



WILLIAM MARKS AND SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY.



ROSE STYRON.

Pictures by M.C. Walla

Senator Kennedy Aids Benefit For Lighthouses of the Island

By ELAINE LEMBO

The planning for lighthouse preservation began some time ago, and the man at the podium on the stage of the Hot Tin Roof Wednesday night explained it this way:

"I can remember when president William Marks called me some time ago and said, 'Will you be a part of this operation to gain the lighthouse?'"

"I thought he said the White House, and I joined on right away."

Ironic it was that those words fell from the lips of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. But on an occasion where the audience was comprised of close Vineyard friends, offspring and newlywed niece Caroline Kennedy, the famous politician couldn't have been in safer hands.

The senator, poet Rose Styron, singers Carly Simon, Kate Taylor and brother Hugh Taylor joined forces with members of the Vineyard Environmental Research Institute for an evening of entertainment, speech-making, recitation and brief ceremony.

The private group cleared about \$4,000 from almost three hundred

guests who paid \$35 each to further the campaign to maintain the outer structures of three Island lighthouses.

There was at least one unannounced surprise at this party, too. Painter Max Moran and Hermine Merel Smith, owner of the Edgartown gallery where the artist shows his work, donated the proceeds from the bidding for a commissioned work.

A freewheeling spree of coaxing and cajoling by announcer Linda Trieschmann resulted in a final bid of \$1,800 by Samuel D. Isaly of New York city. Mr. Isaly commissioned Mr. Moran, who has done portraits of still life settings and celebrities, including astronaut John Glenn, to do separate portraits of his two children.

Admiral Richard Bauman of the U.S. Coast Guard, who spoke about the value of lighthouses and explained the light signalling patterns, formally turned over the keys of the structures to Jonathan Mayhew, a board member of the research institute.

The admiral said: "In the late 1870's, into the 1890's, this ocean highway out

here saw thousands of vessels go through, dependent on these lights. In the boom year of 1883, over 20,000 vessels were counted going through the Sounds here. It is an indication of their importance.

"At one time there were eight lightships marking Nantucket and Vineyard Sounds. I am delighted the Coast Guard was able to come through with a lease that's agreeable to everybody.

"Nationwide, we're doing a great job, but here on the Vineyard you're absolutely in the forefront. It's with great pleasure we turn over three of the lights to caring hands."

And the evening did not end before Kate Taylor, introduced as "my sister

in law, once-divorced" by Carly Simon, took the stage to perform a handful of country and soft rock songs.

Brother Hugh — otherwise known as the fire chief in Gay Head — took the stage for an upbeat duo performance of Lighthouse, a piece written by sibling James.

Poet Rose Styron read selections about lighthouses, written by authors known to the Vineyard and to the

world. Among her collection was a poem by Dionis Coffin Riggs and one by John Ciardi; excerpts from *To the Lighthouse*, by Virginia Wolfe; and excerpts from *The Story of Lighthouses*, by Mary Ellen Chase.

About a quarter of a million dollars over the next five years is needed to put the East Chop, Gay Head and Edgartown lighthouses back in shape, says William Marks, the president of the research institute. In May, the U.S. Coast Guard granted the group a license, the first of its kind in New England, to preserve and maintain the lighthouses. The five-year lease is renewable for an additional 30 years.

At the end of June, Senator Kennedy saw the U.S. Congress approve his efforts to use some \$750,000 in funds left over from the Great Point Light restoration project in Nantucket for restoration of six lighthouses in the state. The federal legislature voted the money in an amendment to a supplemental appropriations bill. Some of the funds go toward care of the East Chop lighthouse.

The Senator said: "I'm here for personal reasons. I believe in those lighthouses. They're always there to guide you to safe passage and to safe harbor. VERI has brought together the members of this community and has targeted in on one of the great threats to our lighthouses: erosion. It deserves all of our support."

Senator Kennedy will be on Nantucket Saturday, Sept. 6, for the rededication of the Great Point Light, which he also worked on.

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