

The original documents are located in Box 48, folder “President - Personal Buildings, etc. Named After” of the Philip Buchen Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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1
President-
airport
renaming

November 25, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mildred Leonard
FROM: Phil Buchen

To avoid having multiple voices from the White House respond to Jimmy Van Atta's importuning, I did not return her telephone call.

I do want to alert you, however, that the President advised me informally that he would not object to a renaming of Kent County Airport in his honor. I talked only to Britt Gordon about this view of the President, and Britt advises that he would prefer appropriate action by the Kent County Board of Commissioners next fall rather than sooner. Reason: expanded airport was just rededicated with great ceremony on November 23, 1974, and this timing which was set before the election precluded efforts in regard to the name change which would have coincided with the rededication.

Thus, I think we have to keep the irrepressible Jimmy away from any premature awareness or action.

PWBuchen:ed



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 3, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: KEN LAZARUS

FROM: PHIL BUCHEN *P.*

Do you think this is something that we should support? Does the naming of the building require an act of Congress?

Attachment

Phoned J.C. and noted.

Call Eva -- tell her we
communicated support
informally to committee
cancel -- no more
needs to be done --
might mention to Griffin
if he sees him.

file.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 24, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR PHIL BUCHEN

FROM: BIRGE S. WATKINS *BSW*

JOHN W. BAILEY III, a friend from Grand Rapids, sent me a copy of his letter to Senator Griffin regarding a memorial to his grandfather, Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. He asked that I forward you a copy in the event you have a particular interest in his plans. As with requests of this nature, he would appreciate any help you could give him.

Enclosure



1199 County Road 641
Lake Leelanau, Michigan 49651

January 20, 1976.

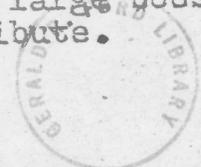
The Honorable Senator Robert Griffin
Room 353
Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Senator:

Please let me re-introduce myself so that you will understand the situation with which I'm involved. My Grandfather was the late Arthur H. Vandenberg. I met you last Fall at the Chamber of Commerce outing on Marion Island, and later gave you a book about my Grandfather at the Homestead. At the outing, we discussed ever so briefly the dedication at the University of Michigan and his value to the Country and its History. From this conversation I gathered that you are a fond admirer of the late Senator, and this is perhaps the reason why I am appealing to you for help.

I am presently in the beginning stages of further dedication to the lasting Memory of my Grandfather. Contact has been made with the Offices of the G.S.A. in Washington and Grand Rapids (as well as the Mayor's Office in G.R.) as to how to proceed in a more elaborate Memorial in Grand Rapids. I also have been in contact with the Chamber of Commerce and have received favorable comments on my ideas. My only conclusion for the easiest and most lasting Memorial is to ask you for help in guiding me in the job of naming the new Federal Building in Grand Rapids in his honor. It is my understanding that in order for a building to be named, it is essential that Congress approve of the measure. As you may know, the Federal Building is located at one end of Vandenberg Center, and since there is really no visual means of recognition in the Center, this would be a fantastic and fitting Memorial. If the building could be named in his honor and a gold plaque stating this fact could be put at the entrance, this certainly would be fitting for the Memory of someone who devoted his life unselfishly for the people of this Country.

It is my further understanding that the President may be arriving in Grand Rapids in May for a Bi-Centennial Celebration. If we could be honored by the President's attendance at a dedication ceremony at the same time, it would not only be a large boost for the Republican Party, but such a fantastic tribute.



Page 'Two

The Honorable Senator Robert Griffin

As you may gather, I'm not too sure where to turn at this point in time and really need contact with someone who will assist me in getting this project off the ground floor. I would be so grateful for any assistance that your office could give and therefore I'm appealing to you. I realize how much work this involves, and how busy you must be since your return from your trip, but I would appreciate anything that you could do to make this dream come true.

Please excuse any inconvenience. Thank you for your valuable time.

Very truly yours,

John W. Bailey, III

JWB:jf

Thanks Buzge for your help in this matter - Is there any way you could check up on whether or not the Senator received the letter and anything else that may be of interest.

See you at Aspen, hopefully!

fb



MRS. SIEGEL W. JUDD
747 SAN JOSE DRIVE, S. E.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506

March 26, 1976

Dear Bunny -

I hear you are in Florida - without the companions you had hoped to be with. So sorry for the Stahls.

Perhaps you can resolve a puzzle for me. You may have heard that the GR Council on World Affairs is planning to revive our former Vandenberg Memorial Lectures and to place his portrait in the new Federal Building - naturally in a secondary position with relation to Gerry's portrait.

We started this idea the year Vandenberg died and held two such lectures. Then somehow the idea died. At that time we aimed to place the portrait in the lobby of the Civic Auditorium - where people from all over the US might see it.

It appears that the portrait never did get hung there but instead in a tiny room known as the "Hospitality Room" where speakers meet their reception committees - never seen by the public.

