United States

JOHN F. KENNEDY
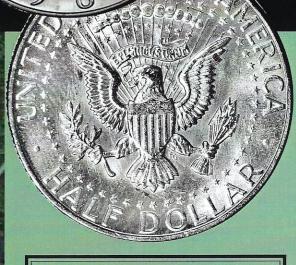## Silver Half Dollar

1964

Diameter: 30.6 mm

Weight: 192.9 grains (12.5 grams)

Composition: 90% silver-10% copper

Designer/Engravers: Gilroy Roberts, rev. Frank Gasparro

Mint Marks: Philadelphia (none), Denver (D), San Francisco (S) - *found left of stem on reverse*

Obverse: Forceful bust of Kennedy facing left with LIBERTY above and IN GOD WE TRUST left and right of truncation. The date is below.

Reverse: Presidential Seal with UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above and HALF DOLLAR below.

Edge: Reeded

In the closing days of November 1963 Chief Engraver Gilroy Roberts was informed by Mint Director Eva Adams that the Treasury proposed to place a Kennedy portrait on a silver U.S. coin ... later determined to be the Half Dollar. It was decided to use the Kennedy Inaugural Medal as a model.

The time pressure was unheard of and only remotely within the realm of possibility due to the fact that the original models for the medals were still preserved and used as the basis to make reductions first to 5" diameter and then coin size. The relief needed to be lowered for mass production.

On December 13th the first trial dies were completed and samples made for approval. Treasury Secretary Dillon wanted the family's approval on the design and met with Jacqueline Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Mrs. Kennedy suggested de-emphasizing the part in JFK's hair. The changes were made, new trials struck and enthusiastically approved by all.

Proof dies were delivered on January 2, 1964 and the production of nearly four million proof specimens began. Business strikes were not available to the general public until March 5th when the first run of 26 million coins was delivered to Federal Reserve Banks for distribution. The entire batch was eagerly scooped up by collectors, investors and speculators.

The Kennedy half remains one of America's most popular coins however, *only those business strikes produced in 1964 are 90% pure silver*. In 1965 the silver content was reduced to 40% and in 1971 eliminated entirely.