

**The original documents are located in Box 29, folder “Swimming Pool (White House)” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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May 14, 1975

SWIMMING POOL

ANNOUNCEMENT

Preliminary work has started on the construction of a White House swimming pool. The pool, which will be slightly larger than the one the Fords had at their home in Alexandria, will be built on the South Lawn in an area just south of the West Wing. The contractor will be National Construction Co., Inc., of Washington, the same contractor that built the President's pool on Crown View Drive. The cost is estimated at \$52,417 for construction, with an additional \$9,000 for landscaping.

The funds will be raised through private donations and the President has laid down very strict guidelines for these donations-- the most important of which is that no Federal funds will be used in any form.

Here are the guidelines for donations:

1. No Federal funds will be expended in connection with the project.
2. The maximum donation permitted is \$1,000 for any one person.
3. Donations of equipment or services will be limited to \$1,000 in value (wholesale cost).
4. No donations for any corporation or union will be accepted.
5. Contributions in excess of those required to complete the project will go to other National Park Foundation projects.



A Committee has been established to supervise receipt and collection of public donations. The Chairman is A. J. Sehorn of Hayward, California, who is vice chairman of the U. S. Olympic Swimming Committee. The treasurer is William J. Schuiling, <sup>Chairman of</sup> ~~Chairman of Financial General Shareholders, Inc.~~ of Washington, D. C.

*Dunbar*



PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Q: Can you give some exact costs and specifications on the pool?

A: The pool will be 22 feet wide by 54.83 feet long. Here is a breakdown on specific cost:

Excavation	\$ 2,500.00
Pool (22 x 54.83')	24,250.00
Deck	8,000.00
Filter Vault	2,500.00
Metal Door (Situation Room)	1,800.00
Steps & Retaining Wall (To Situation Room)	3,000.00
Electric (Allowance)	3,500.00
Water (Allowance)	1,625.00
Filter & Drain Plumbing (Allowance)	1,242.00
Temporary Fence (Allowance)	2,500.00
Heater (54 KW)	<u>1,500.00</u>
	\$52,417.00

Q: What about the landscaping?

A: It will cost not more than \$9,000. It will be done under a separate contract. The landscaping plan has taken into consideration security requirements imposed by the Secret Service.

Q: When will actual construction start?

A: Some equipment is being moved in today. I think they will be putting up some construction fences shortly. The contract calls for work to begin on or about May 15 and be concluded by July 1--so that is a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 45 days.

Q: Why didn't we know about it until the bulldozers showed up on the South Lawn?

A: As you know, this project has been under consideration almost from the day the President came into office. It was thoroughly considered and widely discussed last fall.



The project was laid aside for awhile, but most of the preliminary work on plans and specifications, the legal work with the National Park Foundation and plans for the collection of funds had been completed during the initial period of consideration. When it was decided to go ahead with the project about a week ago, it required very little time to get work started. We are announcing it today--which is as early as we could get all of the details together to give to you.

Q: Was there bidding on this project?

A: There is no requirement that the bidding processes be utilized in a project of this type. There are no Federal funds. There is no Federal agency involved in the construction. The National Construction Co., Inc. (Gordon Rudd, President) is a reputable firm which has done business for a number of years in the Washington area. And, as I say, this is the same builder that built the President's pool.

Q: What about cost overruns?

A: The contract specifies the total cost of the pool and lays out what each item will cost. Should the White House ask for changes and issue a change order, the cost of the pool would go up accordingly. However, I do not anticipate any requests for changes during this construction period.



FUND RAISING PROCEDURES

Q: What is the National Park Foundation?

A: As I have said, it is a charitable, non-profit corporation established by public law 90-209 to accept and administer gifts in connection with the activities and services of the National Park Service. As I understand it, the Foundation's activities in the most recent past have been limited mainly to acquiring land and holding it until it can be purchased and used as park land by the National Park Service.

Q: Why did they decide to take on this project?

