

*The In (Fighting),
Out (Bursts),
Up (Swings),
Down (Slides)
And Other Times of
R. T. Hartmann,
Presidential
Adviser*

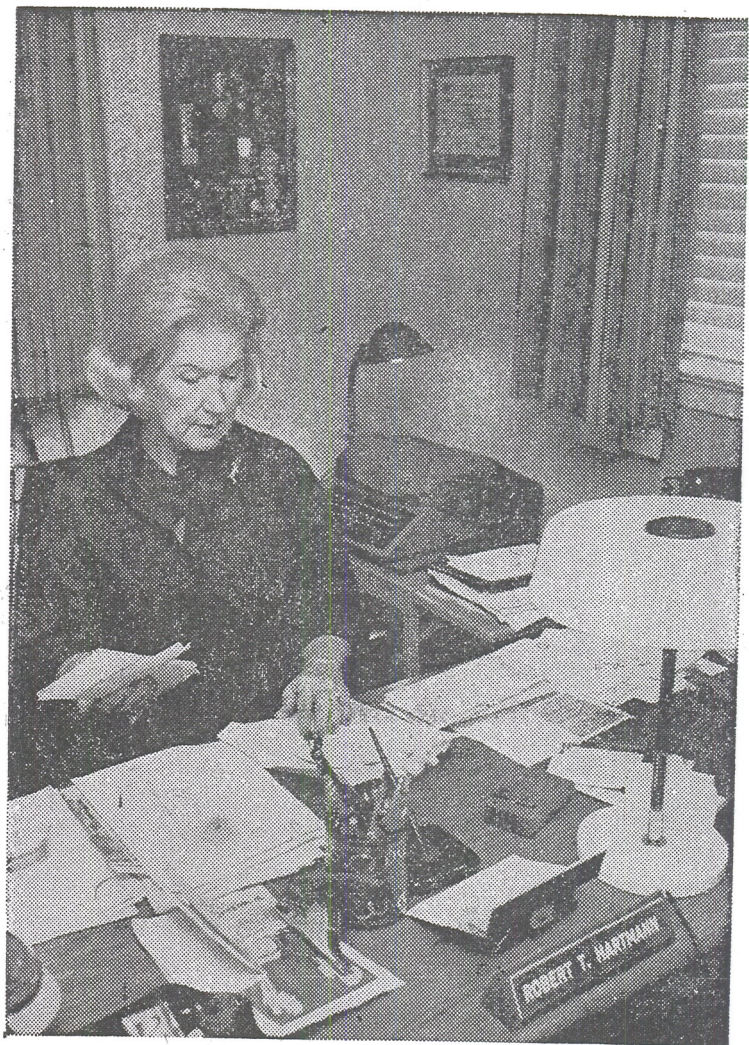
By Sally Quinn

A short, slightly pudgy, flushed man with white, wavy hair appears at the top of the steps of the International Club. He is wearing an enormous "WIN" button. His blonde wife, in ultra suede, gets up from the bench to greet him. A photographer approaches.

She reaches over and straightens his tie, brushes off his shoulders, fluffs up his foulard, and smooths his hair. "Now smile," she tells him, as she turns smiling toward the photographer. Then, as her watchful eye catches a glimpse of his middle, her smile freezes. "Hold in your stomach," she chides him. "Where?" he asks. "There," she says firmly, punching a finger deep in the fat folds of his stomach so that he bends over slightly.

"Is my good side showing?" he asks a photographer. "I certainly haven't seen it in a while," she croons.

"Bob Hartmann," says former White House press



By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

secretary Gerald terHorst, "in terms of transference of power in the White House, has got to be No. 1."

Bob Hartmann is probably the man closest to Gerald Ford and therefore, in Washington parlance, the second most important man in Washington.

As someone who personally dislikes Hartmann has grudgingly admitted, "He's the only guy in the White House who has either the guts or the clout to walk into the Oval Office and say 'Mr. President, you blew it.'"

