

The original documents are located in Box 135, folder “Aug. 9, 1974 - Remarks Upon Being Sworn-In as 38th President, Washington, DC” of the Gerald R. Ford Vice Presidential Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS OF Gerald R. Ford
Swearing In Ceremony
The White House, Wash. D.C.
FOR IMMEDIATE Release Aug. 9, 1974 12: Noon
Mr. Chief Justice, ~~and~~ and my dear friends:

The Bible upon which my hand just rested was opened to
Proverbs, third chapter, the fifth and sixth verses. I learned
these verses many years ago, and have often said them as a prayer.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;
and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he
shall direct thy paths.

~~Proverbs 3:5-6~~



My fellow Americans:

The oath I have ~~just~~ taken is the same oath that was
taken by George Washington and by every President under the
Constitution. But I assume the Presidency under extraordinary
circumstances, never before experienced by Americans. This is
an hour of history that troubles our minds and hurts our hearts.

Therefore, I feel it is my first duty to make an unprecedented
compact with my countrymen. Not an inaugural address, not a
fireside chat, not a campaign speech. Just a little straight
talk among friends. I intend it to be the first of many.

(MORE)



I am acutely aware that you have not elected me as your President by your ballots. So I ask you to confirm me as your President with your prayers. And I hope that such prayer¹ will also be the first of many.

If you have not chosen me by secret ballot, neither have I ^{gained office} ~~sought it~~ by secret promises. I have not campaigned either for the Presidency or the Vice Presidency, I have not subscribed to any partisan platform, I am indebted to no man and only to one woman -- my dear wife Betty -- as I begin the most difficult job in the world.

I have not sought this enormous responsibility, but I will not shirk it, any more than I did the sudden summons to the second office of our government only eight months ago. Those who nominated and confirmed me as Vice President were and are my friends. They were of both parties, elected by all the people, and acting¹ under the Constitution in their name. It is only fitting then, that I should pledge to them and to you that I will be the President of all the people.

Thomas Jefferson said the people are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty. And down the years Abraham Lincoln renewed this American article of faith, asking: "Is there any better or equal hope in the world?"



I intend, on Monday next, to request of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate the privilege of appearing before the Congress to share with my former colleagues and with you, the American people, my views on the priority business of the nation, and to solicit your views and theirs.

Even though this is late in an election year, there is no way we can go forward except together, and no way anybody can win except by serving the people's urgent needs. We cannot stand still or slip backwards. We must go forward, now, together.

To the peoples and governments of all friendly nations, and I hope that could encompass the whole world, I pledge an uninterrupted and sincere search for peace. America will remain

strong and united, but its strength will remain dedicated to the safety and sanity of the entire family of man as well as to our own precious freedom.

I believe that truth is the glue that holds government together, and not only government, but civilization itself. That bond, though strained, is unbroken at home and abroad. In all my public and private acts as your President, I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor with ^{full}~~the~~ confidence that honesty is always the best policy in the end.

My fellow Americans, our long national nightmare is over.

Our Constitution works; our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule. But there is a higher power, by whatever name we honor Him, who ordains not only righteousness but love, not only justice but mercy.

As we bind up the internal wounds of Watergate, more painful and more poisonous than those of foreign wars, let us restore the Golden Rule to our political process, and let



brotherly love purge our hearts of suspicion and hate.

In the beginning I asked you to pray for me. Before closing I again ask your prayers for Richard Nixon and for his family.

May our former President, who brought peace to millions, find it for himself. May God bless and comfort his wonderful wife and daughters whose love and loyalty will forever be a shining legacy to all who bear the lonely burdens of the White House.

I can only guess at those burdens, although I have witnessed at close hand the tragedies that befell three Presidents and the lesser trials of others.

With all the strength and good sense I have gained from life, with all the confidence my family and friends and dedicated staff impart to me, and with the goodwill of the countless Americans I have encountered in recent visits to 40 States, I now solemnly reaffirm my promise to you last December 6: to uphold the Constitution, to do what is right as God gives me



to see the right, and to do the very best I can for America.

God helping me, I will not let you down.

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REMARKS BY GERALD R. FORD
UPON BEING SWORN IN AS
38TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C.
AUGUST 9, 1974, 12:00 NOON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE CABINET
AND
WHITE HOUSE STAFF

THE EAST ROOM

9:36 A.M. EDT

Members of the Cabinet, Members of the White House staff, all of our friends here:

I think the record should show that this is one of those spontaneous things that we always arrange whenever the President comes in to speak, and it will be so reported in the press, and we don't mind because they have to call it as they see it.

But on our part, believe me, it is spontaneous.

You are here to say goodbye to us, and we don't have a good word for it in English. The best is au revoir. We will see you again.

I just met with the members of the White House staff, you know, those who serve here in the White House day in and day out, and I asked them to do what I ask all of you to do to the extent that you can and, of course, are requested to do so: To serve our next President as you have served me and previous Presidents -- because many of you have been here for many years -- with devotion and dedication, because this office, great as it is, can only be as great as the men and women who work for and with the President.

