



Fall 1986

All In Fun, Symposium Plays To Rave Reviews

Appropriately, "**Humor and the Presidency**" was opened by a veteran political campaigner and presidential contender who also lays claim to being a comic. Panel moderator Pat Paulsen, Nixon's erstwhile opponent in 1972, got the symposium rolling by intoning: "*Nothing can stand the assault of humor.*" He then sought to prove it by taking verbal swipes at Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan among others. Paulsen did not spare his host either. He broadsided the former president by asking rhetorically, "*Did Gerald Ford work at being a pratfall artist or was it a gift from God?*"

Thus began the two day Museum conference that brought together politicians, satirists, comics, and cartoonists to consider the role of wit in the presidency. It was all good-natured fun but with a serious intent. The participants and an audience of 200 persons, all the auditorium would allow, learned that humor, deftly applied, can be a potent means of political communication and persuasion. But the sober moments soon gave way to irreverence and a lot of laughs. Through it all, the former president, who was often on the receiving end, responded with grace and good spirits, prompting Chevy Chase to remark, "*You're certainly a good sport, I must say.*"

Thursday's three sessions were on the history of humor in the White House, the cartoonist's perception of the presidency, and presidents remembered, in fun.

The morning program with Bob Orben, Gerald Gardner and others took an earnest look at past presidential humor but the ever vigilant Paulsen didn't let the serious stuff get out of hand. As moderator he felt free to needle the experts with such cosmic matters as: "*What president had the funniest family? If you're a dull president, is it important to have a funny vice president?*"

The first afternoon session, "**The Cartoonists: What Would They Do Without the Presidency?**", brought together seven of the nation's best known car-

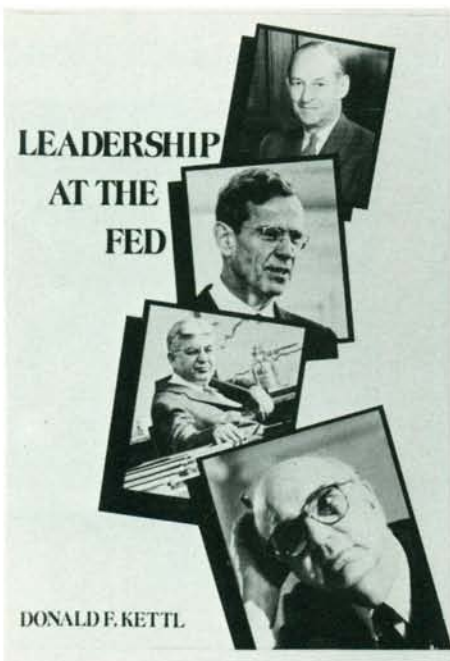


Chevy Chase and President Ford

toonists. Their moderator, Art Buchwald, opened the proceedings with the announcement that all had voluntarily submitted to urinalysis beforehand. Buchwald did not disclose the results, however. The cartoonists described their work, did some sketches, and generally complained that their targets are rarely offended anymore. "*It's virtually impossible to insult anybody,*" huffed Berke Breathed, creator of the syndicated strip **Bloom County**. "*I try all the time. But then the subjects call and ask for the original, autographed, of course.*"

Mark Russell led panelists in the day's final seminar, "**The Presidents and Would-be Presidents Speak,**" as they celebrated the lighter side of funny presidents. Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan received much of the attention. Several not-so-funny presidents were remembered too. Jerry Warren, deputy press secretary to Nixon and Ford, recounted President Nixon's lack of humor and his unease at small talk. By way of illustration, he told the story of the time Nixon was riding in a motorcade, and ahead an escort policeman

continued



The Library has received a copy of **Leadership at the Fed**, published by Yale University Press. In 1982 the author, Professor Donald Kettl of the University of Virginia, was awarded the Foundation's first research grant.

In tracing the growth of the Federal Reserve, Kettl argues that its present independence and power is largely attributable to skillful leadership. His study is primarily an account of the Fed's four most effective chairmen, Marriner Eccles, William McChesney Martin, Arthur Burns, and Paul Volker.

Studying the Ford Administration

This semester the University of Michigan's History faculty is offering a one term course that considers the programs and policies of the Ford administration. According to Don Wilson, the course director, twenty-eight undergraduates signed up, but *"with regret we decided to close the enrollment at seventeen, the number I feel is the maximum for a seminar."*

Course readings include *A Time to Heal*, Ford's autobiography, and James Reichley's *Conservatives in an Age of Change*. Besides lectures and an exam, students will prepare a research paper based on the archival holdings of the Library. Staff archivists Dennis Daellenbach, Dave Horrocks, and Bill McNitt will help the students learn the techniques of archiving.

Library to Host PBS Program on the Constitution

In observance of the bicentennial of the Constitution, the Ford Library will be the site of the seminar, **"The Constitution and the Presidency,"** February 5, 1987. Three of the seminar's five segments will take place at the Library and be taped for television, according to Fred Friendly, the producer. Friendly expects to have the series ready for transmission on PBS in May.