Hartmann himself describes his access to the President as "sometimes I'll barge in. Usually there's a certain time each day set aside. Sometimes he'll holler for me, but if, in my judgment, I need to know an answer . . . I'll get it."

He maintains almost complete access to the President, and access, after all, is everything.

Access is power. The person who can get in to see the President can get across his side of the story, his point of view, his attitudes and values.

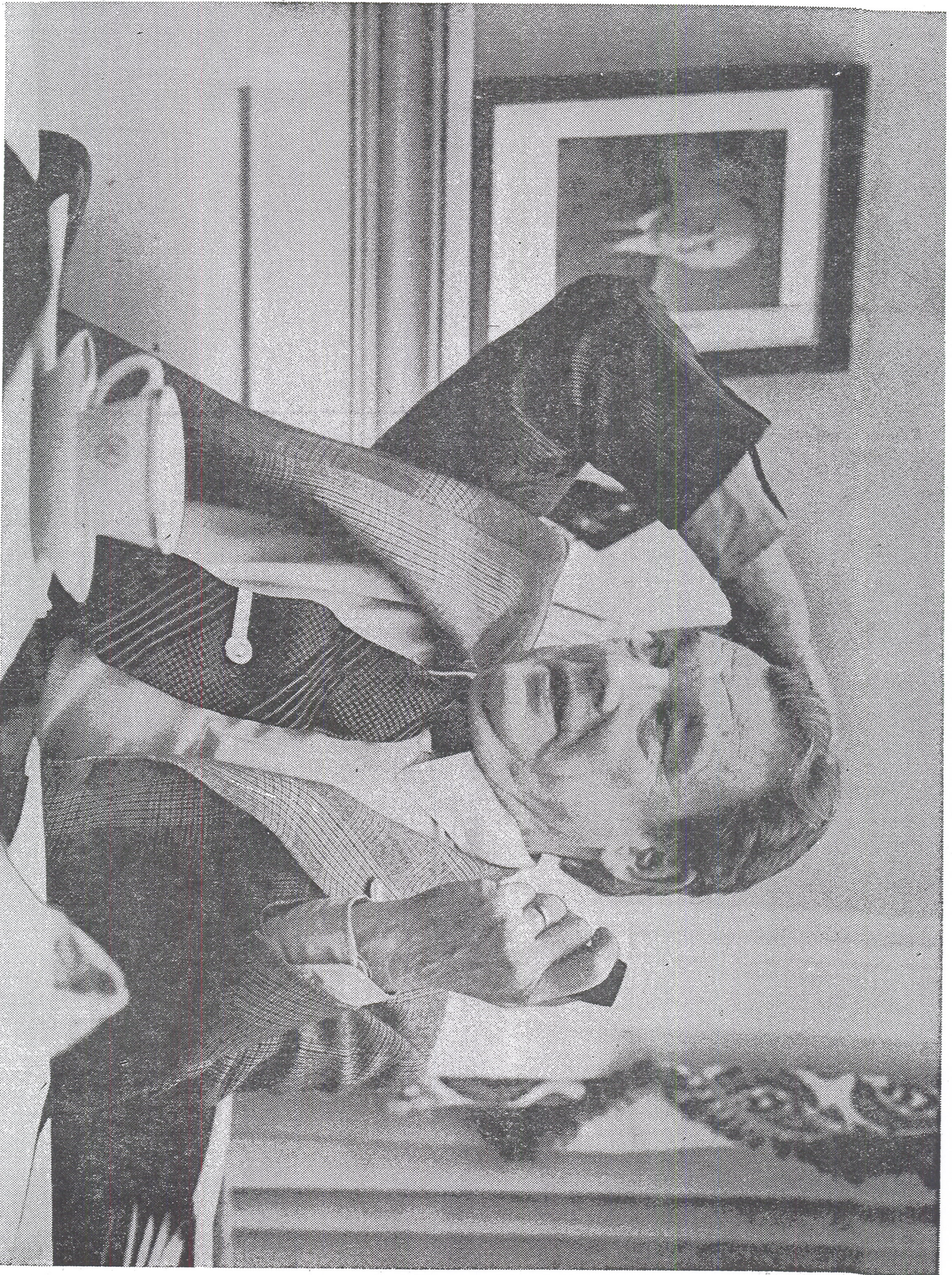
The President is the source of power. Only he can take the final actions, make the final decisions. To influence him to act can only be done by talking to him directly. That is why there were so few powerful men in the Nixon administration. Because nobody had access.

