



# Making JFK Matter: Popular Memory and the Thirty-fifth President

*Paul H. Santa Cruz*

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## **Making JFK Matter: Popular Memory and the Thirty-fifth President** Paul H. Santa Cruz

In *Making JFK Matter*, Paul Santa Cruz examines how popular memory of John F. Kennedy has been used politically by various interest groups, primarily the city of Dallas, Lyndon Johnson, and Robert Kennedy, as well as how the memory of Kennedy has been portrayed in various museums. Santa Cruz argues that we have memorialized JFK not simply out of love for him or admiration for the ideals he embodied, but because invoking his name carries legitimacy and power. Memory can be employed to accomplish particular ends: for example, the passage of long overdue civil rights legislation, or even successfully running for political office.

Santa Cruz demonstrates the presence and use of popular memory in an extensive analysis of what was being said, and by whom, about the late president through White House memoranda and speech material, museum exhibits (such as the Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas and the JFK Presidential Library and Museum in Boston), public correspondence, newspapers and periodicals of the time, memoirs, and archival research. He also explores how JFK has been memorialized in films such as *Bobby*, *JFK*, and *Thirteen Days*. Written in an accessible manner to appeal to both historians and the general public, *Making JFK Matter* tells us much of how we have memorialized Kennedy over the years.

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