

The original documents are located in Box C4, folder “Walker, Jack D.” of the Gerald and Betty Ford Special Materials Collection at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Encl

VIP

Pro. Ford 11-2-76

Office of the Mayor



Overland Park

AH

P-94

November 5, 1976

The Honorable Gerald Ford
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Ford:

The attached speaks for millions of our citizens. May I add--
on behalf of myself and my family--and on behalf of the City of Overland
Park--our gratitude and heartfelt "Thanks" for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Jack D. Walker
Mayor

JDW:am

Enclosure: News Article dated 11-5-76, The Kansas City Times



9-24



Overland Park

November 2, 1976

The Honorable Gerald Ford
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Ford:

The attached speaks for millions of our citizens. May I add
on behalf of myself and my family--and on behalf of the City of Overland
Park--our gratitude and heartfelt "Thanks" for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Jack D. Walker
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Enclosure: News Article dated 11-5-76, The Kansas City Times



WHITE HOUSE
MAIL ROOM

1976 NOV 8 AM 11 35

Thank You, Mr. Ford, for Being There

By Bob Greene

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Dear Mr. Ford:

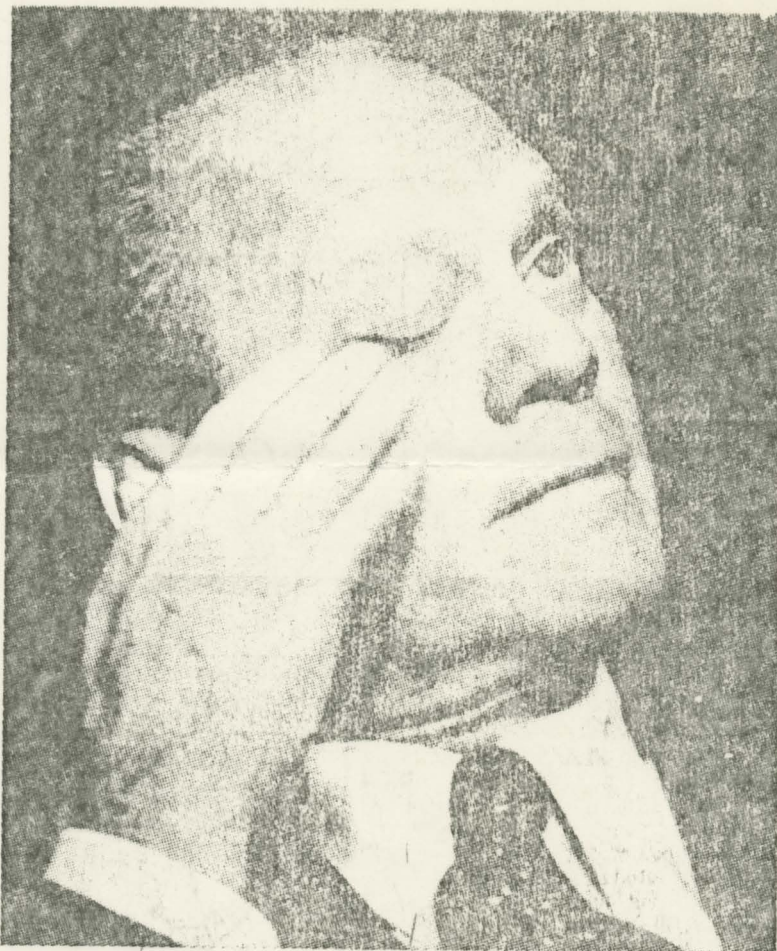
These must be among the most trying hours of your life, and I hope this letter is not an intrusion. Losing the presidency is a hurt that only a handful of men will ever know, and no one besides yourself can understand the personal sorrow that we are feeling now.

But I want to write—as one of many Americans who are not very interested in politics, and who are not registered members of either political party—to say thanks. Thanks for being there when we all needed you.

You did not seek the presidency when it was handed to you. You were the middleman in a crisis the likes of which we may never see again. The rest of us could feel relief when your predecessor left office; while we talked about how the hard times were over, you alone shouldered the burden of trying to put us back together again.

Before you came to office you said that you would never run for the presidency on your own. You changed your mind soon after entering the White House, but it would be hard to blame you for that. Only a few other persons in the history of this nation shared with you the experience of being President; it is hard to imagine that the lure of holding it some more is an enticement hardly any man could resist. In the first minutes of your presidency, you said that you realized you had not been elected by our votes. You asked that, in the absence of our ballots, you could have no prayers. You wished aloud that your predecessor and his family would find personal peace; you said that the long national nightmare was over.

People out here in the country were moved by your speech that day, but we all have short memories. Within a few months we were treating you the same way we have treated all of our modern Presidents. It is probably good, this intense scrutiny and criticism, for it helps make a



President Ford . . . worthy of our trust

President realize that his constituency is, indeed, paying close attention. But in your case we went out of our way to let you know that we did not regard you as an unflawed man.

So we made the jokes and the nasty cracks and the innuendos. It wasn't just the editorial cartoonists and the political columnists; so many of us joined in the glee at laughing every time you displayed a physical clumsiness and making jokes about your uneasy way with words and snickering over what we

were led to believe was your lack of intellect. That you were an athlete, that you were a discerning survivor of the political infighting of the Congress, that you were an attorney graduating near the top of your law school class at Yale University—those things did not impress us. Now you were the President, and Presidents are the biggest targets we have.

By the time this election season came around it was fashionable to portray you as a bumbling clown. How this may have affected you as

a human, we didn't much care. You were the President, and that is how we have been conditioned to treat our Presidents in the second half of the 20th century.

So you must be nursing hurts that you never expected. You will be leaving the White House soon, perhaps leaving Washington. And now perhaps it is the right time to say the words to you that we didn't ever say before.

You were a victim of circumstances. We all were victims of circumstances, of the national crushing of the spirit that was brought about by your predecessor. It was a little easier for us to be victims, though; we could merely complain and not be forced to do anything about it.

You, though—you had the job of beginning the healing. And you did it.

Two years ago it seemed at times impossible that we could ever be a nation that could smile again—that we could ever be a people who felt good about ourselves. But somehow it began to turn around. And you, more than anyone else, did it. In a quiet, low-key way you made sure we knew that the White House was not a place of uncleanness anymore. You made sure that we knew that a President could, indeed, still be a caring man worthy of our trust. You helped get us out.

I don't want to talk about the results of Tuesday night's balloting. As I said at the beginning of this letter, there are many of us who do not spend very much time thinking about political matters, and it is best to leave the political analysis to those who make a career of that.

This is just a note of gratitude for helping all of us find a peace that, for a while, seemed destined never to be ours again. May you and your own family find peace, too. We can never repay you for the service you gave to your countrymen when we needed it most. It is difficult to put our feelings into words, but please know that the feelings are there, and that we will not forget.

Thank you, Mr. President.

