

Eunice Mary Kennedy Shriver

“With enormous conviction and unrelenting effort, Eunice Kennedy Shriver has labored on behalf of America’s least powerful people, those with mental retardation. Over the last two decades, she has been at the forefront of numerous initiatives on behalf of the mentally retarded, from creating day camps, to establishing research centers, to the founding of the Special Olympics Program. Her decency and goodness has touched the lives of many, and Eunice Kennedy Shriver deserves America’s praise, gratitude and love.”

-President Ronald Reagan

Background:

Eunice Mary Kennedy Shriver was born in 1921, in the city of Brookline Massachusetts. She is the 5th of nine children to Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. One of her brothers was President John. F Kennedy. She received her bachelor of science degree in sociology at Stanford University. She is a compassionate, bright and caring person who is dedicating her life to the rights of individuals with mental retardation. She started this quest partly in honor of her sister, Rosemary, who was mentally retarded. She felt that her sister, as well as all other mentally retarded individuals, was not being given a fair chance at life. She has made a significant contribution to society by starting organizations to improve their lives, including the successful Special Olympics.

Major Accomplishments:

- 1957- Became director of Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation**
- 1961- Established the Presidential Committee on Mental Retardation**
- 1962- Founded the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development**
- 1968- Started the Special Olympics which has nearly 1 million individuals participating in 130 countries worldwide**
- 1981- Instituted the Community of Caring which encourages people to be responsible, caring members of the community and counsels on teen pregnancy and lowering the risks of having a mentally retarded child**
- 1984- Received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Reagan**