A Cabinet post is only as important as the access the Cabinet officer has to the Oval Office. William Rogers, as Secretary of State, had little access and the State Department declined in importance. Henry Kissinger has had total access. And the State Department is now the most important department.

His name is Robert Trowbridge Hartmann (it used to be von Hartmann but somebody in the family dropped the von).

He is a Stanford University graduate, former Wash-

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Presidential counselor Robert T. Hartmann "If they called me weak and flaccid, I'd be upset. But when they call me tough and abrasive, I'm not upset."
Robert Hartmann, left, behind her husband's desk: "Oh, I've never heard him hurt anyone's feelings."

By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

HARTMANN, From LI

ington bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times, former legislative assistant to Minority Leader Rep. Gerald Ford, former minority sergeant at arms for the House of Representatives, current Counselor to the President of the United States, speechwriter and political adviser to the President. His age? "How many varieties does Heinz have?" he will ask.

Bob Hartmann may have more enemies than any other man in Washington. It's hard to find anybody who, once safely "on background," won't have something nasty to say about him. But he also has some loyal supporters who will stand by him to the end. And, of course, he has the President.

who, once safely "on background," won't have something nasty to say about him. But he also has some loyal supporters who will stand by him to the end. And, of course, he has the President.

Hartmann, according to even his closet associates and friends, has a very difficult time controlling his temper, an occasional insensitivity to other people's feelings, an overwhelming professional insecurity, and a penchant for burbon. He recently gave up martinis.

These qualities, according to close Hartmann observers, can manifest themselves in spontaneous outbursts of abusive language, insults, rages, crudeness and even sabotage.

"When Ford was Vice President and Hartmann was his chief of staff," says a high White House official who worked closely with Hartmann, "he was really mean to people. He thought he could get something done by being Captain Bligh. It was like Mutiny on the Bounty there for a while."

Another colleague who insisted on remaining anonymous said, "If you've ever heard the term 'mean bastard' it was invented for Bob Hartmann. But you're not going to get me to say that on the record. He may be a great speechwriter, but he's the most vindictive s.o.b. I've ever met in my life. He never forgets."

Betty Ford is said to actively dislike Bob Hartmann because of some sniping at Ford attributed to Hartmann when he worked for Melvin Laird, who was then a rival of Ford's in the House of Representatives.

Some Secret Service agents are known to have no love for Hartmann at all. He reportedly has abused many of them in the line of duty, ordering them around and treating them like second-class citizens, they feel.

But, "He can be very abrasive and mean at some particular moment, then walk in and be a big disheveled puppy with no bite at all," says another co-worker.

"Some of the adjectives that are used about him are true," says his chief aide of some 20 years, Jo Ann Wilson. "He can be a difficult man. On the other hand he can be a sweetheart. He sometimes misunderstands

what his staff is trying to do for him and therefore becomes irritable."

John Marsh, an old friend who likes and admires Hartmann, just laughs when he is asked about Hartmann's temper. "A lot of people just take him seriously when they shouldn't," he says. "He really should have a wooden leg so he could stomp it around when he gets mad. But all you have to do is just say, 'Oh, c'mon Bob' and he's okay."

However, at home or in social situations, around people he cares for and who care for him, friends he feels secure with and who do not threaten him, Bob Hartmann is, in the words of one close observer, "a pussycat." He can be thoughtful, concerned, even sentimental, his friends say, and he can also be terribly remorseful after his outbursts, apologetic and solicitous.

