

Beat: Politics

JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY SISTER, ROSEMARY KENNEDY LOBOTOMIZED AT THE AGE OF 23

JFK SISTER IN INSTITUTION FOR DECADES

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USPA NEWS - Two new books are coming out to "reveal" one of the latest secrets of the Kennedy's clan. The third child of Rose Fitzgerald and Joseph P. Kennedy led a full life. She passed away from natural causes January 7, 2005, aged 86...

Two new books are coming out to "reveal" one of the latest secrets of the Kennedy's clan. The third child of Rose Fitzgerald and Joseph P. Kennedy led a full life. She passed away from natural causes January 7, 2005, aged 86. She was living in a Convent school since 1941 after an operation intended to calm her mood swings. She was born with intellectual disabilities, though this remained a family secret for decades due to stigma. She was the first sister of President John F. Kennedy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Ted Kennedy.

She underwent a prefrontal lobotomy at age 23, which left her permanently incapacitated. In what would become a decades-long secret and a source of deep shame for the most famous dynasty in American history. After the secret surgery, it would be another decades before her siblings learn the truth about their sister's disappearance. She was living in a Catholic facility for the mentally disabled people. The lobotomy was to prevent her "sexual exploits" from damaging Joseph Kennedy's sons' political careers. So, she spent more than 50 years living in a Wisconsin hospital away from public view.

Diaries written by her in the late 1930s, and published in the 1980s, reveal a young woman whose life was filled with outings to the opera, tea dances, dress fittings, and other social interests, when she was 18 to 20 years old. After housing her in a psychiatric facility in upstate New York for seven years, Joseph P. Kennedy, her father, ordered she to be sent to Saint Colette and never saw her again. Her siblings didn't see her for two decades. Her diaries reveal no great secrets, but they do show that the third Kennedy's child led a full life.

Her mother, Rose, claimed husband kept her in the dark about lobotomy for 20 years (Memoir published in 1974)

Now, two new books offer a devastating portrait of Rosemary Kennedy. First, "Rosemary : The Hidden Kennedy Daughter" by Kate Clifford Larson. And the second, "The Missing Kennedy" by Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff. Both biographies suggest Joseph P. Kennedy subjected his daughter to the surgery because he was afraid she might get pregnant. By that time, he was busy laying the groundwork for his sons' political careers.

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