

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Like to know how many hours are left until graduation?"

Former presidents seek power roles

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — Richard M. Nixon was 61 when left the White House. Gerald R. Ford was 63; Jimmy Carter, 56. They had been given unique educations, at public expense, in domestic and foreign affairs. They were far from being washed up mentally or physically. But the American system provided no automatic or natural roles for them to play.

They were, in theory, the titular leaders of their parties. But Nixon was disgraced by his Watergate disgrace and the other two were diminished in influence by their defeats. Besides, in the shapeless cloak of opposition party politics, the "titular leader" is not much more than an empty sleeve.

So they have busied themselves with memoir-writing, lecturing, library-and-museum-building, kibitzing gratuitously and intervening awkwardly on political and governmental matters.

And, like a lot of other retirees, they have time to attend funerals.

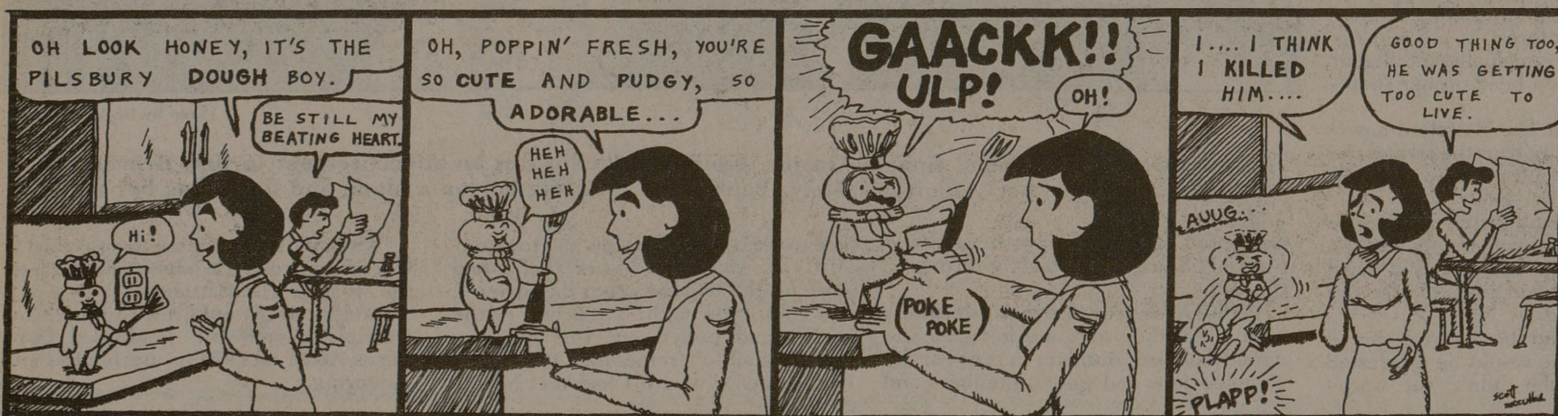
Nixon and Ford came out of retirement to join Carter at Hubert Humphrey's funeral in 1978. Nixon, Ford and Carter joined hands to represent Ronald Reagan and the country at the funeral of Anwar Sadat.

The latest disinterment of these prematurely buried treasures produced more than a historic photograph — apparently unique in our history — of four Presidents at the White House. It produced real news, as Carter and Ford conducted a joint interview en route home from Cairo that suggested an American diplomatic initiative to break the deadlock on the Palestinian issue by opening direct talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Since both presidents had renounced while in office the very course of action they now found desirable, their views had an understandable shock effect. While Reagan immediately reaffirmed what had been — until the Air Force One interview — the Ford-Carter policy, there is a clear sense that options are now open which were previously closed.

Later in the week, Carter and Ford made common cause again in support of Reagan's embattled proposal for sale of AWACS aerial-surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia. That made it seem all the more plausible that they were running interference for the successor they had both, at various times, contested for office.

Warped



Student says statistics invalid

Editor:

The criticisms directed against Texas A&M University by Noe Gutierrez in his Reader's Forum article of October 19 are extreme. Though Texas A&M certainly has room for improvement, it is hardly "a giant madhouse with its pervasive atmosphere of insanity governing it." But at least Gutierrez has expressed his opinions as what they are — his opinions.

Buzz Steiner, in his reply to Gutierrez's vituperations, also states his personal opinions. But he tries to support his opinions with statistics generated by Texas A&M's corps of public relations flaks, information that is simply not true.

First, we are informed that Texas A&M's colleges of agriculture and engineering "have been internationally recognized for decades." What does this mean? Are you internationally recognized if someone in Borneo or Trinidad-Tobago has heard of you? A better indication of the standing of the College of Engineering would be last year's ranking of U.S. engineering schools by the Chronicle of Higher Education: Texas A&M was tied for 49th through 50th places with Oklahoma State and Drexel.

Second, we are told that "Texas A&M draws more National Merit Scholars than any other state-supported school in the Southwest." This should not be surprising; we are the second largest school in the Southwest. What is surprising, and therefore not mentioned, is that miniscule Rice

Reader's Forum

has more National Merit Scholars than Texas A&M.

And third, we are notified that Texas A&M's average SAT score is "higher than the average score at any other state-supported school in the Southwest." This is true only if you exclude You-Know-Who from your list; yes, the pernicious little Teasips have an average composite SAT of 1,080, 51 points higher than Texas A&M's "average" of 1,029. Rice, SMU, and the University of Texas at Dallas also have higher test scores than Texas A&M.