Mr. Ford will participate in two segments, one on foreign policy and terrorism and one on fiscal decision-making and separation of powers. The program format employs a hypothetical situation as a means of raising and debating issues. A moderator and from fifteen to eighteen discussants take part in each segment. Regrettably, there will be very limited seating for observers because of the space needed for television crews and equipment.

Three years ago the former president was a discussant in the first Constitution program, *"The Constitution: That Delicate Balance,"* also produced by Friendly for PBS, and held in Philadelphia. Among those appearing with Mr. Ford were Foundation Board members Phil Buchen and Brent Scowcroft.

On Friday, February 6, the day following the Constitution program, the Gerald Ford Foundation, the Library,



Fred Friendly

and the University of Michigan Law School will present a law seminar which will focus on the Office of Legal Counsel and its role in presidential decisions. The planning team for both programs includes Foundation Board members Phil Buchen, George Grassmuck, and Tom Kauper, and Director Don Wilson.

Staff Changes

William K. Jones, a National Archives employee for the past 18 years and curator of the Museum since 1980, has accepted a position with the United States Information Agency. "Will" Jones will be moving to Washington where he will develop a museum program for the agency's overseas installations. In the wake of his departure, Director Don Wilson will move to Grand Rapids temporarily. *"The next several years will be ones of further growth and transition,"* Wilson said, *"and I want to be at the Museum during the time it takes to select and orient a new curator.* While Wilson will continue to have overall responsibility for both institutions, Deputy Director Bill Stewart will be in charge of day to day operations at the Library.



Don Wilson

Annual Meeting

As always, the annual Foundation meeting in Washington was a well-attended event as 28 trustees joined President Ford in welcoming new board member Fredrik G.H. Meijer. A Grand Rapids business and civic leader, Fred Meijer was an active member of the Ford Commemorative Committee, the group most closely associated with Museum fundraising and construction.

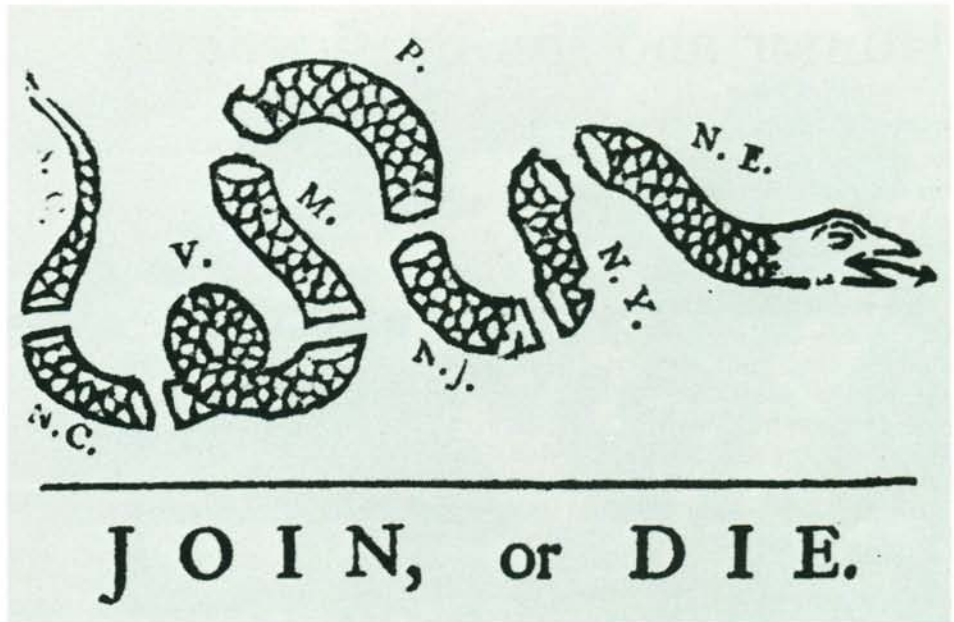
In other business, it was proposed by Mr. Ford and approved by the Board that the Foundation establish two annual journalism awards of \$5000 each for the best works on the presidency and national defense. Robert Hooker, cochair of the Development Committee, announced that a new endowment campaign is in the planning stage and will get underway in the near future.

The Foundation's officers were reelected: Martin J. Allen, Jr., chairman; John G. Ford, vice chairman; George Grassmuck, secretary; and Harold Davidson, treasurer. Committee chairmen for 1986-87 are: Martin J. Allen, Jr. (executive), Harold Davidson (finance), Robert Hooker and Harry Towsley (development), Philip Buchen (program), Brent Scowcroft (awards), Thomas Kauper (grant screening), and Jordan Sheperd (Museum liaison).

Following the meeting, former members of the Ford administration joined the trustees for dinner. An alumnus of the Ford administration, Secretary of the Treasury James Baker, spoke after dinner.



Frederik Meijer



The first American political cartoon, Ben Franklin, 1754.

Museum Exhibit Lampoons the Politicos

Lyn Nofziger, former aide to President Reagan, once remarked that cartoonists are not paid to be nice. The Museum's newly-installed and aptly-titled exhibit, "Without Mercy," provides proof of Nofziger's contention. A visual record of the evolution of the political cartoon in America, "Without Mercy" suggests the political cartoonist is happiest when skewering those in authority, especially politicians.

