



## John F. "Jack" English

### *In Memoriam*

**April 21, 1926 - November 7, 1987**

#### **Education**

Iona College, B.A., 1952

*George F. Sullivan Award for Outstanding Student*

Fordham University, LL.B., 1955

When the late, legendary John F. ("Jack") English founded this law firm in 1960, his vision was to build a law practice staffed by only the most talented and respected attorneys. Throughout his career, Jack English was a trusted advisor to presidents, from John F. Kennedy to Jimmy Carter, as well as to United States senators and other prominent politicians.

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#### **Excerpt from *Newsday* - "The English Connection" - November 15, 1981**

English has always thrived in the three-ring circus of politics. He started early. "When I was 4, I worked on primary day," he said. "By 6, I was keeping a list of everyone in the district." He grew up in the thick of Democratic politics in Franklin Square, where his mother was Democratic leader and postmistress. His father worked for the phone company. Weaned on the excitement and lessons of Franklin Roosevelt's first administration, English learned well.

After high school and a hitch as a Navy quartermaster on a landing craft in the Pacific during World War 11, he went on to graduate from Iona College and Fordham Law School. In 1962, four years after becoming the youngest Democratic leader in Nassau history, he broke the Republican monopoly.

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#### **Tribute to Jack English by Senator Edward M. Kennedy**

*Rockville Centre, New York, November 9, 1987*

It seems like only yesterday. But it was 27 years ago, almost to the day-November 5, 1960. It was two days before the Presidential election, and my brother Jack had come back to Nassau County. They were running very late, because they had tried to come by auto caravan from Queens, out the old parkway. The crowd had lined up hundreds deep at Wantagh and Sunrise Avenue. They had been waiting hours in the drizzle, and yet they gave my brother one of the greatest receptions he ever had.

We knew the explanation right away. Jack English had worked another one of his patented political miracles. As my brother said, Nassau County was the only place in the country where Democrats would turn out in the rain on a Saturday afternoon - and Jack English was the only one who could always make it happen.

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1960 was the campaign and 1960 was the year that I first met Jack. I quickly came to know what my brother meant when he said that no Kennedy ever had a better or more trusted friend than Jack English.

In the quarter century since then, I must have talked to him once or twice a month - and sometimes ten times a day, whenever our family had a difficult problem to resolve in national or local politics.

I know it comes a little late, Regina, but I apologize for all those interrupted meals and late dinners, the long phone calls and the urgent summonses to Hyannis. We're grateful to Jack's family, more than I can ever say, for sharing him with us. President Kennedy thought the world of Jack - and Jack never let him down.

Robert Kennedy felt the same way, because Jack English was always there for Bobby too-first in the hectic days of my brother's race for the Senate in New York in 1964, and again in the Presidential campaign of 1968.

As Bobby began that Senate race, he found it hard to understand one thing - that in order to get along in politics in New York, you have to talk to politicians in New York. So Jack English did the only thing he could - if one Kennedy wouldn't talk, he'd find another one who would.

And that's how I spent my summer vacation in 1964 - traveling with Jack English around New York City, and up and down New York State-returning Bobby's unreturned phone calls from political leaders all across New York.

And after it was over and the victory was won, Bobby quietly asked Jack for his Rolodex. He said, I think I'll call a few of these myself, and try to make some friends. But the best friend of all was the friend he had already made - Jack English. What a pair they made in the four productive and happy years that followed. Next to President Kennedy, Jack English was the greatest teacher that Bobby ever had.

The day finally came, after the New Hampshire primary in 1968, when my brother had to decide at last whether to be a candidate for President. And Jack English was there again. They all knew they had temporized too long. They were supposed to meet for dinner at the family apartment on U.N. Plaza, then go over the arguments pro and con for the thousandth time, and then make the "go or no go" decision, from which everyone knew there would be no turning back.

Bobby was famous for being late, and this time he was very late. While we were waiting in the room, Jack English turned on the television set - and all of us were stunned by what we saw. Walter Cronkite was on the T.V. screen, interviewing Robert Kennedy, and my brother was saying he had finally decided to run for President.

Well, our frustrations exploded when Bobby arrived an hour later, he looked like the cat who had swallowed the White House. Half of us had been for his decision and half of us had been against it, and so the argument started to get very heated.

