



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 3, 2009

Ted Kennedy Receives U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom

President Obama selected Massachusetts senior Senator Ted Kennedy to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom July 30, supposedly the highest civilian honor the United States government gives.

The White House, in a press release, [called](#) Kennedy “one of the greatest lawmakers — and leaders — of our time.” The [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#) is given to persons the president determines who has made “an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.”



President Obama [said](#) the following of Kennedy in nominating him for the medal:

From reforming our public schools to strengthening civil rights laws and supporting working Americans, Senator Kennedy has dedicated his career to fighting for equal opportunity, fairness and justice for all Americans. He has worked tirelessly to ensure that every American has access to quality and affordable health care, and has succeeded in doing so for countless children, seniors, and Americans with disabilities. He has called health care reform the “cause of his life,” and has championed nearly every health care bill enacted by Congress over the course of the last five decades. Known as the “Lion of the Senate,” Senator Kennedy is widely respected on both sides of the aisle for his commitment to progress and his ability to legislate.

But is any of that true? Kennedy certainly should be lauded if he had devoted a sizeable amount of his own massive family inheritance toward “countless children, seniors, and Americans with disabilities.” But Kennedy has kept his personal inheritance while backing every middle-class tax increase put before him over the past 40 years. Charity, as Kennedy practiced it, means doing “good” with other people’s money. And it almost always meant doing it with money from people poorer than himself.

Such hypocrisy goes across the board for Kennedy, whose *raison d’etre* has been “one law for thee, and another law for me.” One more example of that is his longtime backing of draconian gun-control measures. Gun-control legislation explicitly conflicts with his oath of office to preserve the Constitution and its amendments (including the Second Amendment). But for Kennedy it is a hypocrisy as well as a lie, since he has long hired armed personal bodyguards. Personal security is for the rich, according to the Kennedy philosophy. Commoners don’t need to protect themselves.

While all Americans should feel pity for Kennedy, who is currently suffering from terminal brain cancer, it’s an entirely different matter to cite him for the nation’s highest civilian award. It’s not just that Kennedy’s legislative career has been one long and protracted assault on freedom and the Constitution, his personal life has also been a train wreck:

- He was thrown out of Harvard University for cheating after having a friend take a Spanish exam for him.



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- His reputation for carousing with women is legendary, having shown up at family parties without pants and having sex with waitresses in the back of a Washington D.C. restaurant alongside wingman and fellow Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut.
- His reputation for drunkenness is legendary, with almost annual boating accidents off his Hyannisport home or automobile accidents.
- He killed 28-year-old Mary Jo Kopechne in 1969 after the married Kennedy drove the single woman off the Chappaquiddick bridge on Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts. He had been driving Miss Kopechne home from a party after midnight.

The police diver who recovered Kopechne's body later testified that Kopechne had died of asphyxiation rather than drowning. After the accident, Kennedy bailed out of the car and didn't call authorities. He denied it at the time, but most people suspect it was because he was drunk when he drove his car off the bridge. Kopechne slowly ran out of oxygen in an air pocket in the rear of the car while the cowardly Kennedy delayed and sobered up. The police diver told New York City radio talk-show host Sam Yorky that Kopechne could easily have lived over than an hour in the air pocket, more than enough time for emergency services to arrive and rescue her had Kennedy called for help immediately.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom may be officially described by the press as the "highest civilian" award the Federal government gives out. But it wasn't created by any law. It was invented by Ted Kennedy's big brother, established by presidential fiat under [executive order 11085](#) by President John F. Kennedy. In a legal sense, it's a phony award.

So perhaps it's appropriate that Teddy Kennedy, a phony philanthropist (generous with other people's money), should get a phony award.



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