It is for none of these reasons that Gerald Ford keeps Bob Hartmann on. He keeps him on because, as former Press Secretary terHorst puts it, "Not since Ted Sorensen have I seen anyone grasp the cadence and speech patterns, but also the inner feelings and the message of a public figure the way he does. He really has a way of bringing Gerald Ford out to the public in a way that Gerald Ford appreciates. He is very much a political man as well. Give him 10 minutes in a room and he'll quickly grasp who's important. He is also totally loyal to Ford."

Yet Hartmann is very circumspect about taking credit for anything he has done in connection with the President. Even so far as admitting he has, as has been suggested, the best political instincts in Washington, he will say, "If I did, then I'd be President."

"I like, being part of history," he says. "I've spent my life being a front-row spectator. Now I'm a front-row participant . . . but I don't have any power. The President has power. Any power I might have is merely an extension of his. Any other kind is counterfeit power. And if you use it with this President you won't last long. That's why I couldn't be a Haldeman. Because my boss is a different kind of guy than his boss."

"The President never operates through a single subordinate. He always has a number of them. I have to assume Haig and Haldeman were using the power of the President the way President Nixon wanted them to. You get power over people because of their fear, their belief that you can help them or hurt them, that you can transmit their messages or stop them."

Hartmann says he can write Mr. Ford's speeches because he has listened to his speech habits for 10 years. "I know he prefers one-or two-syllable words rather than four or five syllables. He doesn't like big words. Also there is a great tendency in this town for everything to be stated negatively, like 'despite this' or 'we won't' rather than 'I believe.' He has a tendency to state things in a direct and positive way."

As to the impression people have that the President is too gentle to chew people out or tell them what he thinks: "If that's true, he's learning fast."

Those who know Hartmann say he is at his worst when threatened, at his best when sure of his position. As the White House begins to settle down and

Bob Hartmann, to an observer, not a co-worker, comes across as a "good ole boy."

Rumpled hair, in fact, rumpled period, a slightly dissipated look to his face, a gruff, almost growly voice and a grudging, sometimes sarcastic but active sense of humor.

In order to protect his ego he will, as a defense mechanism, lash out at someone he fears may not like him, as though to justify to himself that person's dislike.

There's a gone-to-seed quality about him, like a used up writer. Like what one would have expected Ernest Hemingway to look like. In fact Hartmann admits to having written some "brilliant" short stories once and, yes, to having wanted to be like Hemingway. "He's my hero."

"I am a great writer," he will tell you, just a little defensively. But he knows it's true so he throws his head back and laughs heartily at his own chutzpah for saying it.

If there is a mean, abrasive side to Bob Hartmann, and there apparently is, it is not manifested at lunch. But then, Roberta Hartmann is there to chaperone. He would not consent to an interview unless she was present. She set it up.

"I won't let him do it this week; he's just too tired," she would say on the phone. And then, she would begin clucking about him absentmindedly, affectionately . . . "We really should wash our hair every night because it's so oily," she would muse. "But we don't have the time anymore so we can only do it twice a week now, but I've got one of those new blow-dry hair dryers so . . ."

"I've doubled my speed and doubled my hours," Hartmann says at lunch.

"You've tripled your hours," says Mrs. Hartmann. Then, "You don't mind if we talk to each other about personal things during the interview do you, it's just that we never get to see each other at home."

"Anyway," says Hartmann, ignoring her, "I've had to be a lot less easygoing and pleasant because I just haven't had time. But I have a reputation for being less easygoing and tougher than I used to appear. But not as tough as I really am." He looks pleased with himself.

"I reproach myself, though," he says, "for hurting someone's feelings."

"Oh, I've never heard him hurt anyone's feelings," Roberta interjects.