Opened by President Ford on the occasion of the Humor Conference, the exhibit is arranged in three parts, one of which features 100 original caricatures of Mr. Ford done while he was in office. The second segment is devoted to representative works of seven nationally known artists. After viewing the creations of Paul Conrad, Jeff MacNelly, Pat Oliphant, and Paul Szep, an exhibit goer offered the observation that it is the political cartoonist not the editorial writer who makes sense of current events.

In America the political cartoon dates to Ben Franklin who drew the first one in 1754 urging the colonists to unite in the French and Indian War. For the most part, our early cartoonists were an ineffective lot until the appearance of Thomas Nast in the years following the Civil War. The final exhibit segment details the contributions of Nast, originator of the modern political cartoon and creator of the symbols that still remain the emblem of our major political parties.

"Without Mercy" will remain on view through next spring.

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Humor and the Presidency

continued

flipped from his motorcycle, breaking an arm and a leg. Nixon jumped out of his car, hurried to the policeman, leaned over and, trying to comfort the downed officer, asked: "How do you like your job?"

The wrap-up session Friday morning, which was chaired by Rep. Richard Cheney, was devoted to "Inside Stories," a collection of tales and reminiscences from White House chiefs of staff Cheney and Don Rumsfeld and others once close to the action. Of all the intriguing revelations the best story came from Mr. Ford himself. The most memorable line from his remarks upon assuming the presidency, he confided, very nearly ended up on the cutting room floor. As he worked with speechwriter Robert Hartmann on the speech he felt that "our long national nightmare is over" did not fit and he directed that it be deleted. Hartmann shot back that if the line went so would he. Both stayed.

It was left to comedian Don Penny to offer a benediction of sorts: "The politicians were every bit as funny — sometimes more so — than the professional comedians."

Art Buchwald with cartoonists Jeff MacNelly, Berke Breathed, and Draper Hill.



Art Buchwald, Mark Russell, Chevy Chase, and the President on Good Morning America.

ABC, NBC, and CBS covered the symposium on their September 18 morning programs, with David Hartman and ABC devoting an entire segment to an interview with President Ford, Art Buchwald, Chevy Chase, and Mark Russell. The other networks interviewed Ford and Chase. Print coverage was equally impressive as the conference received national attention, including the front page of the *New York Times*,

Detroit Free Press, *Detroit News*, the *Grand Rapids Press*, and major magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek* and *People*.

All the sessions, dinner and gala were filmed by Home Box Office. According to Bob Barrett, who organized the program and entertainment, HBO will edit the proceedings for a special to be aired on the pay television network late this year. Check television listings.



"Boyhood Chums"

Art Buchwald startled the audience when he revealed that he and Jerry Ford were boyhood chums in Grand Rapids. They played as children on the banks of the Grand and attended South High together, where their friendship was firmly forged on the gridiron. Now he desperately wanted to set the record aright, Buchwald confided. In those Depression days, high school football equipment was scarce and there was only one helmet between the two of them. Art unselfishly insisted that his pal Jerry take it. Finally, Buchwald could now unburden himself. It was he, not Jerry, who had played without a helmet.



Charles Manatt, Lyn Nofziger, Dick Cheney, Liz Carpenter



A surprise visit by "President Reagan," a/k/a Jim Morris, Washington comedian, who closed the show, ah, symposium with a bang.

The Cartoonists: What Would They Do Without The Presidency?



Mike Peters



Jeff MacNelly



Mark Russell with Lou Cannon and Ron Nessen

"I would like to see similar symposium year at the Jimmy Carter Library — the Amoco station." Mark Russell

"I've been asked why do I trade it for humanitarian reasons, limousines, and the girls? Thank you." Pat Paulsen



David Kennerly and Susan Ford Vance



Pat Oliphant

*from time to time. Maybe next
they can get all those people in*

*l around the country talking politics. Is
community spirit or for the money, the
answers are no, no, yes, yes, yes."*



*Susan Ford Vance, Betty Ford, President Ford
Grand Rapids Press*



*Pat Paulsen and Professor Arthur Dudden of
Bryn Mawr*

Banquet and Gala to Benefit Foundation

Thursday evening 350 guests joined Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill at a black tie dinner to honor the participants. Proceeds will help support the activities of the Gerald Ford Foundation. Participants and guests also attended two luncheons and a breakfast while in Grand Rapids. The opening breakfast featured a key-note address by Edward Bennett Williams. The fine hospitality earned kudos for Peter Secchia, chairman of the conference, and his committee.

Perhaps the high spot of the gathering, certainly for the public who attended, was the entertainment gala in DeVos Hall of the Grand Center. The lineup was impressive: Art Buchwald, Chevy Chase, Gerald Ford, Robert Klein, Pat Paulsen, Mort Sahl, Susan Ford Vance, Capitol Steps, and the Army Chorus and Herald Trumpets. Plus "Tip" O'Neill singing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" to Betty Ford while Mark Russell played the piano. Proceeds from the ticket sales and programming rights will go to the Foundation.

*Photo courtesy
Grand Rapids Press*



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