

travel pool report to capitol for sparkman party:

[12-20-74]

trip took total of 21 minutes. president departed white house via motorcade approximately 1:17, drove immediately to old s.o.b., raced up two flights of stairs and entered the caucus room, scene of the sam ervin committee watergate hearings, where the surprise birthday party for sen john sparkman (ala.) already in progress. (75th b'da

about 250 guests rose and applauded as pres walked in. pres went to head table, where he greeted sparkman, plus senator's wife and daughter. he said he there because "of the great respect and admiration" he has for sparkman and "because of the fine job you've done in congress -- i know first hand."

pres said to sparkman:

"in football terms, you may be too old for the university of alabama, but you could be too young for the washington redskins. thirty-eight years in congress is a milestone i never achieved."

paid tribute ^{UT} to sparkman's national and international contributions.

mrs. sparkman gave president an azalea, and pres traded football stories with sparkman while they posed for pictures.

sparkman offered pres a hunk of the four-tiered ^e birthday cake and mr. ford declined, saying: "i'm on a diet."

president strode out of room, down stairs, out to car and back here.

elapsed time 21 minutes.

trip uneventful except poolers out of breath from climbing stairs.

saul kohler
tom joyce
bill matney