"You don't have time," he says, oblivious to the latest remark, "to explain. You just say, 'Do it.' On the Hill you do have time. Everything on the Hill is done by persuasion, not authority. But I don't have time for persuasion now."

"Oh, I think this abrasive thing is something that just got started . . ." trails off Roberta.

"Wait a minute, let me finish," he says, forgetting what he was going to say. Silence.

"If they called me weak and flaccid," he starts again, "I'd be upset. But when they call me tough and abrasive I'm not upset."

The meal hasn't arrived and Hartmann, who is a very good cook, gourmet and wine connoisseur, according to his wife and friends, digs into the bread.

"Honey," admonishes his wife, grabbing the bread basket with one hand and slapping his wrist with the other, "don't eat any more bread. You're getting too fat."

He looks down and picks at the crumbs sheepishly.

The talk gets back to Hartmann's hours, and how he has to work so late. "He used to use the Vice President's shower," says Mrs. Hartmann, "if we were going to go out and he didn't have time to change at home."

"Don't say that," he tells her. "That's indiscreet."

"Well, I don't think so," she answers back.

"That'll look bad in the paper," he says to her.

"Well, you are working for Jerry Ford," she says. "Not for yourself."

"That's what you tell me every night, dear."

The Hartmanns move on to talk about how they met.

"I was an ensign in the Navy," he says.

"He was a fat young ensign," she says. "And a fellow schoolteacher invited him over to meet me. He said he wasn't interested in schoolteachers but a home-cooked meal sounded real good."

"That," says Hartmann, "was the beginning of my downfall."

"Well," she says, "he rescued me from being an old-maid schoolteacher. You know, he's very sentimental and romantic. We met on the 14th of December and when he went off to war he gave the florist money and told him to send me a dozen roses every 14th day of each month."

"Oh," groans Hartmann. "This is getting maudlin."

"We kid Roberta a lot about acting like a Jewish mama around Bob," says the Hartmanns' best friend, Mrs. Glennard P. Lipscomb. "She fusses over Bob like he's 3 years old and he acts like 3 when he's around her."

And "he's the most sentimental man," Mrs. Lipscomb says. "When Roberta had to take him to the hospital once for minor surgery, she came home to find he had written in lipstick on the mirror 'I love you.' Now if that isn't getting brownie points, I don't know what is."

Bob Hartmann came to be Gerald R. Ford's counselor by a circuitous route. After graduating with a B.A. in journalism at Stanford and doing a stint in the Navy—becoming a lieutenant commander during World War II—he began his career as a copy boy at the Los Angeles Times, then graduated to police reporter, then to editorial writer, then, in 1954, to bureau chief of the Washington office.

"He was a very, very competent re-

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job definitions become clearer, Hartmann's position is more clearly defined now as the President's chief speechwriter and political adviser.

Most of the administrative powers he once fought so furiously to retain now have been transferred to Donald Rumsfeld. And people who work most closely with Hartmann feel that he has now accepted his role of counselor and may even be relieved that he no longer needs to cope with administrative duties. To some he appears to be entering a more mellow, less frustrated stage.

Over a lunch interview at the International Club, Robert and Roberta Hartmann explain his personality and visit with each other. He orders a bourbon on the rocks ("I guess I will" he tells the waiter) and they immediately launch into his long hours and terrible working schedule.

The Hartmanns are Mr. and Mrs. America: Both 57, they will have been married 31 years in January. They finish each other's sentences, know each other's likes and dislikes, and they have a routine going which has strong Ozzie and Harriet overtones.

The Hartmanns have adjusted well to their respective roles. Roberta Hartmann is well-groomed, with a bright, friendly smile and a motherliness about her that makes one feel relaxed. She has a very chatty nature. She is also fiercely loyal to her husband and bristles at the slightest suggestion that he is not perfect. Unless, of course, it is her suggestion, which is often the case.



Robert Hartmann, right, is sworn in as a presidential adviser by White House executive clerk John Ratchford, left, with President Ford and Mrs. Hartmann looking on.