A: They did it by resolution of their board. As you know, the White House grounds are administered by the National Park Service and I presume the National Park Foundation thought this would be a worthy project.

Q: Are contributions tax exempt?

A: There is a letter dated December 31, 1970, from the Internal Revenue Service to the Foundation which says that contributions are, to the extent allowed by law, can be used as tax deductions for individuals. (The letter is three pages long and quite detailed. I would suggest an answer from the Foundation's legal office could be a lot more specific.)

Q: What is the committee that you say is set up to collect funds?

A: It is called the White House Swimming Pool Committee. When this matter was first under discussion here, a group of people interested in the swimming pool formed a Committee to raise funds for this project. The Committee totaled about a dozen people and consisted mostly of people who had some ties to amateur swimming teams--Olympic Swimming Committee members, Olympic coaches, the Swimming Hall of Fame, college swimming coaches, and some people from the Amateur Athletic Union. I don't have all of the names, since this was a non-White House group--but I will try to get them for you.



When the project was put aside at the White House, the Committee was not especially active in collecting funds. However, the interest in the project remained. And, when it was decided to pursue the swimming pool again, the Committee was there and ready to go.

Q: Who is A. J. Sehorn?

A: Mr. Sehorn is associated with the Carboline Marine Corporation, which is a firm in Hayward, California. It is a subsidiary of Carboline Corporation of St. Louise. Mr. Sehorn is 57 and is widely known in Olympic circles for his 30 years of work with the U. S. Olympic Committee. He has served as Financial Chairman for the states of Oregon and California. He has been National Olympic Swimming Committee Chairman. A Delegate to the Olympic Games, manager of the U. S. Olympic Swimming team at the Tokoyo games in 1964. He has been active with the Amateur Athletic Union as National Swimming Chairman and AAU President for Oregon.

Carboline Corporation is a worldwide company which manufacturers all types of marine and industrial paints and some kinds of rough coatings and floor coatings. They have offices in Australia, Japan, and Hawaii and manufacturing plants all over the U. S. including Ohio and Louisiana.

Q: Who is Schuiling?

A: He is a Washington businessman, who is originally from Grand Rapids and was a friend and classmate of the President's at South High. I understand the Financial General Shareholders, Inc. firm is the holding company for the First National Bank of Washington.

Q: How much money has been collected so far?

A: Very little. Some has been collected by various committees that were formed last fall. Some came to the White House in the mail. All that came to the White House amounts to less than \$1,000. None of it has been officially accepted and turned over to the National Park Foundation.



(FYI: Stiles says cash and pledges so far amount to about one-third of the total cost. The White House Swimming Pool Committee--the Olympic group--has checks for about \$5,000. The Swimming Pool Institute has about \$4,000. The White House has less than \$1,000.)



MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Who may use the pool?

A: ~~The Foundation's resolution uses the words~~ "The President, his family and guests..."

Q: Does that mean the White House staff or newsmen or welfare kids?

A: We will have to cross that bridge when we get to it. But it does say "guests."

Q: Has the Fine Arts Commission approved this?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there provision for expansion of the facilities, such as a cover?

A: Not being a builder I cannot answer that. (FYI: No. What's there is just about all there will ever be.)

Q: Has the Secret Service approved the security arrangements?

A: The Secret Service has played a role in this from the start and it is with their concurrence that work is starting.

Q: What about a bullet proof screen or something like that?

A: I don't know of any plans for such a provision.

Q: What were the dimensions of the Ford pool in Alexandria?

A: 20' x 40'.

Q: What is the role of the National Swimming Pool Institute?

A: From the inception of the idea, the National Swimming Pool Institute, a Washington-based association of manufacturers of pool products, has been interested in the idea. They have expressed an interest in donating some money from their members and some equipment. However, the details have not been worked out.



JUSTIFICATION

Q: How can you justify building a swimming pool with the economy in the state that it is?