Now that the Press and the Chamber of Commerce have named the Civic the "George W. Welsh Auditorium" - and the Press never mentions the Civic without the Welsh prefix - there is a HUGE portrait of Welsh in the lobby. It is my contention, that although V's portrait should take second place to that of the President - it should never take second place to the mayor - let alone GWW!

Now the Council on World Affairs finds there are other self-starting movements to honor Vandenberg this Bicentennial Year. His own church - Park - has plans. The City Bi-centennial Committee has plans - and even Jib Sands - Betty Vandenberg's son has plans.

Jib wants to name the Federal Building the Vandenberg Building. On his own he wrote Griffin but got no satisfaction. Then the other day, Pellessier of the Press informed Marie there were plans afoot to name it the Ford Building.

Let me be clear - the naming of the building is not a part of the Council's program. We are not promoting it and it makes no difference to us. But among other rumors Marie Cady has heard is that Gerry had turned down the idea of naming it for him. Personally I think his name is by far the most appropriate.

I just want to know the facts so we - the Council - won't get entangled: has the idea been presented to Gerry? And if so, what is his attitude?

Thanks a lot, *Marie Cady*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1976

*I had asked
Dottie if they
were aware
of this*

Mildred --

Eva would like to learn if we know anything about the President's position on renaming the Federal Building in GR in his honor-- has he actually turned down the idea of naming it for him?

Eva has not asked Mr. Buchen about this but will do so. She rather felt that possibly Mrs. Buchen to whom the attached letter is written would have asked Mr. Buchen about it.

Dottie

*Walter - I haven't heard anything
about the Federal Building - only Kent Co.
Airpark -- which he didn't want but guess
they're doing it anyway -*



Friday 4/2/76

10:05 Attached is a copy of a letter Dorothy Judd sent to Mrs. Buchen -- Mrs. B wants to reply and let her know whether in fact President Ford had turned down the idea of naming the Federal Building for him.

I checked with Dotty Cavanaugh and she has not heard that the President had turned it down -- doesn't remember seeing anything on it. She will check a couple of people who are close to the President and let us know.

In the meantime, Ken had been checking on the letter which Birge sent you written to Sen. Griffin by John Bailey -- also attached -- Ken didn't answer the question "Does the naming of the building require an act of Congress?"

Do you want me to check with him further on this or have you discussed it with him?

Is there anyone else I should check with to see if the President turned down the idea of naming the Federal building after him?



4:05 p.m.

Thursday, April 8, 1976

I spoke with Mrs. Judd about naming the Federal Building after the President. She advises that she had heard that he wished not to, but was glad to get definite word from you.

Also, she was only suggesting that the President might want to make the speech in Chicago. I am having the Scheduling Office check it out, but she advises that she doesn't need a reply.



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WASHINGTON

February 24, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR PHIL BUCHEN

FROM: BIRGE S. WATKINS 

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Enclosure



January 20, 1976.

The Honorable Senator Robert
Room 353
Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Senator:

Please let me re-introduce my
the situation with which I'm
the late Arthur H. Vandenberg,
Chamber of Commerce outing on
you a book about my Grandfather
outing, we discussed ever so
University of Michigan and his
History. From this conversati
fond admirer of the late Senat
reason why I am appealing to

I am presently in the beginning
the lasting Memory of my Grand
with the Offices of the G.S.A.
(as well as the Mayor's Office
a more elaborate Memorial in
contact with the Chamber of
comments on my ideas. My out
most lasting Memorial is to
the job of naming the new
his honor. It is my understand
to be named, it is essential
measure. As you may know,
one end of Vandenberg Center
visual means of recognizing
fantastic and fitting Memor
named in his honor and
put at the entrance, this
Memory of someone who
people of this Country.

It is my further understand
in Grand Rapids in
could be honored by
ceremony at the same
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The Honorable Senator Robert Griffin

As you may gather, I'm not too sure where to turn at this point in time and really need contact with someone who will assist me in getting this project off the ground floor. I would be so grateful for any assistance that your office could give and therefore I'm appealing to you. I realize how much work this involves, and how busy you must be since your return from your trip, but I would appreciate anything that you could do to make this dream come true.

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See you at Aspen, hopefully!

fb



Monday 4/12/76

Republican
Women's
Club of
Kent County

4:20 Gail McFarland went home sick.
George TerHorst (of all people) is in her office
and called back to let us know.

(616) 459-0141



Monday 4/12/76

2:00 Gail McFarland called from the Republican
National Headquarters in Grand Rapids.

(616) 459-0141

She is also a member of the Republican Women's
Club of Kent County. They are in the process of
hoping to change the name of the club to the
Gerald R. Ford Republican Women's Club.

(Their intention was to contact the President after
it had been accomplished and telling him they
had changed the name of the club, but wanted to
be sure they were not doing anything illegal.)

