

President Gerald R. Ford's handwritten reflections, 1977 or 1978

Scanned from the collection **Gerald R. Ford: Materials from the writing of *A Time To Heal*** at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

While writing his autobiography, *A Time to Heal* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), President Gerald R. Ford composed a series of personal reflections on twenty-seven topics. What makes these documents so unusual is not only their introspection but also their form. President Ford recorded these observations by hand, writing in blue ball point on his favored yellow writing tablets. He did not expend time and energy to polish and edit his writing, apparently planning to do so when incorporating them into the book. Therefore occasional spelling or grammatical errors or incomplete thoughts appear.

For each reflection the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library has scanned President Ford's handwritten document and added a Library-produced transcription below to aid in reading the reflection.

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My Definition of a statesman as opposed to a politician.

A politician is interested in the next election. A statesman is concerned about the next generation. No statesman approves short term benefits if they undermine long range progress. A politician talks & votes to patch over fundamental problems with superficial solutions.

A statesman is one who stands before an antagonistic audience and speaks with conviction, strength and persuasion. A politician tells a group what it wants to hear, knowing fully that ^{what they} want is not in their or the nation's best interest.

A statesman is one who believes in the ultimate good judgment of the American people and therefore takes the position that if all the facts are known he will survive the next election & the nation will be better off. The politician in contrast is not willing to use his leadership to guide the people & the nation down a path of sacrifice & long range success.

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