**Paper: South Florida Sun-Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)**

**Deceased: J. RUSSELL, FORMER LAUDERDALE MAYOR**

**Date: September 21, 1995**

John V. Russell, a retired lawyer who served as Fort Lauderdale mayor during the 1950s and backed some of the city's most important capital improvement projects, died on Wednesday. He was 69.

Mr. Russell also supported the civil rights movement and played an instrumental role in helping integrate the city's segregated beaches.

A personal friend of President John F. Kennedy, Mr. Russell was a frequent visitor to the White House during the early 1960s. Mr. Russell met Kennedy during the 1960 election and supported his campaign in Florida.

"They saw eye to eye," said David Russell, his brother. "They were both World War II vets. John was young and Kennedy was older, but they hit it off."

Mr. Russell, a native of Pittsburgh, was first elected to the Fort Lauderdale City Commission in 1955. Two years later, at 31, he became one of the nation's youngest mayors. He was re-elected to a second mayoral term in 1959.

"He will be missed," Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jim Naugle said. "He always remained young at heart and was very passionate in his feelings about Fort Lauderdale."

Mr. Russell supported several capital improvement projects, including Lockhart Stadium, Yankee Stadium, the city library on East Sunrise Boulevard and the police station on West Broward Boulevard.

He was on the commission when bridges were built on Southeast Third Avenue, Southeast 17th Street and Las Olas Boulevard.

One of the most controversial issues Mr. Russell supported was the building of a tunnel under the New River, where a two-lane drawbridge had operated since 1928. The tunnel proposal narrowly passed in a 1956 referendum. Construction was completed in 1960.

"He could see things were changing and that this was going to be a big metropolitan area," Naugle said.

Some supporters of the tunnel, however, paid a political cost.

"As mayor, I lost five commissioners and resigned only when the tunnel was completed," Mr. Russell said.

After stepping down as mayor, Mr. Russell served as city attorney for three years before moving to Indiana to pursue a business interest. He returned in 1968.

During World War II, Mr. Russell served in England and Germany as a radio operator in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He retired with the rank of major.

Mr. Russell graduated from Fort Lauderdale High School in 1944. He studied law at the University of Miami and held an international law degree from Exeter College.

A former minor league baseball player, he played shortstop for the Fort Lauderdale, St. Petersburg and Deland teams of the Florida State League.

Mr. Russell is survived by his wife, Diane, of Fort Lauderdale; his brother, David, also of Fort Lauderdale; four children, Elizabeth Russell of Fort Lauderdale, James V. Russell of Orlando, John V. Russell Jr. of Stuart, and Emily Langlois of Chapel Hill, N.C.

There will be a memorial service at 4 p.m. Saturday at All Saints Episcopal Church in Fort Lauderdale.

His ashes will be interred at the Bushnell V.A. Cemetery near Orlando. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be given to the Normandy Battle Foundation in Washington, D.C.

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