

## A Nixon Phone Call

By Nancy Collins

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Though he wasn't there in person, the presence of former President Nixon was felt Tuesday night at a retirement dinner for Nebraska Sen. Carl Curtis at the Mayflower Hotel. Curtis, elected to the House in 1938 and to the Senate in 1954, was, of course, one of Nixon's strongest supporters throughout his Watergate troubles.

And co-chairing the event was another strong Nixon backer, Rabbi Baruch Korff.

So it was not unexpected that Nixon should talk via telephone from California with Curtis, who has announced he is not seeking reelection. Though there were some initial static problems, Nixon could be heard congratulating the 300 guests for "cutting through the snow to honor Carl Curtis. I only wish I could be there with you."

Continued Nixon: "I've known this man for 30 years and he is a man of very high morals, very great principles.

"Putting it in the vernacular," he

said, "Carl Curtis has guts galore." Then he admonished the guests to "have your skis on when you go home."

The dinner was sponsored by 10 groups, including the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and the Gun Owners of America. Among the guests were at least 10 senators, a number of representatives and Anna Chennault, a Republican socialite.

When they stepped up to the podium, both Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and former Rep. Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, once a Democratic power, drew standing ovations.

"I couldn't turn down coming here tonight," said Mills, "because I've always wondered what it would be like to speak to a Republican convention."

Goldwater told the crowd: "The other night at the State of the Union address—if you can call it that—I was sitting with my son Barry, who as you know is a congressman from California.

"After it was over, he asked me what I thought of it. I said, 'Son, I made the same damn speech in 1964 and got beat.'"