

A Salute in Tribute to the

By Dorothy McCardle

Reprinted from yesterday's late editions

President Nixon drew a standing ovation Thursday night as he made a surprise appearance at a dinner honoring his wife, Pat, as one of Nevada's outstanding women of the century.

The President strode onto the stage of the Sheraton-Park Hotel ballroom, looking fit and flashing his famous V-for-victory sign. He took his place at the lectern for a 10-minute speech before the start of the dinner given by the Nevada State Society.

The ebullient President, beset by problems ranging from Watergate to the Mideast and the energy crisis, provided no evidence for critics who charge he is showing signs of stress.

He exhibited both humor and determination.

"You'll have to excuse me for being late," Mr. Nixon told the audience of 700, a majority of whom were Democrats. "I could only drive 50 miles an hour. And I have to get back to the White House and finish my work before they turn the lights off."

A few groans were overwhelmed by laughter.

Later in his speech, a tribute to his wife, stressing the theme of the "strength in adversity" that she had given him, the President said his wife had much the same spirit as his Quaker mother.

His mother, Mr. Nixon recalled, had just undergone a serious operation for a terminal illness. "Mother, don't you give up," I told her. She got up on an elbow and said to me, 'Richard, don't you ever give up.' And I don't intend to give up."

Mr. Nixon also recalled his visit to Caracas, Venezuela, in 1958, when he was

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First Lady



United Press International

Pat Nixon joins the crowd in applauding President Nixon's surprise visit to the Nevada State Society's dinner in Mrs. Nixon's honor.

Vice President.

Their motorcade was stoned and mobbed. An aide "told me later," the President said, "that she (Mrs. Nixon) was the coolest person in the car . . . the bravest woman I ever saw in my life."

Though Mr. Nixon did not mention it, the dinner also represented a moment of family unity. Also at the head table were his daughter Julie and her husband, Dwight David Eisenhower.

After saluting his wife, Pat, born 60 years ago in Ely, Nev., Mr. Nixon also praised two other Nevada women being honored at the dinner—Helen Delich Bentley, chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, and Eva B. Adams, former director of the U.S. Mint.

"The test of the Nevada ladies," Mr. Nixon declared, "is when the going is tough they are at their very best."

Mr. Nixon looked up and down the long head table

and ticked off the names: Sen. John McClellan (D-Ark.), Sen. Russell Long (D-La.), Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), Sens. Alan Bible and Howard W. Cannon of Nevada, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Caspar Weinberger and, "maybe a bit premature, Vice President and Mrs. Gerald Ford."

Before we left the White House Julie dropped a hint that he might do this," Mrs. Nixon told the audience after her husband departed.

"This is the sort of thing he does for his family."

On her way out Mrs. Nixon and David and Julie Eisenhower were stopped constantly by strangers in the hotel who wanted to shake their hands. Women rushed up to Mrs. Nixon, patted her shoulder and expressed their faith in her husband. There was a round of applause from people in the lobby as she went out the door in the rain to return to the White House.