

FEBRUARY 13, 1976

POOL REPORT #3
TRAVEL POOL FROM SHERATON ORLANDO JETPORT INN EN ROUTE
OLD MCCOY OFFICER'S CLUB

After the news conference, the President went to elsewhere for 15 minutes, then returned to the news conference room, where conference participants were buying drinks and milling about. Mr. Ford shook hands for five minutes. There was some activity on the platform on which he had previously spoken.

Leaning against the platform was a Celebrity Board proudly owned by KFTU, the television station of Florida Technological University. The board is white, of composition material, and measures four by six feet. Ron Nessen stood at the left corner. It was difficult to see around him to the signatures which appeared on that portion of the board blocked by his chest and head. But later examination confirmed a report by a local reporter that behind Nessen were the signatures of Richard Nixon and Pat Nixon. The local reporter said the Nixons signed the celebrity board when they visited the campus in 1973. Mr. Ford in time came to the board and with his left hand holding a felt tipped pen signed "Jerry Ford" to the right of center. His signature is nearby those of Gene Roddenberry, creator of Star Trek, and Betty Anne Staton, a member of the Board of Regents.

The President shook more hands, said he was sorry to have to leave so soon, but was so required by his schedule makers, then walked quickly through several corridors of the motel, by the swimming pool, to his motorcade, parked in a back yard.

He arrived three minutes later at the Officer's Club, where he was greeted by bagpipe music. Mr. Ford told the pipers: "Thank you very much. It was great music." Shaking hands with people along the line, he passed through a room papered with Ford campaign posters and into the larger hot room where he met the PFC volunteers.

Nessen announced that Mr. Ford, while away from the press conference room for those few minutes, telephoned Mrs. Everett M. Dirksen for a three or four-minute conversation, "mostly just pleasantries." Mrs. Dirksen lives in the Orlando area.

George Watson - ABC

Larry O'Rourke - Philadelphia Bulletin

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