

# Last ceremony held for Kennedy death

**United Press International**  
DALLAS — Some 1,000 people packed the John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza Tuesday for the 20th and final official ceremony commemorating the late president's assassination.

The crowd gathered under overcast skies alternating — as they had that morning 20 years ago — between threats of rain and promises of sunshine.

The sun won out during a ringing baritone invocation by People's Baptist Church Pastor the Rev. S.M. Wright, whose prayer echoed off the last remnants of the downtown skyline as Kennedy had seen it in the final moments of his life.

"We need a pluralistic mentality," Wright implored, "to help us empathize with the needy, the jobless, the down-trodden."

"To this end, Almighty God, we thank you for the life and contribution of John F. Kennedy."

The services had running through them a dual theme: commemorating Kennedy in life, and expunging Dallas of blame in his death.

Toward the latter end, master of ceremonies U.S. Rep. John Bryant, D-Texas, read a letter from JFK's brother, U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., conveying his regrets at not attending the ceremony.

"Among the last words my brother heard were, 'Mr. Kennedy, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you (spoken by Nellie Connally, wife of former Gov. John Connally)," the letter stated.

"I believe those words were true then and are true today."

Keynote speakers included former Sen. Ralph Yarborough, Kennedy's colleague in the Senate from 1957 to the presidential election in 1960.

Commemorative addresses also came from U.S. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Texas, and state Rep. Thomas McGee, speaker of the Massachusetts House.

McGee, whose speech ended the ceremony, cited an address by Kennedy to the Massachusetts House in which he outlined traits required of politicians aspiring to greatness.

"Those qualities he (Kennedy) ascribed to the founding fathers of Massachusetts best described him," McGee said. "President Kennedy was a man of courage, justice and integrity."

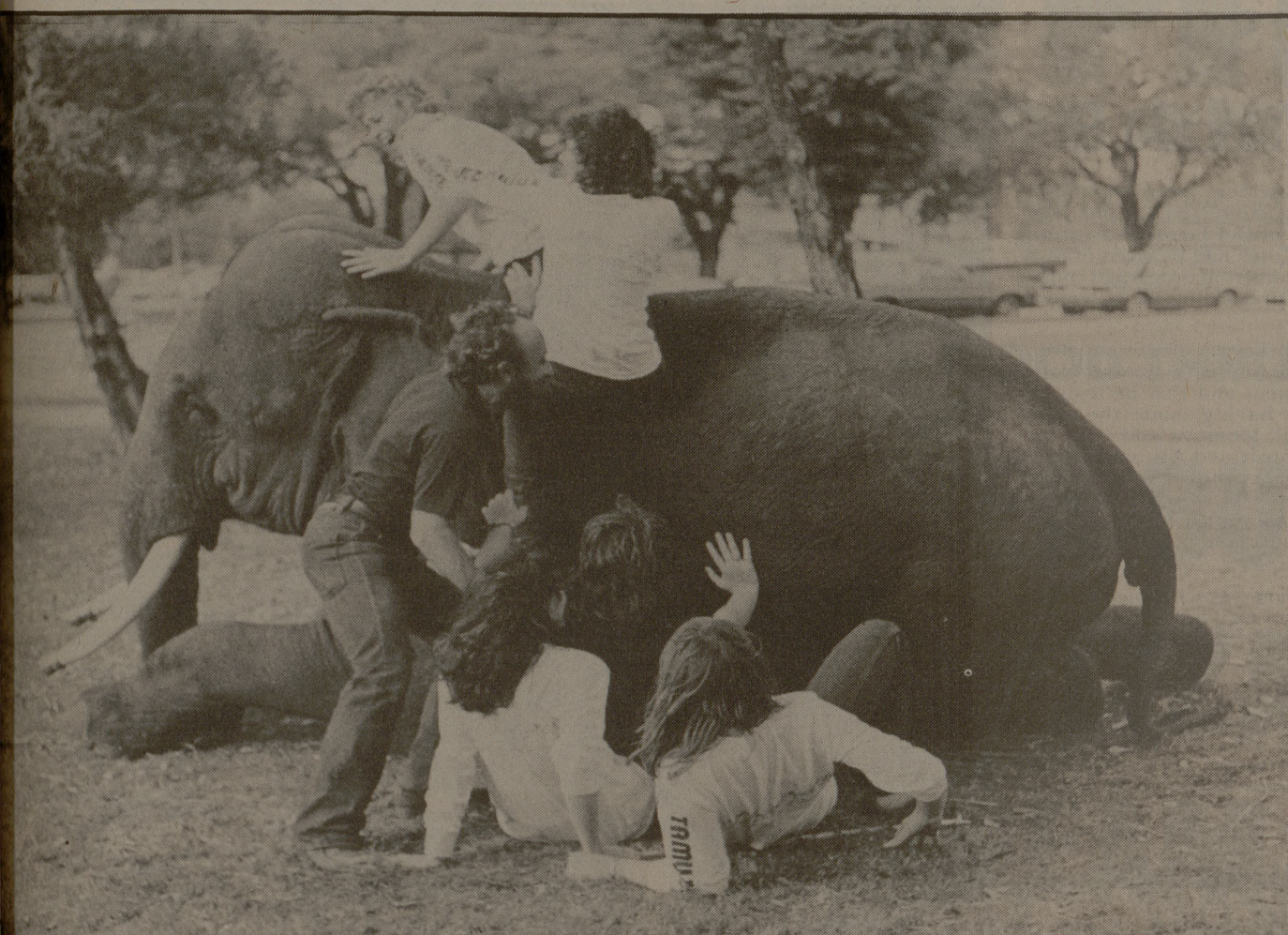
The well-groomed and mostly youthful crowd applauded politely during the speeches. Their reasons for attending seemed as diverse as the appeal of Kennedy himself.

