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Shock After Surgery

Nixon Says Pat Saved His Life

New York

In a magazine interview, former President Nixon gives his wife, Pat, credit for saving his life when he was desperately ill last October.

In the interview published by McCall's magazine in its May issue, Mr. Nixon said "when I came out of shock, and I'm told I was more dead than alive, Pat was there . . ."

Mr. Nixon was hospitalized in Long Beach last October 23 for treatment of phlebitis. A blood clot was discovered in his left leg and he underwent urgent surgery October 29.

He went into shock following the operation and was on the critical list at Memorial Hospital Medical Center for six days. His doctor, John Langren, said at the time he had been near death.

"In the weeks after that, if it hadn't been for her, I think it's her immense capacity to comfort and encourage that pulled me through," Mr. Nixon said.

"I doubt if I would have made it without her. Her love, her strength, her constant reassurance, her faith in me as a human being and a husband led me out of the depths."

Pat Nixon was quoted as saying, "Except for the grace of God and the doctors, he would have died."

The former first lady added, "I love my husband, I believe in him and I think he has been a great president. Nothing has changed that.

"Like everyone else, he

has probably made mistakes — no one is infallible. But he has done many good things for our country and the world."

Summing up for the magazine, Mr. Nixon said, "The best decision I ever made

was choosing Pat to be my wife, my partner in life. I've had prestige, power and even, at times, some money. Those things come and go — as they have with me.

"But Pat has stood by my side during good and bad times alike. What more could any man ask?"

Reporter Trude B. Feldman, who visited Mr. Nixon's home, said Mrs. Nixon handles the special

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diet the former president requires.

"She hovers over me to make sure I eat enough," Mr. Nixon said. "Even when I suspect she's not hungry herself, she'll sit down and eat with me as an inducement to get me to eat more."

Miss Feldman said the presidential trappings are gone from their home. There is a volleyball net on what used to be the helicopter pad and weeds growing on the courses.

She said that at and Richard Nixon are closer today than ever before. They are spending more time together, eating meals together and swimming daily in the pool. Occasionally they watch a ball game together.

"I'm getting to be quite an expert," Mrs. Nixon said. "I even have my favorite players and teams now."

Associated Press