



ARKANSAS BUSINESS

Paul Vitale Finds JFK Autograph in Birthday Book

By The Associated Press
11/8/2010 4:17:22 PM

LITTLE ROCK—Tucked inside a used copy of John F. Kennedy's 1960 book, "The Strategy of Peace," was a birthday gift of a lifetime for a Little Rock man who's idolized the president his entire life.

There, between pages 62 and 63, lay a mint-condition business card from Kennedy's time in the U.S. Senate. "Jack Kennedy" is scrawled across the top in messy handwriting.

Paul Vitale received the book as a gift from a colleague for his 38th birthday. He doesn't know who previously owned the book, which was bought online for \$4.49, or how Kennedy's business card may have ended up in there.

So Vitale, a motivational speaker, wrote a letter this summer to Kennedy aide and speechwriter Ted Sorensen to share the story of his lucky find. To Vitale's surprise, Sorensen invited him and his father, Lou Vitale, to New York, where the speechwriter took a look at the business card and told them he thought the signature was real. Sorensen died October 31.

Meeting the famous speechwriter was a dream come true, Paul Vitale said Monday—the 50th anniversary of Kennedy's election as president. Vitale's father had joined AmeriCorps VISTA after being inspired by Kennedy's inaugural address, which Sorensen helped compose. VISTA—founded in 1965 as Volunteers in Service to America—is a national public service program designed to fight poverty.

"I feel like I had a collision with good fortune," Vitale said.

He plans to have the signature authenticated, find out how much the card is worth and try to do good with his lucky find.

"We currently are looking at ways that we can let this card do its greatest," said Vitale, who is storing



In this taken July 28, 2010, and provided by Paul Vitale, Paul Vitale, left, poses with former John F. Kennedy speechwriter Ted Sorensen in Sorensen's home in New York. (AP Photo/Paul Vitale)

it in a bank security box. "It was passed on, somehow, to me in a book and I will pass it along. And I will pay this forward."

He said he's also telling everyone to flip through old books—even in the age of iPads and other e-readers.

"You never know what might be between pages 62 and 63," he said. "Every time I see a used bookstore now, I want to stop."