This house, for example, I was thinking of it as we walked down this hall, and I was comparing it to some of the great houses of the world that I have been in. This isn't the biggest house. Many, and most, in even smaller countries are much bigger. This isn't the finest house. Many in Europe, particularly, and in China, Asia, have paintings of great, great value, things that we just don't have here, and probably will never have until we are 1000 years old, or older.

But this is the best house. It is the best house because it has something far more important than numbers of people who serve, far more important than numbers of rooms or how big it is, far more important than numbers of magnificent pieces of art.

MORE

This house has a great heart, and that heart comes from those who serve. I was rather sorry they didn't come down. We said goodbye to them upstairs. But they are really great. And I recall after so many times I have made speeches, and there have been some of them pretty tough, yet, when I always come back, or after a hard day -- and my days usually have run rather long -- I would always get a lift from them because I might be a little down, but they always smiled.

And so it is with you. I look around here and I see so many on this staff that, you know, I should have been by your offices and shaken hands, and I would loved to have talked to you and found out how to run the world -- everybody wants to tell the President what to do, and boy he needs to be told many times -- but I just haven't had the time. But I want you to know that each and every one of you, I know, is indispensable to this Government.

I am proud of this Cabinet. I am proud of all the members who have served in our Cabinet. I am proud of our sub-Cabinet. I am proud of our White House staff. As I pointed out last night, sure we have done some things wrong in this Administration, and the top man always takes the responsibility, and I have never ducked it. But I want to say one thing: We can be proud of it -- 5-1/2 years -- no man or no woman came into this Administration and left it with more of this world's goods than when he came in. No man or no woman ever profited at the public expense or the public till. That tells something about you.

Mistakes, yes. But for personal gain, never. You did what you believed in. Sometimes right, sometimes wrong. And I only wish that I were a wealthy man -- at the present time I have got to find a way to pay my taxes (Laughter) -- and if I were, I would like to recompense you for the sacrifices all of you have made to serve in Government.

But you are getting something in Government -- and I want you to tell this to your children, and I hope the Nation's children will hear it, too -- something in Government service that is far more important than money. It is a cause bigger than yourself. It is the cause of making this the greatest Nation in the world, the leader of the world, because without our leadership the world will know nothing but war, possibly starvation, or worse, in the years ahead. With our leadership it will know peace, it will know plenty.

We have been generous and we will be more generous in the future as we are able to. But most important, we must be strong here, strong in our hearts, strong in our souls, strong in our belief, and strong in our willingness to sacrifice, as you have been willing to sacrifice, in a pecuniary way, to serve in Government.

MORE

There is something else I would like for you to tell your young people. You know, people often come in and say, "What will I tell my kids?" They look at Government and say it is sort of a rugged life and they see the mistakes that are made. They get the impression that everybody is here for the purpose of feathering his nest. That is why I made this earlier point -- not in this Administration, not one single man or woman.

And I say to them, "There are many careers. This country needs good farmers, good businessmen, good plumbers, good carpenters."

I remember my old man. I think that they would have called him sort of a little man, common man. He didn't consider himself that way. You know what he was? He was a streetcar motorman first, and then he was a farmer, and then he had a lemon ranch. It was the poorest lemon ranch in California, I can assure you. He sold it before they found oil on it. (Laughter)

And then he was a grocer. But he was a great man because he did his job and every job counts up to the hilt, regardless of what happens.

Nobody will ever write a book, probably, about my mother. Well, I guess all of you would say this about your mother -- my mother was a saint. And I think of her, two boys dying of tuberculosis, nursing four others in order that she could take care of my older brother for three years in Arizona, and seeing each of them die, and when they died, it was like one of her own.

Yes, she will have no books written about her. But she was a saint.

Now, however, we look to the future. I had a little quote in the speech last night from T.R. As you know, I kind of like to read books. I am not educated, but I do read books, (Laughter) and the T.R. quote was a pretty good one.

Here is another one I found as I was reading, my last night in the White House, and this quote is about a young man. He was a young lawyer in New York. He had married a beautiful girl and they had a lovely daughter, and then suddenly she died, and this is what he wrote. This was in his diary.

MORE

He said: "She was beautiful in face and form and lovelier still in spirit. As a flower she grew and as a fair young flower she died. Her life had been always in the sunshine. There had never come to her a single great sorrow. None ever knew her who did not love and revere her for her bright and sunny temper and her saintly unselfishness. Fair, pure and joyous as a maiden, loving, tender and happy as a young wife. When she had just become a mother, when her life seemed to be just begun and when the years seemed so bright before her, then by a strange and terrible fate death came to her. And when my heart's dearest died, the light went from my life forever."

That was T.R. in his 20's. He thought the light had gone from his life forever -- but he went on. And he not only became President, but as an ex-President, he served his country always in the arena, tempestuous, strong, sometimes wrong, sometimes right, but he was a man.

