Kennedy vs Nixon – Presidential Platforms from the 1960 Election

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | John Fitzgerald Kennedy (JFK) | Richard Milhous Nixon |
| Age at time of election |  |  |
| Personal Information/Biography Wife, Children, Where are they from,  |   |  |
| Experience:Military, Political |  |  |
| Political Party |  |  |
| Vice Presidential Nominee (Running Mate) |  |  |
| Slogan/ Platforms:What did they tell voters to get them to vote for them? How did they calm fears about their abilities? |   |  |
| Election Results (Electoral college votes) |  |  |
| Popular Vote |  |  |

The 1960 election was a tense election, offering Americans a young Democratic Senator from Massachusetts and a seasoned politician and current Republican Vice President.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was 43 years old at the time of the election, which would make him the youngest President ever elected – Theodore Roosevelt had been only 42 when he assumed the role upon the death of President McKinley. Kennedy was from a large, wealthy, politically active, Irish-Catholic family in Massachusetts. His wife, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, was from a wealthy family as well. The couple had a daughter, Caroline, and Mrs. Kennedy was pregnant with a son, who would be born after the election in November, named John F. Kennedy Jr, after his father and nicknamed John-John. Kennedy had won a Pulitzer Prize for his biography of influential Americans, Profiles in Courage. His brother, Robert Kennedy, was very involved in his campaign, and would be JFK’s nomination for Attorney General if he won. He had been a Naval officer in WWII, receiving a Purple Heart and Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Heroism. He served as a Senator for the state of Massachusetts. The Democratic party’s candidate had chosen New Deal Democrat, Lyndon Baines Johnson, to be his running mate, and serve as the Vice President. Kennedy believed that America needed “New Leadership for the ‘60s”, and promised to “get America moving again”. He promised to deliver on his New Frontier programs, and pushed to match and eventually overcome the Soviets in the space race. His Catholic faith raised trouble, as there was a fear that he would bring the Pope’s influence to the White House. He made a statement that he was the Democratic party’s candidate, not the Pope’s. People were attracted the young glamorous All-American family, and the youth and charm of the candidate. His wife quickly became a fashion icon for American women, who were looking for a glamorous trendsetter after 8 years of the somewhat conservative Mamie Eisenhower.

Richard Milhous Nixon was 48 years old at the time of the election. His experience as President Eisenhower’s Vice President, a Representative and Senator from California, and an outspoken anti-communist made him a face and voice people recognized. He had also served as a Naval officer in WWII. His wife, Thelma “Pat” Ryan Nixon, and their children, Julie and Tricia, were humanizing for him, as he was not a very warm man. His upbringing was a combination of Quaker and Protestant, and very poor. He had received the nickname “Tricky Dick” for his campaign tactics, as it seemed that his opposition was always accused of being a little too communist. The Republican had chosen Henry Cabot Lodge to be his running mate. He campaigned with the slogan, “For Peace and Prosperity”, and promised to continue the safety and wealth enjoyed under Eisenhower. He was considered a moderate Republican, and a balance to the vehemence and brutality of Joseph McCarthy’s Red Scare when he had been in Congress. Nixon argued that that Kennedy was too young and too Catholic, despite being only 5 years older than JFK.

When American voted, Kennedy received 34,226,731 popular votes, and 303 electoral college votes. Nixon received 34,108,157 popular votes, and 219 electoral college votes.

Kennedy won the 1960 Presidential Election.