But Jack English brought us back to earth. He said, "Bobby's already made the tough decision. The rest is easy - he just wants us to figure out some way that he can win. So let's start taking our assignments." There was a long pause - so I put my hand up and said to Jack - "O.K., I'll take bumper stickers."

And after that campaign, after Bobby had left us, Jack English was always there for me as well. He was at my side from the beginning, in my own race for President in 1980. He wasn't as sure as I was that the polls were right, but he gave it all he had. As you may have heard, I had a little trouble in some of the states, but the two which Jack English had - New Jersey and New York - gave me my two most impressive victories of that year.

I've always thought that things might have turned out a little differently in 1980 if I'd had 50 Jack Englishes for all the 50 states.

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He was with me in another kind of decision I have often made - the times when I decided not to run for President. I remember one evening late in 1982. I had planned a little gathering on short notice at my home in McLean, Virginia, because the time had come to decide about 1984.

Jack flew down from New York in late afternoon. Our friend Bill Carrick met him at the airport to drive him to my house. No one was supposed to know the agenda for the meeting - but no one ever fooled Jack English. He had figured it all out on the shuttle from New York. As he walked into my living room, he said, "You don't have to say anything, Ted. I know you're not running. I've done this too many times before."

In a sense, I am speaking today, not just for myself, but for President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy too. We loved Jack English like a brother. There were two Jacks in my life, and now they are both gone.

Somehow, somewhere, though, I suspect that Jack English is at it again. He's already held the first campaign meeting in heaven, and he's busy organizing the delegates for the next Kennedy race up there.

He was a friend and adviser for the ages and I miss him more than ever now.

Every cause Jack English touched, he left better than he found it. It is difficult to believe that any finer person or more loyal friend ever graced this county or this country.

Near the end of Pilgrim's Progress, there is a passage that tells of the death of Valiant, in words that remind me of Jack English.

"Then, he said, I am going to my Father's. And though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not regret me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought his battle who now will be my rewarder.

"When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the riverside, into which as he went he said, 'Death where is thy sting?' and as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

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### **John Francis English, 61, Is Dead; Top Political Adviser to Kennedys**

John F. English Obituary - The New York Times - November 8, 1987

By Frank Lynn

John F. English, a national, state and Long Island Democratic leader for many years, died yesterday of liver cancer at Mercy Hospital in Rockville Centre, L. I. He was 61 years old and lived in Muttontown, L. I., and on Fire Island.

Mr. English, whose political astuteness was matched by his ability to laugh at himself and other politicians, was a top advisor to John F., Robert and Senator Edward M. Kennedy. He was chairman of the Fund for a Democratic Majority, Senator Kennedy's political action committee, and would have managed a Kennedy campaign for the Presidency. He was also instrumental in persuading Robert Kennedy to run for the Senate in New York in 1964.

Although he had long been identified with the Kennedy family, he was national political director of Edmund S. Muskie's Presidential Campaign in 1972 and deputy national chairman of the Jimmy Carter Presidential campaign in 1980.

Mr. English also played a key role in the election of Eugene H. Nickerson as the first and only Democrat elected Nassau

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County Executive in the early 1960's. Mr. Nickerson is now a judge in Federal District Court.

Mr. English was a pioneer in establishing a suburban presence in New York State Democratic politics in the 1960's as he emerged as a major state figure.

He had the polish and personality to be equally at home in a clubhouse and the White House.

Despite its success, his political career was an avocation. He was a founder and senior partner of one of the leading Long Island law firms, Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein. The firm included among its partners Bernard S. Meyer, a retired State Court of Appeals judge; Joseph Suozzi, the former Appellate Division justice; John V. N. Klein, the former Suffolk County Executive and Basil Paterson, the former state senator and New York City deputy mayor.

Mr. English had been law secretary to Mr. Meyer in 1959-60 when Mr. Meyer served on the State Supreme Court. He succeeded Mr. Meyer as Nassau Democratic chairman and was considered the most successful Democratic leader in the county then and since. At one point in his tenure in the 1960's, Democrats held four county offices, two congressional seats and half the county's six Assembly seats.

He was a graduate of Iona College and Fordham Law School. He served four years in the Navy in World War II, winning four battle stars and the Philippine Liberation Medal.

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