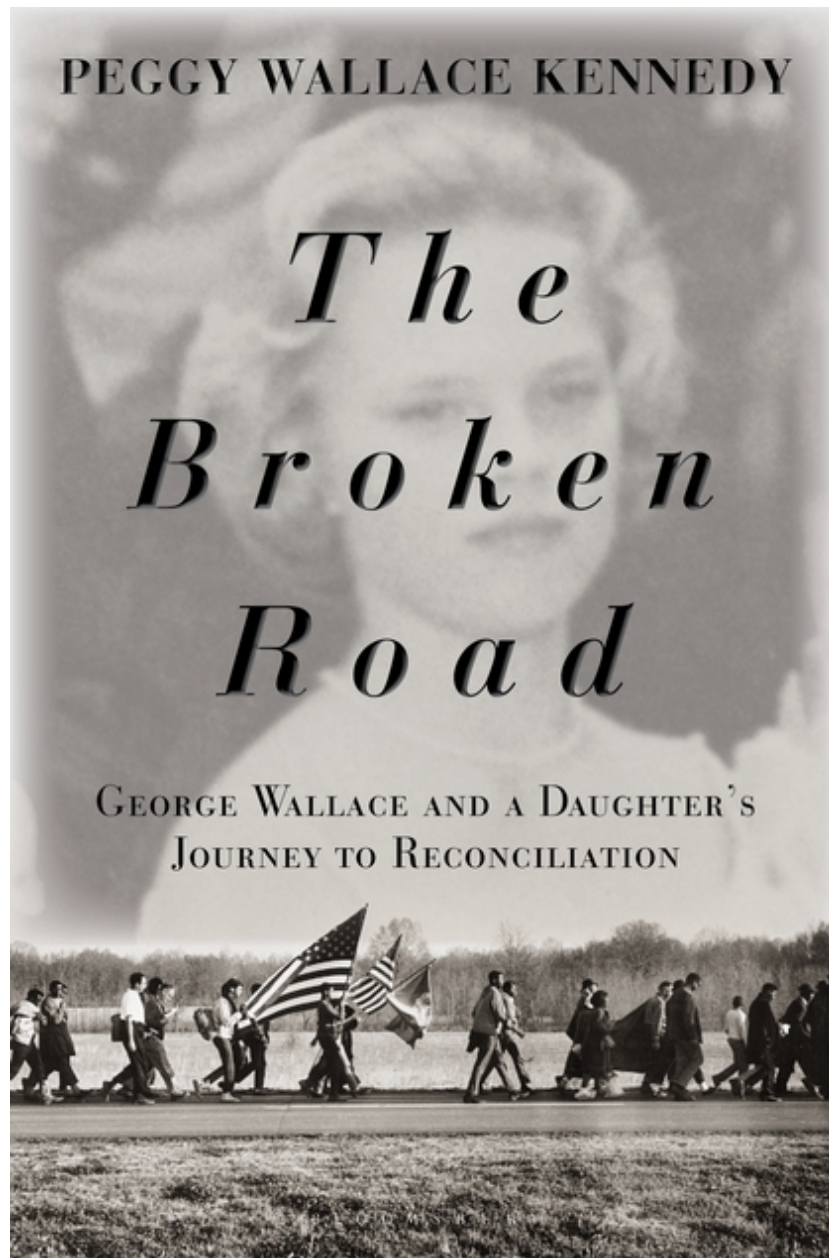


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By:
Peggy Wallace Kennedy

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Thanks to Bloomsbury for the ARC at BEA 2019.

TLDR: this book is revisionist history designed to protect the Wallace legacy, don't read it.

This book is Peggy Wallace Kennedy's memoir of growing up with and dealing with the legacy of her infamous father, Governor of Alabama and Independent candidate for President in 1968 and 1972, George Wallace. I was skeptical of what this book would entail; Wallace was not only directly responsible for an enormous amount of harm by being one of the most ardent

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Unfortunately, this book is exactly that. While it occasionally notes the harm Wallace did, it consistently tries to rebrand Wallace as a race-neutral populist hero who didn't hate black people, but simply wanted to stop federal intervention and protect down on their luck working class people. I want to quote some passages, so as a heads up this was the paperback version and it's from a ARC I received at the end of May. It's possible that these quotes change by the final copy that comes out in December.

"If I had asked Daddy in the summer of 1958 if he was a racist, I'm not sure what he would have said. For many years, I felt obligated to defend Daddy's character and actions. I took the official Wallace line: Daddy was segregationist, but not a racist...What is the difference between a segregationist and a racist? A racist is defined as a person who believes that one race is superior to others. To be a segregationist means upholding a caste system - a system of apartheid....I know in our house when I was growing up the use of the N-word was strictly forbidden." - pages 53-54.