By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

Roberta Hartman displays a needlepoint project given to her as a gift.

porter and writer," recalls L.A. Times managing editor Frank Haven. "But a difficult S.O.B. to be around."

According to colleagues who knew him then, Hartmann "raised all kinds of hell in the days when Norman Chandler was publisher. In those days Hartmann was sacred."

It was during the "sacred" period that the L.A. Times loaned the Hartmanns the money to buy the Maryland suburban house where they still live. It was a unique gesture and because of it the Hartmanns were able to settle in early to a comfortable life.

They have recently added a bocce court where he can play his favorite game and a swimming pool with statues all put in by Jerry Ford's swimming pool man. The house is not large but it is immaculate and decorated in baby blues and yellow brocades, velvets and florentine gilt furniture with lots of knickknacks.

Otis Chandler, when he took over as publisher from his father, apparently decided to go with his other people so Hartmann was "kicked upstairs" and sent to open a Rome bureau. Later, when the Times refused Hartmann a raise, he quit.

(The L.A. Times people in the Washington bureau feel they are in a very difficult position, in that Hartmann left under less than cordial circumstances. They are particularly upset

because a few months ago they set up a private luncheon for him at the International Club and he never showed up. It was 15 minutes after he was due that a secretary called to say he was with the President and couldn't make it.)

He drifted for a bit, then took a job as information adviser for the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization.

In 1966 Melvin Laird, passed over for minority leader for the more neutral Gerald Ford, hired Hartmann as his first staffer for the newly formed House Republican Policy Committee. According to those who knew them both then, Laird, jealous of Ford and disdainful of his ability, used Hartmann to snipe at Ford through the press.

Ford, however, was not unaware of what was going on and when Laird became Secretary of Defense, Ford hired Hartmann to be on his own team. Some sources say that it was then that Betty Ford began to dislike Hartmann, who, she felt, had tried to harm her husband.

It was during that time, however, that Hartmann and Ford established their working synchronization, and Hartmann is credited with writing almost all of Ford's speeches, including the one he made to the House proposing to impeach Supreme Court Associate Justice William O. Douglas.

Hartmann predicted Ford would be chosen by Nixon as Vice President,

and when the new staff was organized Hartmann became its chief. He was all-powerful in that role. But not for long.

The tensions and pressures shortened his temper, increased his drinking and eventually turned virtually everyone against him. Reportedly it was Betty Ford who saw the problem and set about to solve it. It was she who prompted Ford to bring down their old friend from Grand Rapids, Mich., millionaire accountant William Seidman.

Seidman was an administrator, a man who knew how to run things. He came in, drew up charts and reorganized the staff.

Hartmann went wild, according to sources, and there was a terrible battle. "He wanted to be captain of his ship," says a former co-worker. "In Washington the name of the game is to get as much power and as many people under you as you can. That's what Hartmann wanted and he couldn't handle it. I don't think he was fully aware of what Ford was doing when he had the office reorganized."

When Mr. Ford became President, Hartmann wrote his successful swearing-in speech and his first speech to Congress.

But the transition period was not easy and Hartmann faced a new and enormous problem: Gen. Alexander Haig.

Hartmann knew that Mr. Ford respected Haig and that the President was grateful for Haig's handling of Nixon's last days in office. As chief of staff, it was Haig who was closely advising Ford during the first weeks. Hartmann saw the possibility of his own position being usurped by the general. He felt threatened. The feeling was mutual.

According to those close to both, they despised each other. Haig felt that Hartmann was "good for no more than four hours a day," and that he was not competent for that job. In fact, the animosity between the two was so great because of their monumental power struggle that the level of combat between them took on a particularly vicious, hateful tone.

Haig is even reported to have called Hartmann a "sick man," and to have said that if Hartmann were allowed to stay in office, "he would ultimately destroy the presidency."

Hartmann, not to be outdone, responded by reportedly confiding to someone at a party one night that he didn't understand why "that kind of evil" should be rewarded with such an exalted position as NATO commander.