Texas A&M's scores would be even lower if this "average" were computed properly, that is by averaging the scores of all Texas A&M students. Instead, the scores of athletes and special admissions are not used. Special admissions are students who do not score 800 or above on the SAT, but they are still students at Texas A&M. Why aren't their scores averaged in? Do I have to tell you everything?

As an aid for those who will doubtless write The Battalion's beleaguered editor vit-

riolic letters on this issue but who don't care to research, I provide free, gratis, and nothing the following statistics on several internationally recognized universities. The numbers following each school's name are: first, the percentage of the student body that scored over 600 on the SAT verbal; second, the percentage of the student body that scored higher than 600 on the SAT mathematical. Case Western, 40 percent, 74 percent; Cornell, 50 percent, 7 percent; MIT, 71 percent, 96 percent; Hesseleer Polytechnic, 26 percent, 100 percent; Cal Tech, 78 percent, 100 percent; Texas A&M University, 10 percent, 28 percent; and Prairie View A&M, 0 percent, 0 percent. As you can see, what was formerly known as the Normal School for Colored Teachers gives the Aggies a big lift in the numbers game.

For those who think I have been biased and only compared the University with the world's best schools and one of the worst, I must now concede that Texas A&M compares very favorably in its SAT scores with Tuskegee Institute (20 percent and 5 percent) and the University of Puget Sound (15 percent and 23 percent).

Aggie spirit and traditions are one thing but don't imagine the school to be more than it is: a competent business and technical school with a slightly better than average student body.

Tim Sage
Class of '81

It's your turn

Post-game yell practice a problem

Editor:

Saturday I had the opportunity to go to Waco to see the fighting Texas Aggie football team play. I was pleased with the performance of the team, even though we were outscored.

We all know that after being outscored, we hold yell practice in the stands. It should also occur to most of us that a winning team's band, in this case the Baylor band, will play for a few minutes after the game is over. This is when a conflict occurred.

The yell leaders, realizing that the Baylor band was going to play for a few minutes after the game, decided to wait on the practice until the band had finished. This would have been the most logical and courteous thing to do. It would have been pretty stupid to try to out-yell the band, and it also would have been rude. With all this in mind, there were still people who knew better.

I'm talking about the people who stood and yelled at the yell leaders to forget the band and commence yell practice. They called the yell leaders names, and some even suggested holding yell leader elections right there. If it had been just a handful, I could have ignored them. I realize there was a lot of tension, fatigue and possible even anger, but how could a few minutes of waiting possible inconvenience someone to the point of anger and childish remarks?

If all of these people would have waited a few minutes, they would have found that the band was going to leave. But, instead, they showed their ignorance. They embarrassed me and my friends.

Next time, let's just sit tight and wait our turn. We are some of the finest people found anywhere, but other schools deserve an opportunity to give their ovation. Let's not try to steal their thunder with our impatience. After all, wouldn't we want the same?

Charles McBride
Class of '85

ment, we were so impressed we felt response was necessary. We seek not to argue but to address.

The covenant explains further: 1) As the foundation of national security, nuclear weapons are idolatrous. As a method of defense, they are suicidal. To believe that nuclear weapons can solve international problems is the greatest illusion and the height of naivete.

2) The threatened nuclear annihilation of whole populations in the name of national security is an evil we can no longer accept. At stake is whether we trust in God or the bomb. We can no longer confess Jesus as Lord and depend on nuclear weapons to save us. Conversion in our day must include turning away from nuclear weapons as we turn to Jesus Christ.

3) The building and threatened use of nuclear weapons is a sin — against God, God's creatures, and God's creation. There is no theology or doctrine in the traditions of the church that could ever justify nuclear war. Whether one begins with pacifism or with the just war doctrine, nuclear weapons are morally unacceptable.

Let us join this covenant. Let us join the 250,000 people who gathered in Bonn, West Germany to call for a nuclear-free Europe, a disarmed NATO. Let us sanctify life, demanding an end to this folly and madness and waste. And let us pray for peace.

Doug Wenzel '81
Jack Seifert '82

Bicyclists a problem

Editor:

I resent the way bicyclists race around campus, weaving in and out among de-

fenseless pedestrians. Have you ever been plowed down by a biker while you were walking across campus? I have had several close encounters and have seen many others. How many people have been injured already? If, one, that's too many. It doesn't seem to work; maybe action will be taken.

So the next time you are walking and a biker buzzes by, tell him what could happen if you kicked his front wheel out from under him while he is riding at cruising speed. And if he doesn't listen, kick it.

Sally Stahl
Class of '81

Off campus cutting crew

Editor:

This is an open letter to all off-campus students. We need your help with Bonfire. This year, we have had more interest and participation in organizing an off-campus cutting crew. Throughout September and October, Off Campus Aggies sponsored Bonfire meetings in the various apartment complexes and on campus. The enthusiasm indicated that off-campus students have LOTS of Aggie Spirit.

Here's your chance. This Saturday and Sunday are designated as Civilian Cutting Weekend. Cutting classes will be held at cards issued at the site. Interested women can either help with refreshments or join our women's cutting crew.

We represent the largest student group. Be at Duncan Dining Hall at 8 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Let's show the on-campus students and the Corps that we have the burning desire to beat the hell out of t.u.!!!

Bruce Martin
Vice President
Off Campus Aggies

End to nukes wanted

Editor:

In the name of God, let us abolish nuclear weapons. This is a statement of the New Abolitionist Covenant. It means exactly what it says. After learning of this move-

By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications. Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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