And as I leave, let me say that is an example I think all of us should remember. We think sometimes when things happen that don't go the right way; we think that when you don't pass the bar exam the first time -- I happened to, but I was just lucky; I mean my writing was so poor the bar examiner said, "We have just got to let the guy through." (Laughter) We think that when someone dear to us dies, we think that when we lose an election, we think that when we suffer a defeat, that all is ended. We think, as T.R. said, that the light had left his life forever.

MORE

Not true. It is only a beginning always. The young must know it; the old must know it. It must always sustain us because the greatness comes not when things go always good for you, but the greatness comes when you are really tested, when you take some knocks, some disappointments, when sadness comes, because only if you have been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain.

And so I say to you on this occasion, as we leave, we leave proud of the people who have stood by us and worked for us and served this country.

We want you to be proud of what you have done. We want you to continue to serve in Government, if that is your wish. Always give your best, never get discouraged, never be petty; always remember others may hate you, but those who hate you don't win unless you hate them, and then you destroy yourself.

And so, we leave with high hopes, in good spirit and with deep humility, and with very much gratefulness in our hearts. And I can only say to each and every one of you, we come from many faiths, we pray perhaps to different gods, but really the same God in a sense, but I want to say to each and every one of you, not only will we always remember you, not only will we always be grateful to you, but always you will be in our hearts and you will be in our prayers.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 9:55 A.M. EDT)

221A

NIXON 8-8

URGENT
NIGHT LD

BY HELEN THOMAS

UPI WHITE HOUSE REPORTER

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE END OF RICHARD M. NIXON'S PRESIDENCY, THE ULTIMATE CASUALTY OF THE WATERGATE SCANDAL, APPEARED IMMINENT THURSDAY.

PRESIDENT NIXON MET ALONE WITH VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD IN THE OVAL OFFICE FOR AN HOUR AND 10 MINUTES TO INFORM HIM HE WAS RESIGNING, A WHITE HOUSE AIDE SAID. THE WHITE HOUSE THEN SAID NIXON WOULD APPEAR ON NATIONWIDE TELEVISION AT 9 P.M. EDT THURSDAY TO ANNOUNCE HIS DECISION.

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADER THOMAS P. O'NEILL SAID HE HAD LEARNED NIXON WOULD ANNOUNCE HE WAS HANDING HIS LETTER OF RESIGNATION TO SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER AND THAT FORD WOULD BE SWORN IN AS 38TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES LATE FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

O'NEILL SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FORD WOULD TAKE THE OATH OF OFFICE FROM CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN E. BURGER IN THE WHITE HOUSE EAST ROOM BETWEEN 4 P.M. AND 6 P.M. EDT FRIDAY.

FORD, 61, WHO BECAME VICE PRESIDENT ONLY EIGHT MONTHS AGO TO SUCCEED THE DISGRACED SPIRO T. AGNEW, WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEGUN MAKING PLANS SEVERAL DAYS AGO FOR A TRANSITION OF POWER AND ASSEMBLY OF A NEW CABINET AND WHITE HOUSE FF. HIS AIDES REFUSED TO DENY THE REPORTS.

KISSINGER, WHO BY LAW WOULD RECEIVE A NIXON LETTER OF RESIGNATION MAKING FORD'S SUCCESSION EFFECTIVE AT THAT MOMENT, CANCELED AN APPEARANCE BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND MET WITH NIXON AT THE WHITE HOUSE THURSDAY MORNING FOR THE THIRD TIME IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS.

THE WHITE HOUSE AIDE, WHO ASKED THAT HE NOT BE IDENTIFIED, SAID NIXON HAD DECIDED THE RESIGNATION PRESSURE FROM HIS CLOSEST ADVISERS AND FROM REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERS IN CONGRESS WAS IRRESISTIBLE, AND THAT HE WAS NOW MAKING LAST-MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSITION OF POWER TO A FORD ADMINISTRATION.

CROWDS OF CURIOUS, SILENT PASSERSBY PEERED THROUGH THE BLACK IRON FENCE SURROUNDING THE WHITE HOUSE, AWAITING THE FINAL, CLIMACTIC WORD OF NIXON'S FATE. AIDES SAID THE WHITE HOUSE SWITCHBOARD HAD BEEN JAMMED FOR NEARLY TWO DAYS WITH TELEPHONE CALLS ABOUT THE RESIGNATION RUMORS THAT HAVE SWEEP WASHINGTON AND THE WORLD.

ON WALL STREET, THE STOCK MARKET OPENED THURSDAY WITH ANOTHER LEAP UPWARD IN ANTICIPATION OF A NIXON RESIGNATION, AFTER THE DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE POSTED A 23.78-POINT GAIN WEDNESDAY, THE THIRD LARGEST OF THE YEAR. SPECULATION OVER NIXON'S DEPARTURE SAW THE U.S. DOLLAR RISE AND THE PRICE OF GOLD DECLINE ON EUROPEAN MONEY MARKETS.

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UPI 08-08 01:51 PED



4:00 Thrs. 8-8-74