Those who have observed several administrations over the years liken the bitter Haig-Hartmann controversy to similar *contretemps* between the Kennedy-Johnson people during that transition period.

In fact, the animosity between the two was so great that Hartmann was the only senior staffer who did not attend President Ford's farewell dinner in the White House for Gen. Haig. Unfortunately for Hartmann, his suggestion for Haig's complete dismissal met with little presidential enthusiasm. In

the end, there was a compromise and Gen. Haig went to NATO, against Hartmann's will.

Still, those who judge power in the White House see Haig's departure as a victory for Hartmann.

Then came the problems with the leaks. Hartmann is credited with leaking most of the stories about Haig which appeared in the press shortly before Haig's departure. Haig apparently knew about it, which did nothing to strengthen their relationship.

Also, it is reported that Hartmann, who is very proprietary about the President's ear, felt threatened by Secretary of the Treasury William Simon and William Seidman, the economic counselors.

So he leaked stories about them to the press. They found out about it and went to the President, who called Hartmann in and berated him. Hartmann was forbidden by the President to talk to the press for some time after that and was even forced to hand over his call-back list of reporters that week to Press Secretary Ron Nessen.

Now, if there is a threat to Hartmann it is Donald Rumsfeld, according to those nearest the President, even though ironically, it was Hartmann's suggestion to bring Rumsfeld back to Washington from Brussels where he was Ambassador to NATO. One of Rumsfeld's first acts was to organize the President's schedule more tightly, which has left less "peeking time," as Hartmann calls it, to check into the Oval Office.

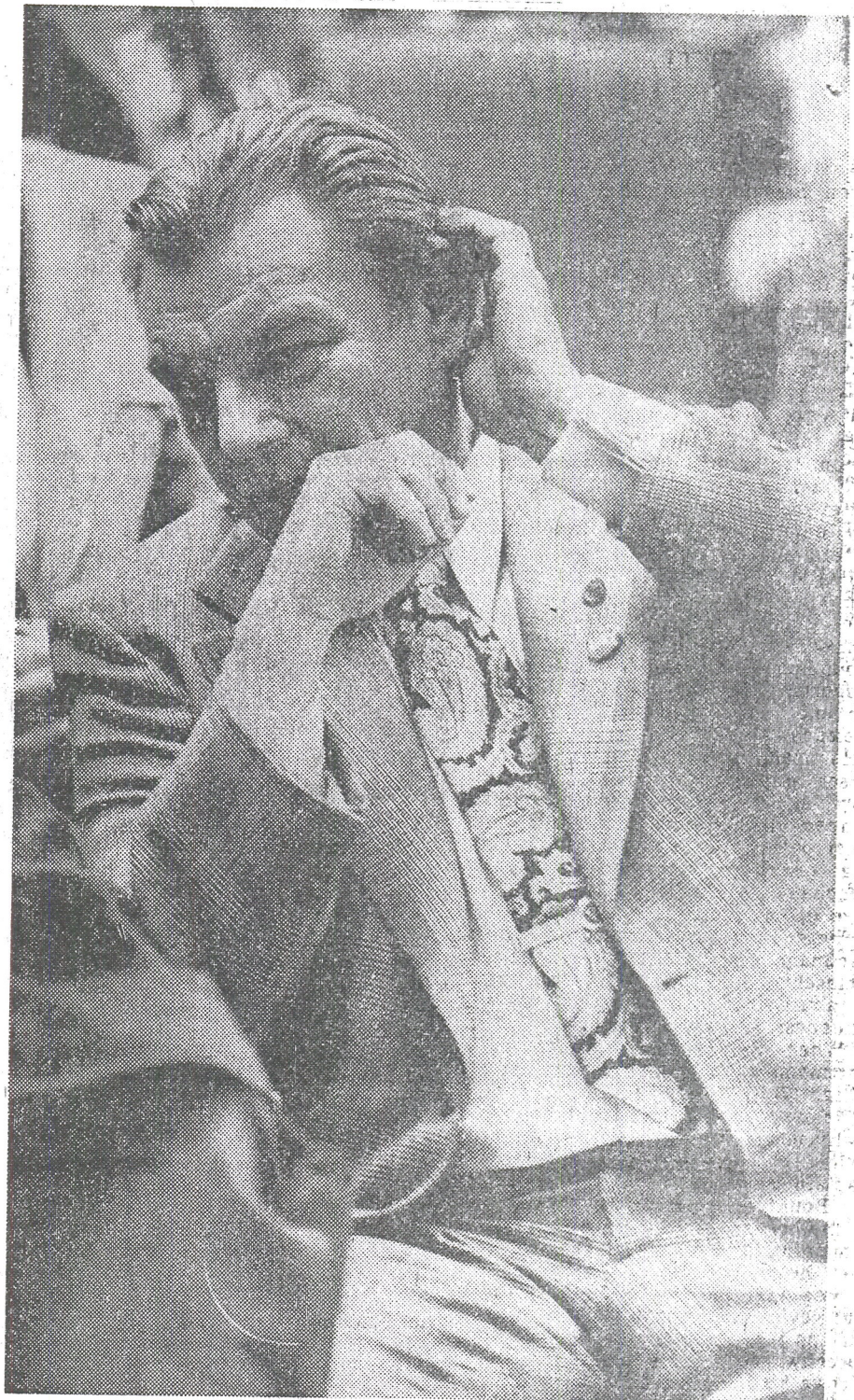
"Rumsfeld is the only guy who could get rid of Hartmann if he wanted to and he really went at it now," says another political observer.

