sociology **James E. Blackwell** received a distinguished achievement award during Washington State University's commencement last May. Blackwell earned his Ph.D. from the university in 1959. In its August/September issue of *ACJS Today*, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences reprinted Blackwell's plenary address at the organization's annual meeting in Pittsburgh last March. Sociology Professor **G. R. Garrett** wrote a brief editorial introduction to the article, titled "Criminal and Social Justice: The Temperature of the Nation." In his article, Blackwell offers a history of the evolution of the civil rights movement and an analysis of the reversals that the movement has suffered since 1980.
- Physics Professor **D.V.G.L.N. Rao** received the 1992 Distinguished Faculty Scholarship Award at Convocation ceremonies last week in recognition of his research in the field of nonlinear optics and the properties of liquid crystals.
- Sociology Professor **Estelle Disch** wrote an article for the summer edition of *The Boston Review* titled "Multiculturalism Without Political Correctness: The UMass/Boston Model." The article reviews the University's efforts to establish a diversity requirement.
- Recently, there was a book signing party at Wellesley College to salute the arrival of Sociology Professor **Bette Woody's** *Black Women in the Workplace: Structural Changes in the Economy*.
- **James Jennings** recently published *The Politics of Black Empowerment: The Transformation of Black Activism in Urban America*. He also has written a monograph, published by the Boston Foundation's Persistent Poverty Project, titled "Understanding the Nature of Poverty in Urban America." It is intended to provide government and civic leaders with a succinct report on some of the issues and questions related to poverty in our cities. In addition, Jennings has written "New Urban Racial and Ethnic Conflicts in United States' Politics," published under the auspices of the Institute of Race Relations in London.
- **D. Leo Monahan**, director of public information, has been named public higher education coordinator in the state for this year's Commonwealth of Massachusetts Employees Campaign (COMEC).