

Fascination with the Kennedys

inspires Philip Goduti '97 to write book about decision-making in the Kennedy White House

My interest in history began in sixth grade when I gave a small presentation about John F. Kennedy. Years later, as a student at Quinnipiac, I covered a Hillary Clinton speech in New Haven for *The Chronicle* student newspaper. My sixth-grade teacher was there, we talked, and it turned out that she still had my project on JFK.

I met her a few weeks later and she gave me a copy of that report, which I had written on a manual typewriter at my grandmother's kitchen table. This got me thinking about a career as a history teacher, and that's what I've been doing the past 10 years, at Somers (Conn.) High School and part time at Quinnipiac.

Recently, my passion for history and interest in Kennedy inspired me to write a book on JFK titled, *Kennedy's Kitchen Cabinet and the Pursuit of Peace*.

History has always been more than names, dates and places to me. I see it as an ever-changing narrative that helps us see where we came from, where we are and where we are going. My book explores history from the point of view of the people who assisted a leader with decisions. JFK was president during one of the most crisis-driven periods in history. I looked at how he crafted foreign policy, figuring that if I understood how people around JFK were



Philip A. Goduti Jr. '97

thinking, I could analyze how he made decisions that have affected generations.

As a writer, I do whatever I can to see history from the perspective of my subjects. The Kennedy brothers spent a lot of time on Cape Cod, Mass. The summer I was finishing my book, my wife, Alyssa, and I rented a small house on the Cape, where I wrote the chapters that explored Robert Kennedy's role in presidential decision-making. Writing from that venue was inspiring. I found myself thinking that John and Robert were making decisions while looking out at the same horizon 48 years prior. They played with their children in the same water that I did with my son, Alex, and daughter, Olivia.

I see writing as a very personal, intimate craft. One of my cherished memories occurred five years ago, right after the birth of my son. I was at the beginning stages of the book and would hold Alex in the early

morning hours while handwriting the first few chapters. My wife gave me a fountain pen last Christmas, reminding me of that time. I used that pen for the last 60 pages of my book, with my 2-year old daughter at my feet.

Another inspiration for writing the book is to contribute to the discourse of the past. At Quinnipiac, brilliant professors challenged me to express myself effectively, and I grew a lot as a writer. Professors Leonard Kent, Ron Heiferman, Kathy Cooke and many others honed skills I never thought I had. That experience gave me the tools to approach writing in such a way that I could contribute.

Philip A. Goduti Jr. '97 is the author of Kennedy's Kitchen Cabinet and the Pursuit of Peace: The Shaping of American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963 (McFarland 2009).

Scholars with Family Ties



From left: Felicia Valentino '11, Jody Brint '12, Brittany Darling '11, Meni Emmanouil '11 and Kevin Simon '11. Absent from photo is Robert DePaola '10.

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