A: This is, as you can see, not an elaborate swimming facility. It is not much larger--nor any more plush--than the pools owned by many families in the Washington area and in many areas all over the country.

The President is a swimming enthusiast. He obviously enjoys it. I think Dr. Lukash has spoken very explicitly about the benefits of swimming to the President's health. We spend a lot of money for the protection of the President physically; there seems to be obvious justification to spend money for the President's health.

This is not a pool for President Ford. It is a pool for the White House. It can be used by this President and Presidents for years to come. *Old pool built for FDR by public contributions. (Shows he's strong)*

And, finally; although the President is very pleased that a swimming pool will be built, this was a project that was begun by a group of people who have an interest in swimming and the benefits derived from it. The funds are being raised outside the White House and purely on a public contribution basis.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SWIMMING POOL TASK FORCE III

Public Information

Meeting, August 26, 1974

ATTENDING:

J. F. terHorst, Press Secretary  
Larry Speakes, Task Force Chairman  
Bill Casselman, Office of Legal Counsel  
Dr. Bill Lukash, President's Physician  
Bill Markert, Executive Secretary, National Swimming  
Pool Institute

POINTS FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

1. This is one of three Task Forces within the White House Committee on the President's Pool. The others are (a) Legal and Funding, (b) Designing, Costing and Construction.
2. The full Committee met Saturday. The Task Forces are meeting today.
3. The gist of Saturday's session was that the Swimming Pool Institute would spearhead the fund raising effort and contribute both in-kind services and cash from members.
4. The full Committee will meet again Tuesday to receive Task Force reports. Our assignment was to develop a plan for announcing the fund drive and to watch for public relations developments in the planning.



TODAY'S MEETING:

I will open the meeting and turn it over immediately to J. F. terHorst with a suggestion that Mr. terHorst has followed this swimming pool effort from its inception and has some definite ideas from the President concerning its handling.

Some questions:

1. how will funding be handled?
2. through which organization?
3. a limit on and an accounting of contributors?
4. how will announcement be handled?
5. how much will be revealed on cost and construction details?
6. the role of the White House?



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 28, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR JERRY TERHORST

FROM: LARRY SPEAKES *LS*

SUBJECT: SWIMMING POOL

The Swimming Pool Task Force met Tuesday.

Although nothing specific was decided, the move is toward forming a Trustee Group, composed of leading national figures (such as Goldwater, Mathias and others), which would raise the money and supervise construction of the pool.

Estimates are still running high on cost--from \$585,000 to \$858,000. However, it appears they will impose restrictions on contributors similar to the campaign financing law.

Location still centers on the site south of the West Wing-- and it would be a covered, year-round facility.

They are still doing some estimates on renovating the present pool and moving the Press Room. However, a new press facility would cost anywhere from \$871,000 (above ground south of West Wing) to \$2 million plus (underground south of West Wing).

I cautioned the entire group about talking to the press before details were settled, but it apparently had the reverse effect. The Fine Arts Secretary and the Pool Institute people ran out and spilled the details.

I think our official press reply, however, should be: "A feasibility study is underway. There are many ideas in the proposal stage as to location, type of pool, fund raising--but nothing has been settled yet."



January 10, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JACK MARSH

FROM:

RON NESSEN

Concerning the Swimming Pool Institute's desire to display the White House swimming pool plans at their convention in Las Vegas, I think this is an awful idea that should be stopped.

The President is just about to tell the American people how bad the economy is and how much we all need to sacrifice and I can't think of a worse time for us to reveal plans for a \$300,000 swimming pool.

I hope you will be able to stop this.

rn/pp

cc: Swimming Pool file/w/ cy incoming



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

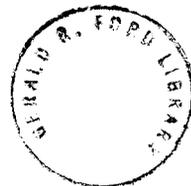
January 9, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:      RON NESSEN

FROM:                    JACK MARSH *Jack*

I am told there has been another request by the Swimming Pool Institute to display the swimming pool plans at their forthcoming national convention in Las Vegas in several weeks.

