

# Hero's welcome greets Nixon

## Examiner Wire Services

HYDEN, Ky. — Richard Nixon returned to public life in high style yesterday, cheered by crowds chanting "We want Nixon."

A crowd of about 1,000 greeted him at the London-Corbin Airport, about 50 miles away, as he stepped off a small chartered jet that may have been bringing him into a new form of public life to replace the self-imposed exile he began Aug. 9, 1974, when he resigned as president.

He said later that he will not run for political office again, but will give advice to political candidates. "I will occasionally perhaps make an appearance in non-political forums," he added.

Nixon left the jet with his arms outstretched, acknowledging both the welcoming committee on the ground and the crowd held back behind woven-wire fences.

He came to the mountain town of 500 to speak today at the dedication of the \$2.2 million Richard M. Nixon Recreation Center in Hyden. It is one of the few public structures named after Nixon.

Even in the heat, Nixon kept on a suit coat as he greeted a welcoming committee that included Rep. Tim Lee Carter, R-Ky.

Jim Wooten, who was defeated in the race for Leslie County judge-executive by C. Allen Muncy, looked at the crowded streets and told a reporter, "The only thing that would bring out a bigger crowd would be a public hanging."

Nixon spent at least a half-hour

at the airport shaking hands and signing his book, "RN Memoirs: The Story of Richard Nixon."

Recalling that he had ended America's involvement in the Vietnam War, Nixon told the airport crowd, "I'm just glad that we were able to bring our people and the POWs home.

"It doesn't mean that freedom is not faced with many challenges around the world," he continued, sounding a vintage Nixon foreign policy theme.

"It also means our freedom must not be destroyed by aggressors. That's above partisanship."

He added that "to see so many people on a Saturday afternoon who could be listening to a baseball game — that's what I would be doing — or maybe going fishing, to come out and stand in the hot sun — that's just the nicest thing you could do."

His speech drew cheers, applause and laughter. The crowd held up signs: "Nixon's the Man in 1980" and "Welcome Nixon" and "We Like Nixon." Some airport salesmen hawked "Nixon for President" buttons for \$2 each and American flags for \$1.

The Laurel County High School Trumpeteers serenaded Nixon with one of his favorite anthems, "God Bless America," and a chant went up, "We want Nixon, we want Nixon."

"I came to see the greatest president we ever had," said Ronald Burns, 36, of Onedia, Ky., part of the worshipful airport crowd that pressed around Nixon, pumping his hand and shouting "God



United Press International

### Well-wishers crowd around Richard Nixon at Kentucky airport

bless you," as Secret Service bodyguards kept close watch.

"It must be love," said Beatrice Hensley, 41, of Norwood, Ohio, explaining her willingness to wait for her hero under a hot sun.

"Nixon would carry Leslie County if he ran for president in the morning," Muncy said.

"This Watergate business didn't enter our minds," he added. "How long does a people have to punish? Why are they not more forgiving? It's the peace generation that keeps hating."

The Thousand Sticks News, which proclaims itself Leslie County's leading newspaper since 1898, put out a special 98-page edition for the visit. Watergate was not mentioned in a front-page biography of the distinguished visitor, nor in

subsequent stories. The word "resigned" makes a rare appearance in a full-page ad for Rabbi Baruch Korff's Nixon Justice Fund.

Muncy said he invited the president because the county has benefited so greatly from the revenue-sharing program established during Nixon's presidency.

"Revenue sharing made up \$357,000 of the county budget — that's almost two-thirds of the total budget this fiscal year. So you can see why that when we ask the question 'who helped us the most' there was just one answer — Nixon," he said.

Some observers have said that the Hyden visit is the beginning of Nixon's re-emergence to public life.