Yarborough paeans Kennedy era

By JOEL TAUROG
Thresher Reporter

A man, “sharp as a tiger’s claw... with amazing facility with words... of superb self-discipline, rare wit, and the keenest intellect,” is Senator Ralph Yarborough’s description of the late John F. Kennedy.

The Texas Democrat delivered these remarks Sunday in his keynote address to the Jones College symposium on “The Kennedy Years.”

Probable Candidate

The main body of the Senator’s address was a review of the Kennedy administration’s major accomplishments, ranging from the growth of the economy during the Kennedy years to the laws enacted by Congress on education, poverty relief, and the space program.

Senator Yarborough called it “improbable” that this inexperienced, ailing young man of Catholic faith could win the Democratic nomination for President and defeat the experienced Vice-President of the United States in the election. Kennedy defied the improbable, and suddenly there appeared in the White House light, music, song, laughter, the spirit of youth.

In deciding Kennedy’s ultimate place in American history, Yarborough noted that it must be considered that most of the great Presidents held office in times of war.

Kennedy was a great President in a time of peace, a President who began his term with one of the greatest of inaugural addresses, he said, whose years in office were years of hope, dreams, of initiation and accomplishment.

Campaign Strategy

During the question-answer session the Senator restricted his answers to questions concerning the late President, declining to comment on such matters as Vietnam and the CIA.

He denied that the purpose of Kennedy’s visit to Texas in November, 1963, was to settle a political dispute between himself and Texas Governor John Connally, saying that the visit was part of a strategy of early campaigning for the 1964 elections.

The program of the Great Society, enacted into law during the Johnson Administration, was conceived by the Kennedy Administration, and all, said the Senator, with the possible exception of those concerning civil rights, would have been written into law had Kennedy lived.