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## THEY MAKE IT OFFICIAL: IT'S THE TIP O'NEILL TUNNEL



MICHELE MCDONALD/GLOBE STAFF

The late House speaker was warmly remembered yesterday at rites dedicating a Big Dig tunnel in his honor. From left, Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, Turnpike Authority chairman Matthew J. Amorello, former governor Michael S. Dukakis, Senators John F. Kerry and Edward M. Kennedy, and former lieutenant governor Thomas P. O'Neill III. **B4.**

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SENATOR EDWARD  
M. KENNEDY

# At bottom, Big Dig is all about Tip O'Neill

By Sean P. Murphy  
GLOBE STAFF

Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr., the son of a mason from Cambridge who became US House speaker, was warmly remembered yesterday at a ceremony dedicating the Interstate 93 tunnel beneath Boston in his name.

"He was the best friend the American worker has ever had," said Joseph Nigro, a longtime labor leader, recalling that as many as 5,000 workers earned paychecks on the Big Dig at the peak of construction.

A bevy of politicians paid tribute to O'Neill before a crowd of about 1,500 under the rotunda of the Boston Harbor Hotel. O'Neill, who died in 1994, served for 34 years in Congress, and fought for a dozen years to secure more than half of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project's funding from the federal government.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy recalled O'Neill's friendship with another late congressman of Irish ancestry, John F. Kennedy. "I often think of these two sons of Boston swapping stories in heaven," Kennedy said.

Reminding the crowd that, after 20 years, the Big Dig project is nearing an end, Kennedy said, "That project could never be complete until it bears the name of the person who made it all possible."

Senator John F. Kerry credited O'Neill with "literally inventing the future," by making the \$14.6 billion Big Dig a reality.

Tribute also came from US Representatives Edward J. Markey (who called O'Neill "the Albert Einstein of political science"), Barney Frank ("he knew where we should go"), and Michael E. Capuano ("throw away the old maps, it's the O'Neill Tunnel"), and from House minority leader Nancy Pelosi and Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey.

The loudest and longest applause came for US Representative John Murtha, Democrat of Pennsylvania, who recalled being sworn in as a congressman by O'Neill in 1974, and being appointed by him to the Appropriations Committee in his first year.

"He said he expected me to do as much for Boston and Massachusetts as I did for my own district," Murtha remembered with a laugh.

Nigro read the names of three workers killed working on the project, plus another who died after being hit by a truck on the site.

The 90-minute affair was hosted by O'Neill's family, including his son, Thomas P. O'Neill III, the former lieutenant governor and owner of the lobbying firm O'Neill and Associates.

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