

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS

THE STATE FLOOR

3:50 P.M. EDT

Mr. Hill, Mr. Huici, members of the Association and guests:

Walking over, I was trying to recollect where we had first gotten together, and I was reminded by one of your officers that it was up in Boston, so it is a little shift from the Parker House to the East Room of the White House, but it is a great opportunity for me to welcome all of you and to meet with you and to provide a more personalized view of the President for your sketches.

Although, when it comes to personalized views, I don't think I will ever forget the one expressed by a former teammate of mine from my old Michigan football team. He introduced me one time at a banquet and said, "You might be interested to know that I played football with Jerry Ford for two years. Jerry played center, I was the quarterback, and you might say it gave me a completely different view of the President." (Laughter)

I hope your views today won't be quite that different. But, I am pleased and honored to welcome you to the White House. Your editorial cartoons representing a truly great American tradition have adorned the White House, its walls, for many, many years. Today, I am delighted to welcome all of you in person.

Two years ago this month I addressed your association in Boston. At that time, Guernsey LePelle, editorial cartoonist for the Christian Science Monitor, said you wanted to get a firsthand impression to better perceive my true identity. There had been a number of cartoons depicting identical Vice President Fords seated behind a desk with the caption, "Will the real Jerry Ford stand up?"

Today, two years later, the real Jerry Ford has stood up. You have taken me full measure. In keeping with the artistic and journalistic responsibility to call the shots as you see them, you have in all honesty, in my opinion, treated me very fairly, and for that I thank you.

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I concede that a pen is mightier than a politician. Only six or seven seconds are required to read and digest a cartoon. That is why you have such a big advantage over those of us in political life. It may take six or seven months before the public forgets a cartoon that hits the target, and that takes us up to next November.

I am pleased to take my chances with your cartoons because I know that you depict all candidates without fear or without favor. Your cartoon art is a very vital American safeguard against the deception of voters by any candidate, especially those that demagogue false issues or fuzz up the real issues.

We in political life -- and I think the public as a whole -- count on you to rip away facades with penetrating realism, and just as you asked for the real Jerry Ford to stand up, I congratulate all of you for asking the very same question for all the new and old faces of 1976.

I have heard cartoonists say their cartoons make a complex situation really very simple, while the editorials usually found on the same page make a simple situation really very complicated. (Laughter)

I am glad that we are in agreement on that. We all know the old Chinese proverb that a single picture is worth 1,000 words. Every cartoonist realizes this anew each time he starts to write the caption. So it is with political campaigns. We often see the real situation behind the mask, but can't always at the outset put the precise caption on it.

Yet, there is a very basic and penetrating wisdom that emerges in cartoons. I am confident that the same insight exists in full abundance among the American people. That is why I personally face the future with complete and total confidence.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 3:55 P.M. EDT)