It occurred to me that this is something you might want to bring up with the President at your public affairs meeting to get his views as to whether he wants this type of public attention.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 23, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR RON NESSEN

FROM: LARRY SPEAKES *LS*

SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENT'S POOL

The Official Line

"The White House has ordered a feasibility study on the construction of a pool. This includes the legal questions, the proper method of raising of funds, consultation with Park Service and Fine Arts Commission, and the plans and specifications to construct a pool which would serve not only this President but all future Presidents. These studies are continuing and no decisions have been made. The one specific guideline laid down by President Ford is that no tax money will be involved."

Guidance

We expect to be able to announce plans for a broad-based, nationwide drive to raise funds for the President's Pool this week, perhaps as early as Wednesday. The general set-up will be:

- The National Park Foundation will serve as the fundraising organization. It is a non-profit, non-government foundation, which will donate the funds to the White House. A Board of Trustees, composed of leading citizens who have an interest in swimming, will be formed. This group will make the announcement and the White House will endorse the plan and provide details.
- The cost of the pool is estimated at just under \$400,000. It will be constructed as a southward extension of the West Wing of the White House. Since this area is largely



hidden from public view, the only visible sign of the pool will be the extension of a ornamental railing along the embankment which faces West Executive Avenue. However, the east side of the pool enclosure (facing the South Lawn) will open onto the lawn through sliding doors and into a landscaped sun area. These plans were adopted because they are best suited to hold costs down (original estimates were as high as \$800,000), meet security and Fine Arts requirements and cause minimum disruption to White House operation.

- Construction is expected to get underway October first. The Inaugural Committee will make an initial, interest free loan guarantee of up to \$350,000 to insure that construction can begin immediately, with an eye toward a February first completion date. (The Committee considered the "PR" risks involved in accepting a loan from the Nixon Inaugural Committee and its Chairman, J. Willard Marriott. However, the decision was made in order to allow construction to begin immediately. We considered not revealing the loan, but decided to make a complete disclosure, omitting only the details of the "guarantee" of financing up to \$350,000 if funds were not raised. Inaugural funds have been used previously to pay for lighting the White House and the purchase of furniture for the State rooms. It is legal.) A press plan, designed to provide the White House with the complete details and to promote the fundraising campaign, is attached.



**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
WASHINGTON

9-23-74

Dates have slipped on the attached memo awaiting final approval of pool project, but can be adapted.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

September 13, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR JERRY JONES

FROM:

LARRY SPEAKES *LS*

SUBJECT:

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR THE PRESIDENT'S  
POOL

Monday, September 23

- National Park Foundation reveals plan for nationwide drive to raise funds for construction of the President's Pool. The appointment of a Board of Trustees is announced (11 a.m.).

- Press Office announces White House acceptance of NPF offer, releases Presidential statement, makes available NPF release, biographical material on Trustees (12 noon).

- Chairman of Board of Trustees meets with the President to discuss plans for the pool. Oval Office. Photo session (1 p.m.).

- Board Chairman, NPF pool expert Q & A in West Wing Press Room. Fact sheet released detailing fund-raising method, cost estimates and construction plan (2 p.m.).

- RNC mails White House announcement to 6,000 major daily and weekly newspapers with particular emphasis on "how to contribute" to pool fund.

- RNC makes mail appeal to local party leaders.

- Pool Institute mails release to major aquatic publications and other specialized publications.

- Parade, Family Weekly Sunday supplement magazines asked to run article, print mail coupon for contributors (early deadlines).



Tuesday, September 24

- Dr. Lukash does interview with Washington Post (or Star News) and New York Times emphasizing physical fitness aspects of swimming and the need for a pool for the President.

- Similar interviews arranged with medicine sections of Time and/or Newsweek.

Wednesday, September 25

- Press Office announces local pool funds--such as Grand Rapids--agree to join in national drive and contribute funds already collected.

Thursday, September 26

- Report released on immediate and favorable public response to fund, announcing total contributions to date.