That doesn't seem likely however. "At the moment, Rumsfeld is still in the giving-and-taking-orders stage," says another administration official. "His work is not nearly as substantive as Bob's."

Rumsfeld has this to say about Bob Hartmann:

"I consider him a very valuable member of the President's staff. Certainly there are elements of things he says which are very valuable. He is a very close adviser to the President."

"I don't really know the guy well," says Bill Seidman. "There have been a lot of stories about wars between the two of us. But he can be delightful



By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

Presidential adviser Robert Hartmann at a Wichita, Kans., campaign rally (also attended by President Ford) for Republican Sen. Robert Dole.

when he wants to be. I just don't know whether we're friends or not. But I'd like to be friends with Bob. I'm certainly no threat to him now."

The Hartmanns have two children—a son, Rob, 26, an information specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts, and a daughter, Roberta, 31, mother of two, who is married to Charles Brake, a high-school science teacher in Louisville, Ky.

"Rob is smart like Bob and Bobby is dumb like me," says Mrs. Hartmann.

Rob Hartmann doesn't totally understand the occasionally unflattering publicity his father has gotten recently.

I don't remember him being terribly strict at all when I was growing

up," says Rob. "Though he's always been the ruler at home, you know, a man's home is his castle and all that."

"We're a very religious family. We're Church of Christ and the time around the dinner table is a very important time for us as a family to talk things out.

Rob feels that his father has been very lucky in his life. "He's had the great fortune to align himself with two great people in life—Gerald Ford and Norman Chandler. He aligned himself instinctively with two men who were going places. He needs to believe in somebody. My father always addresses Ford as 'Sir' and 'Mr. President,' even among friends and family."

There are those Hartmann detractors who maintain that he is only mean or ugly to the little guys, never to those who can help him. And they will claim that Hartmann is loyal to Jerry Ford as long as he is President.

But no one questions his loyalty to the President now. As long as he's loyal, he'll most likely stay.

"Ford has something like a love-hate relationship with Hartmann," says a close observer. "Ford is a really nice guy, a pushover. Hartmann is the anti-thesis of Ford's personality. Everybody keeps saying that they'll get him sooner or later. But I don't think so. I think he'll be there as long as he keeps his liver under control."