

## **CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHERS MATE ROBERT L. KNUDSEN, USN(RET)**

Robert Leroy Knudsen, 61, a retired Chief Photographers Mate with the White House Staff, where he served for 28 years, died January 27, 1989 at the Bethesda Naval Hospital after a heart attack. He lived in Annandale.

Chief Knudsen had provided photographic coverage of every president from Harry Truman to Richard M. Nixon, and his photographs chronicled most of the major events at the White House for nearly three decades.

He photographed President Truman's election in 1948 and the election of President Eisenhower in 1952. His pictures included Eisenhower's meeting with Nikita Krushchev in 1959, the first steps of John F. Kennedy Jr., and President Kennedy's autopsy.

Chief Knudsen photographed the weddings of Linda and Luci Johnson and Tricia Nixon's White House wedding. He accompanied President Nixon on his historic trips to China and the Soviet Union in 1972, and photographed Nixon's farewell in 1974.

A native of Stormlake, Iowa, Chief Knudsen joined the Navy in 1945 and graduated first in his class in 1946 from the Naval Photographic School in Pensacola, FL.

Later that year he was transferred to Washington and assigned to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy. He was detailed to the White House to provide photographs of President Truman's activities.

Chief Knudsen remained in that assignment through the administrations of Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. He retired from the Navy in 1965, but remained at the White House as a member of the official staff until 1974.

Since then he had operated his own firm, Robert Knudsen Photographers Inc.

Chief Knudsen photographs had appeared in magazines such as Life, Look, The Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal and The National Geographic . His scenes of Washington became the 1969 beautification stamps issued by the U.S. Postal Service.

He had been commander of the Washington area flotilla of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and was chief of the photographic section of the organization's public affairs department.