I'm sorry Peggy, but no, there's no difference between personally hating black people and actively working to maintain a system of racial political, social, and economic separation and willingly using state violence through the police and the prisons and showing support for paramilitary organizations like the KKK to enforce that separation. It's the same damn thing. In fact, I'd much rather have a 1000 Wallaces who just make snide comments in private but never do anything about it, to 1 Wallace in office, actively resisting federal efforts to end legal segregation. Also, just because you don't say the N-word

Don

Releases on December 3, 2019, I read an advanced reader copy from the publisher. Not what I expected, which I think was more introspection of Ms. Wallace Kennedy's own part in growing up as George Wallace's daughter and then her own work as a civil rights advocate. I don't have enough scholarly knowledge to judge if this is "revisionist" in nature but it must be affected by a daughter's lens. It is a little disjointed in terms of timeline so I needed to keep that in mind as I read. I am very

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Jill Meyer

In November, 2008, soon after the Obama presidential victory, I read an article in - I think, "USA Today" - written by Peggy Wallace Kennedy. Wallace Kennedy was the daughter of Governors George and Lurleen Wallace and in the article she writes of visiting her parents' graves in Alabama earlier that fall. She was approached by a little old lady who told her how much she had loved Peggy's parents, and, as an aside, wouldn't George be horrified at the thought of a black man (I'm sure she might

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Wallace Kennedy's book, "*The Broken Road: George Wallace and a Daughter's Journey to Reconciliation*", is an interesting and well-written look at how Peggy grew up in the 1950's and 60's Alabama, with a father who wanted electoral success at any price and a mother devoted to raising her four children in times of economic hard times as her husband did not provide for the family when he was running perpetually for public office. He also ran around on his wife, and often had a side piece. Not a pleasant home to grow up in but Peggy loved both parents.

Much of the book is devoted to George's political aspirations and public life. Peggy states that George had been a racial moderate with good relationships with African-Americans when he was a judge, but that changed when he lost his first race for Alabama governor in the early 1960's. He figured he had to out "n-r" his opponents, which he did in the next election. He won the election and his outlook towards blacks in Alabama changed completely. It was under his administration that state police challenged civil rights marches and attempts at desegregation. But then he was shot in 1972 in an assassination attempt when he ran for the Democratic nomination for president

The most interesting part of the book was Wallace Kennedy's evaluation of her father and his followers as potential Donald Trump supporters forty years later. And that somehow, her father's character changed and he began to reach out to the black community and apologise for his previous actions. I presume it's true because Peggy Wallace Kennedy writes it in her book, but I was left to wonder if the rest of her family - she had two sisters and a brother - also felt the same way.

While she talks about her husband and two sons and her parents, she doesn't talk about her siblings. Maybe it's a question of not wanting to speak for them, but it did leave a curious void in the story.

Peggy Wallace Kennedy's memoir is an excellent followup - 11 years later - to her newspaper article about her father and his beliefs.

Donna Davis

Love was perhaps Daddy's most important legacy of all.

Thanks go to Bloomsbury and Net Galley for the review copy, which I read free and early in exchange for this honest review.

I was a child during the Civil Rights era, and although I didn't live in the American South, I recall news footage of Kennedy's father, George Wallace, the man that the author rightly attributes as a harbinger of the Trump movement. Instead of "Make America Great Again," Wallace urged his constituents "including the Klan,

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I was a child during the Civil Rights era, and although I didn't live in the American South, I recall news footage of Kennedy's father, George Wallace, the man that the author rightly attributes as a harbinger of the Trump movement. Instead of "Make America Great Again," Wallace urged his constituents "including the Klan, whom he openly welcomed to his campaign" to "Stand Up for America." When the federal government signaled that it would enforce the segregation ban, Wallace made headlines around the world by literally standing in the door of the schoolhouse in order to turn the first Black student away from a public school in Alabama. My own father was a redneck of the first order, but even he distanced himself from this extremist. Wallace ran for U.S.

president but was defeated; upon returning to the governor's mansion, he was shot and paralyzed from the waist down. By that time Malcolm X was dead and could not have told us that this was a case of chickens coming home to roost, and yet it may well have been.

Although the book's summary suggests that Kennedy is vastly different from her father politically, her prose indicates that her true, bitterest grievances all center on his philandering betrayal of her sainted mother and his failure to be a strong provider and dedicated family man. She tells us that even in the 1960s, she felt his racist rhetoric was wrong, and so I waited for what I thought must surely come next: the moment she either confronted him or simply moved out of the house to another part of the country to restart her life in saner surroundings. None of this happened, as it turns out. She stayed in the governor's mansion, thrilled by the relative affluence and privilege she regarded as her due following a tumultuous, sometimes impoverished childhood.

The title is taken from a Hemingway quote, and in her own story designated the location of her maternal grandparents, whose simple, homespun nurturance provided relief to her mother and herself when her father went on the road politicking and didn't send money home for them to live off of. At the beginning of the book she uses the expression often enough to beat it to death, but once her father becomes governor she rarely speaks of these kind, gentle people. Toward the end, she parenthetically notes that her grandmother died at some point back in the middle of the book.

It's interesting that although Lurleen Wallace was elected governor in order to circumvent what was at the time a state law against successive terms for her husband, the author says nothing at all about her mother's civil rights policies. We see that she won the governorship in a landslide and was loved by all, and yet if her policies diverged much from George's, that would have created screaming headlines. It's just one of the many inconsistencies within this memoir.

The last several chapters are devoted to her father's redemption politically, or so she asserts. He never hated African-Americans, she tells us, but only did and said those things in order to gain office. Later in life, he asked a handful of Civil Rights leaders for forgiveness and spoke in Black churches about his error. She follows this up by pointing to the large numbers of Black voters that returned him to the Capitol.

Maria-Anne

This book was an education for me. Born the same year as Peggy I fell a connection in historical data. You often wonder about the children of politicians and how they feel about what is going on. Peggy doesn't sugar coat her life or over dramatizes it but basically tells about her feelings. The conflicting emotions and trying to understand her father . Through her we got a bit better

understanding what kind of man George Wallace was. Half a century of history in Alabama through the eyes of a

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