- Board of Trustees meets with President, showing drawing and/or scale model of pool. Oval Office. Photo session.

- Press Office releases drawing of pool.

Monday, September 30

- Dr. Lukash appears on "Today" show with Chairman of Trustees to discuss pool.

- New figures released, showing increasing total of contributions.

- Photo of White House secretaries opening letters and counting money.

- Excerpts from letters released, showing broad-based public support from school children to older people.



Tuesday, October 1

- National campaign for the President's pool opens with ground breaking ceremonies at construction site. The President and the Chairman of the Board speak, turn the first shovel. Special guests include Olympic swimmers. Open news coverage.

Thursday, October 3

- President goes out to inspect earth turning efforts, talks with construction workers. Photo session.

- New fund total released. Contributions climb.

Succeeding weeks

- Weekly reports released on total contributions. Ideal fund "progress reports":

1st week--nearly one-fourth of total raised.

2d week--contributions top \$150,000 mark.

3d week--contributions near goal.

4th week--goal is reached.

- Visiting aquatic club (preferably youngsters) visits White House and sees President in Oval Office. President makes impromptu tour of pool site with youngsters. Full coverage.

- Olympic swimming stars visit President to discuss health benefits and competitive spirit of swimming.



MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN cc LARRY SPEAKES

FROM: Roberts

RE: MEETING OF COMMITTEE ON SWIMMING POOL, Oct. 9, 1974

I sat in for Larry Speakes at the Oct. 9 meeting of the Swimming Pool Committee. Progress in several areas was discussed, including, the need for Interior to have a statement ready for Congressional approval; the need for a favorable Inflation Impact statement, in light of the President's Economic Speech; the need for an Environmental impact statement from the Park Service; and the necessity of bids on the pool construction. In light of the President's statement in the Economic speech against negotiated bids, the committee recommended a normal bid procedure for the construction.

The discussion then turned to the possibility of adverse public and press reaction to construction of the pool, considering the rather critical climate since the pardon, and the President's call for everyone to sacrifice to hold down inflation. The committee agreed that even though it is possible to make a strong and justifiable case for the pool, an adverse reaction is still more than likely. The committee agreed it would be desirable to have the President review the situation in light of these factors, and to consider the possibility of announcing--- part of as/his contribution to the fight against inflation--a delay in construction of the pool--possibly until next year--but continuing to accept contributions for the pool. Perhaps putting those contributions in a Savings and Loan Account or something similar. It was also pointed out that unless construction begins very soon on the pool, work will have to continue during the winter months, which could add as much as \$100,000 to the cost of the pool.

Another Committee meeting was planned for Thursday or Friday, at the call of Chairman John Marsh.

# # #



January 10, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JACK MARSH

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rn/pp

cc: Swimming Pool file/w/ cy incoming



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 9, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN

FROM: JACK MARSH *JM*

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• Institute to display the swimming pool plans at their forthcoming  
national convention in Las Vegas in several weeks.

It occurred to me that this is something you might want to bring  
up with the President at your public affairs meeting to get his  
views as to whether he wants this type of public attention.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Bill*

June 28, 1975

MEMO TO: Ron Nessen

FROM: Jack Stiles *J.R.S.*

SUBJECT: First Plunge

If all goes well, the President plans to take his first plunge in the new White House pool the morning of July 1, 1975 (Tuesday.)

He indicated the White House Press Corps would be welcome.

Will you check schedule and arrangements?

cc: Donald Rumsfeld  
Jack Marsh  
Jerry Jones  
Warren Rustand

*Ron --  
I made copies of this for:  
Larry  
Jack  
Bill R  
Bill G  
Tom*



June 28, 1975

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FROM: Jack Stiles *gms*

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cc: Donald Rumsfeld  
Jack Marsh  
Jerry Jones  
Warren Rustand

*Rn-*  
*This is different what what decided*  
*D*



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# The White House Pool Returns?

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