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Nixon a generous, kind man, but his deeds go unheralded

WASHINGTON — Red Skelton is an avid Nixon fan.

When his son was dying of leukemia, the sad clown took him to Lourdes but found no miracle. Then he brought the boy to the shrines of America and spent a day showing

Jack Anderson

him the Capitol. Richard Nixon, then vice-president, volunteered his services as a guide.

Skelton had seen a hidden, human side of Nixon. "I'm not a Catholic," Skelton has said, "but on a small altar at home we keep a picture of Mr. Nixon. And, during the 1968 presidential campaign, I lighted candles daily for him."

Other people who know him well see still other facets of Nixon's character that are usually obscured by the robot-like quality of his public personality.

To Rose Mary Woods, his secretary since 1950, Nixon is "shy" but "well disciplined." More than once, he has brought distinguished visitors in to meet her, and they have sat around the secretary's office chatting informally.

Evangelist Billy Graham, a long time friend, calls Nixon a man with "an extremely high sense of ethics." On the evangelist's private advice, Nixon has made a number of anonymous contributions to charities.

Intimates say he donates more than \$50,000 a year to charities, almost all of it anonymously. High on his list are worthy black causes. He has sent a black youth through medical college, another through architect's school. Neither has any idea his tuition was paid by the President of the United States.

'Smooth correctness'

Betty Beale, the society arbiter of the Washington Star, finds Nixon a host whose parties reflect "smooth correctness, elegance of dress and smiling ease." She adds: "Whether you like it or not, this in itself is style."

To the woman who has known him the most intimately since 1940, his wife Pat, he is gentle and considerate. They often stroll along the shore at San Clemente or Key Biscayne, hand in hand.

To Washington's Florida Avenue Quaker Meeting, he is a stranger, although he still

lists himself as a member of the Society of Friends.

Lawyers who worked with him on Wall Street remember him as an unusually diligent attorney. Life magazine once envisioned him as a future sports broadcaster.

Son-in-law David Eisenhower thinks of his wife's father as "the perfect father for a teen-age serial." Only David would say that.

Chotiner befriended

The other son-in-law, Edward Cox, a former Nader's raider, made it clear to friends he was marrying Tricia, not the President. But Cox has now been won over completely by his famous father-in-law.

To old friends, Nixon is loyal. When his old political ally, Murray Chotiner, was roasted in the Washington papers, the President phoned the next day and asked Chotiner to be his house guest at San Clemente.

To enemies, Nixon can be ruthless. But, on occasion, he has also shown a quiet decency. He took Sen. Ted Kennedy aside at a White House reception after the Chappaquiddick tragedy and talked to him, say intimates, as Nixon would have expected the slain John F. Kennedy to bolster his brother.

Nixon is a very private person, an artichoke whose center has never been exposed. "Any kind of personal confession is embarrassing to me," he has said. "I believe in keeping my own counsel about personal matters . . . You can't confide in anyone about your personal plans, your personal feelings."

Too private for exploitation

When a film crew asked him to stroll down the beach with his wife for a political documentary on his family life, Pat tried to reach for his hand. But he wriggled loose. Holding hands with his wife was too private for political exploitation.

There is also a constant hint in his behavior of a longing for admiration. The 1968 election was hardly a month old when the U.S. Information Agency began carrying the President-elect's new message to 112 foreign nations. A film was circulated which compared him to Woodrow Wilson.

Richard Nixon, clearly, looks upon Richard Nixon with deep and solemn seriousness. But his frequent, unguided voyages into his psyche are intensely private. He feels he must hide himself behind the masks that his advisers design.