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'Visiting Professor' Kennedy Pushes Space-Age Spending

By EUGENE KEILIN

Speaking to half-full stands in the heavy heat of a late Texas summer, President John F. Kennedy said that "no nation which expects to be the leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in (the) race for space."

"The exploration of space," he said, "will go ahead whether we join in it or not, and it is one of the great adventures of all time . . . Those who came before us made certain that this country rode the first waves of the industrial revolution, the first waves of modern invention and the first wave of nuclear power.

"AND THIS generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space. We mean to be a part of it. We mean to lead it."

The president's address, delivered to a crowd estimated at about 40,000 and composed mostly of students, was the focal point of his two-day, one-night stand in Houston. While in Houston, the president also conferred for about forty-five minutes with Democratic gubernatorial nominee John Connally, re-

ceived a confidential briefing from top NASA officials on America's man in space programs and made a relaxed tour of space-age exhibits in the Rich Building, one of the 12 Houston-area NASA sites.

Included in the tour of Manned Spacecraft Center exhibits were full-scale mock-ups of the Gemini two-man space vehicle, the Apollo moon-shot command module and the lunar landing "bug." The President was escorted on his brief tour by Astronauts Scott Carpenter and John Glenn. Carpenter showed the President the heat-scarred capsule in which he made his three-orbital flight, while Glenn encouraged him to place his hand in a space-suit glove lying in a low pressure chamber.

THE PRESIDENT'S trip was ostensibly non-political, but most observers were quick to point up the publicity which the visit gave to the space program in general and its economic value to this area in particular.

"This year's space budget," the President said, "is three times what it was in January, 1961, and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined. That budget now stands at \$5,400,000,000 a year—a

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staggering sum, though somewhat less than we pay for cigarettes and cigars every year.

"For we have given this program a high national priority, even though I realize that this is in some measure an act of faith and vision, for we do not know what benefits await us.

"... I THINK that we must pay what needs to be paid. I don't think we ought to waste the money, but I think we ought to do the job—and this will be done in the decade of the Sixties."

Rice President K. S. Pitzer introduced President Kennedy, naming him a visiting professor for orientation week. Kennedy drew laughter from the crowd by promising that his first lecture would be brief, as he did on two other occasions by referring to the Rice-Texas game and the broiling heat.

But mostly he drew cheers from the small but vocal audience. Cheers greeted him as he began when he said "We meet at a college noted for knowledge, in a city noted for progress, in a state noted for strength. And we stand in need of all three."

And cheers greeted him again, as they had many times during his speech, as he finished by telling a story.

"MANY YEARS ago," the President said, "the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said: 'Because it's there.'

"Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it. And the moon and the planets are there, and

new hope for knowledge and peace are there. And therefore, as we set sail, we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked."