

Nixon's Favorite Dinner Partner

Washington

President Nixon rates Alice Roosevelt Longworth as "the most fascinating conversationalist of our time" and his own number one choice as a dinner partner.

The President's warm regards for the daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt were set out in a letter to his daughter, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, for an article she wrote about Mrs. Longworth in the March issue of the Saturday Evening Post which will appear soon.

Mrs. Longworth will be 90 years old today and Mrs. Eisenhower asked her father to provide some of his own views on Mrs. Longworth. Mr. Nixon's response to his daughter is carried in full by the Saturday Evening Post. He said, "Alice is without doubt the most fascinating conversationalist of our time."

"I would rate her as No. 1, above everybody else, if I were to select an individual for a dinner partner," he wrote. "She earns this rating because of a combination of factors — she has brains, with an unusual gift for phrase-making and people she has met and places she has been which is as good today as when I first met her 26 years ago."

As for Mrs. Longworth, she gave this appraisal of the attention paid by Washington political and social leaders — and reporters — over her reaching 90: "This goddamn birthday is driving me crazy."

Both being presidential daughters, Mrs. Eisenhower said she found a common bond with Mrs. Longworth despite the age difference.

"... Alice Roosevelt and I share the bond of seeing fathers whom we unabashedly adore endure strong political careers," Mrs. Eisenhower wrote. "T.R.'s brandishing the big stick, his 'seizure' of the Panama isthmus and his controversial, often bitter third party attempt to regain the White House in 1912 are all part of the uncertain life in politics."

In obvious reference to the Watergate scandal, Mrs. Eisenhower wrote: "I wanted to know how she had coped with the often unfair criticisms that are part of life in politics and so I asked her, 'was politics mean when your father was in the White House?'"

"She responded immediately, with a devilish delight in her voice, 'Oh yes, terribly mean!'"

United Press