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# Gabrielle Giffords honored by JFK Library

## Receives Profile in Courage Award

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT MAY 06, 2013

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DINA RUDICK/GLOBE STAFF

**Gabrielle Giffords, who left Congress to focus on her recovery after being shot in the head, was honored with the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award Sunday in Boston by Caroline Kennedy .**

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Former Arizona congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who survived a deadly shooting in Tucson in 2011 and has become a vocal advocate for legislation aimed at reducing gun violence, received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award at a ceremony in Boston Sunday afternoon.

“I believe we all have courage inside,” said Giffords, who spoke briefly and slowly because she continues to recover from being shot in the head at point-blank range. “I wish there was more courage in Congress. Sometimes it’s hard to express it. I know. It’s been a hard two years for me. But I want to make the world a better place more than ever.”

The award, given annually by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation since 1990, was presented by the foundation's president, Caroline Kennedy.

"Gabrielle Giffords has turned a personal nightmare into a movement for political change," Kennedy said Sunday. "When others would have withdrawn from public life, she has challenged us all to reengage in the political process. When others would have given up hope, Gabby has been unwavering in her belief that politics can solve problems. When others would have looked for excuses, Gabby has inspired action."

On Jan. 8, 2011, Giffords and 18 others were shot during a meeting she was holding with constituents in a supermarket parking lot in the Tucson area. Six people died, including Arizona District Court Chief Judge John Roll; Gabe Zimmerman, one of Giffords's staff members; and 9-year-old Christina-Taylor Green.

The shooter, Jared Lee Loughner, pleaded guilty to 19 counts, including attempted assassination of a member of Congress, in August 2012. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Giffords had been announced as this year's award winner in early March. But, after the April 15 attacks at the Boston Marathon, the ceremony took on added meaning.

It was held inside the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, a building that caught fire six minutes after a pair of bombs exploded at the Marathon finish line. Initially, some thought the library had also been bombed.

Investigators later ruled it was a fire caused by carelessly disposed smoking materials.

The building is in Dorchester, where 8-year-old Martin Richard, the youngest person killed in the Marathon bombings, lived.

"Given the events of the past few weeks, we're incredibly fortunate to be celebrating a profile in courage," said Kenneth R. Feinberg, chairman of the foundation's board, who was also recently named to oversee the One Fund Boston, which was established to benefit victims of the



MICHAEL DWYER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Giffords and her husband, Mark Kelly, at the ceremony.**

“

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Marathon bombings. “The last couple of weeks here in Boston, believe me, have been extremely trying. But, the reaction of the American people and the people here in Boston and the Commonwealth to what happened has been overwhelming and we’re all very, very grateful.”

*been a hard two years for me.’*

Gabrielle Giffords, former Arizona congresswoman who was shot in 2011

Giffords and her husband, retired Navy captain and astronaut Mark Kelly, also visited victims of the bombings at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

Giffords was chosen for the award by a 13-member committee. The award ceremony also drew several high-profile members of Congress: Nancy Pelosi of California, the former House speaker; Ron Barber of Arizona, an aide to Giffords who was also wounded during the Tucson shooting and was elected to succeed Giffords after she stepped down to recover; Donna F. Edwards of Maryland, a member of the Profile in Courage Award Committee; and Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida.

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