"My mother was in Parkland Hospital having my little sister the day he was shot," said Alma Warlick, 24, of Dallas. "My sister

was born and died that same day. So I decided to come down here and commemorate her death too."

Dallas lawyer Sam Boyd, 38, also was there. With a U.S. Army Special Forces patch pinned to his lapel, he said Kennedy was especially revered at the North Carolina Special Forces school which bears his name.

This year will be the final tribute on the anniversary of Kennedy's death. Dallas County Democratic Party officials said they will accede to a request of Kennedy's children that future observances be on the date of their father's birth.



Class of '84 takes a fall

Mike Davis, Battalion staff

Five members of the Class of '84 fall off Vance the elephant after the trainer commanded him to roll. The Class of '84 brought Vance to The Grove Tuesday to celebrate Elephant Walk. From bottom to top, Debbie Sherman, an agriculture

economics major from China, Tx., Margie Stenzler, a marketing major from Ft. Worth, Jeretta Broussard, an agriculture economics major from Nome, Sharon Fontenot, a marketing major from Beaumont, and Tina Hawley, a marketing major from China, Tx.

## Original Thanksgiving dinner was in Texas, historians say

**United Press International**  
EL PASO — The first Thanksgiving dinner held in what is now the United States was in El Paso, not Plymouth, Mass., border historians are claiming.

And the menu for the banquet to give thanks to God probably included the traditional Mexican dishes of tacos and tamales, not turkey, said Leon Metz, southwestern history expert and author.

The year was 1598 and the pilgrims all spoke Spanish, Metz said. The Pilgrims in Massachusetts celebrated the first Thanksgiving in 1621.

Don Juan de Onate of Zacatecas, Mexico was leader of a sizeable colonizing expedition which crossed into what is now Texas in that year, according to historical accounts.

The south-of-the-border pilgrims had no problems with the harsh winter, but they had other reasons to be grateful, Metz said.

The Onate expedition marked the first attempt by any conquistadors to cross that stretch of desert from Chihuahua City, 240 miles south of El Paso, to the border," Metz said. "They nearly died in the attempt."

Onate is credited with settling what is now New Mexico. His claims were also the basis for Spain's ownership of a number of other western states.

The conquistador was a man of considerable wealth. His father was Don Cristobal Onate, a Spanish nobleman, and his mother was Dona Isabel de Tolosa, the great granddaughter of Montezuma.

Relying on Indian reports of a great river to the north, Onate traveled directly across the desert, searching for water holes along the way.

Armando Chavez, official historian for Juarez, Mexico, said

Onate's expedition consisted of "two Franciscan priests, 400 soldiers, 130 families in 83 ox carts and 7,000 animals including cattle, sheep, pigs, mules and horses."

Metz said the expedition arrived on the shores of the Rio Grande around the end of April, 1598. He said Onate and other members of the expedition knelt on what is now Texas soil and thanked God for guiding them safely across the desert.

"Members of the expedition claimed a miracle or two helped them along the way," Metz said, "such as an unexpected rainfall

when they were wandering in the desert, and clouds when the heat became too unbearable."

Chavez said the first El Paso Thanksgiving was held on Thursday, April 30, 1598 on the Roman Catholic Feast of the Ascension.

Chavez said accounts of the expedition indicated a special mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated.

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