

Ford a Traditionalist Who Believes in Home,

Key Trait Is His Ability To Befriend Opponents

AUGUST 9, 1974

Family, Hard Work

and Patriotism

By ISRAEL SHENKER

He has a granite jaw, regular features, and a demeanor that remains stern even in laughter: It is a model countenance for billboards and campaign literature. He believes in the homespun virtues of family loyalty, hard work and stubborn patriotism.

Man
in the
News

No intellectual, he likes to think of himself as a devotee of sensible courses and determination rather than of originality and flair. He has admirers but no worshipful followers, critics but no real enemies.

About Gerald R. Ford there is no whiff of charisma. But those who have known him well—in his undergraduate glory days on the gridiron in Michigan, in 25 years in the House of Representatives, in his tenure as Vice President—are prepared to hope that he is what the nation needs: a solid, politician who will scorn the devious, a leader who can be trusted.

When President Nixon chose him in October as Vice President-designate, Mr. Ford said he felt "something like awe and astonishment at the magnitude of the new responsibilities I have been asked to assume," adding: "At the same time I have a new and invigorating sense of determination and purpose to do my best to meet them."

As Vice President, Mr. Ford traveled hundreds of thousands of miles, attempting to rally the faithful and at the same time establish his own positions. "I think a Vice President ought to speak his own mind," he said.

At one point Mr. Nixon told him he was working too hard and suggested he curtail his schedule. Mr. Ford said he would not take Mr. Nixon's advice. "I would get very bored if I sat around and didn't get out to see the people," he said.

Six years ago, when there was talk about Jerry Ford as favorite-son candidate for the Vice-Presidency, he said, "I would 10 times rather be Speaker of the House than Vice President." But Congress has a way of remaining Democratic, and Mr. Ford's hopes of becoming Speaker glimmered only faintly.

Parents Were Divorced

Mr. Ford's original name was Leslie King Jr. He was born July 14, 1913, and when he was two years old his mother divorced his father and left Omaha for Grand Rapids. When she remarried, her husband, Gerald Ford Sr., president of the Ford Paint and Varnish Company, adopted the young boy, and gave him his name.

Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr. was one of four sons, and at South High he took a double lunch hour and earned spending money waiting on table

and washing dishes in a Greek restaurant.

What interested him most in high school was football. He made the high school all-city and all-state football teams, and moved on to continuing stardom as linebacker and center at the University of Michigan. In 1932 and 1933 the Wolverines were undefeated, and in 1934, though the team lost all its games, Jerry Ford was named the most valuable player. He was graduated in 1935.

Turning down offers from the Green Bay Packers and the Detroit Lions, he attended Yale Law School during alternate semesters, spending the rest of the year as assistant football coach and freshman boxing coach.

Years later Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh, a Democrat, suggested that Mr. Ford was not terribly intelligent because he had played football too often without a helmet. But Myres S. McDougal, a professor at Yale Law School, who used to play basketball with Mr. Ford, said: "He was a good student, a good 'B-plus' to 'A' student. I wrote him a letter the other day telling him that the man I knew couldn't have been half as bad as the stories picture him."

Prof. Eugene V. Rostow at Yale called him a "B" student. "A very solid, straightforward, decent sort of bird of moderate ability," said Professor Rostow. "He worked hard, did reasonably well."

'Sensible, Very Sensible'

There are those who have called Mr. Ford unimaginative. When Professor Rostow (who was an Under Secretary of State in the Johnson Administration and knew Mr. Ford in Washington as well as in New Haven) was asked whether Mr. Ford was imaginative, he replied: "Sensible, very sensible. He held his own and was liked, too."

After graduation from Yale Law School in 1941, Mr. Ford began practicing law in Grand Rapids. Nine months later he enlisted in the Navy as an ensign, serving 47 months altogether, 18 of them aboard the light aircraft carrier USS Monterey, and winding up as a lieutenant commander.

On his return to Grand Rapids he resumed the practice of law. Mr. Ford was encouraged by Senator Arthur Vandenberg, himself a

Grand Rapids man who had made a big name as an internationalist, and he entered politics.

Michigan's Fifth Congressional District was safely Republican, rural as well as urban, and its citizens were almost 100 per cent white and mostly of Dutch descent. Bartel Jonkman, the district's Congressman, was an isolationist veteran, and Mr. Ford set out to beat him.

The neophyte won an upset victory, then paused long enough, in October, to marry Elizabeth Bloomer, who was born in Chicago but had lived most of her life in Grand Rapids.

From age 14 she had earned spending money and then her living by modeling clothes. She had spent two years in New York City as a dancer in Martha Graham's company, modeling meanwhile to keep herself alive. Then she returned to Grand Rapids and became what she called "a fashion coordinator" with a local department store.

In 1942 she married William Warren, a local furniture salesman, and in 1947 the marriage ended in divorce, for incompatibility.

She spent football season weekends at Ann Arbor, noting afterward that she had gone to college but never during the part of the week that could have earned her a degree.

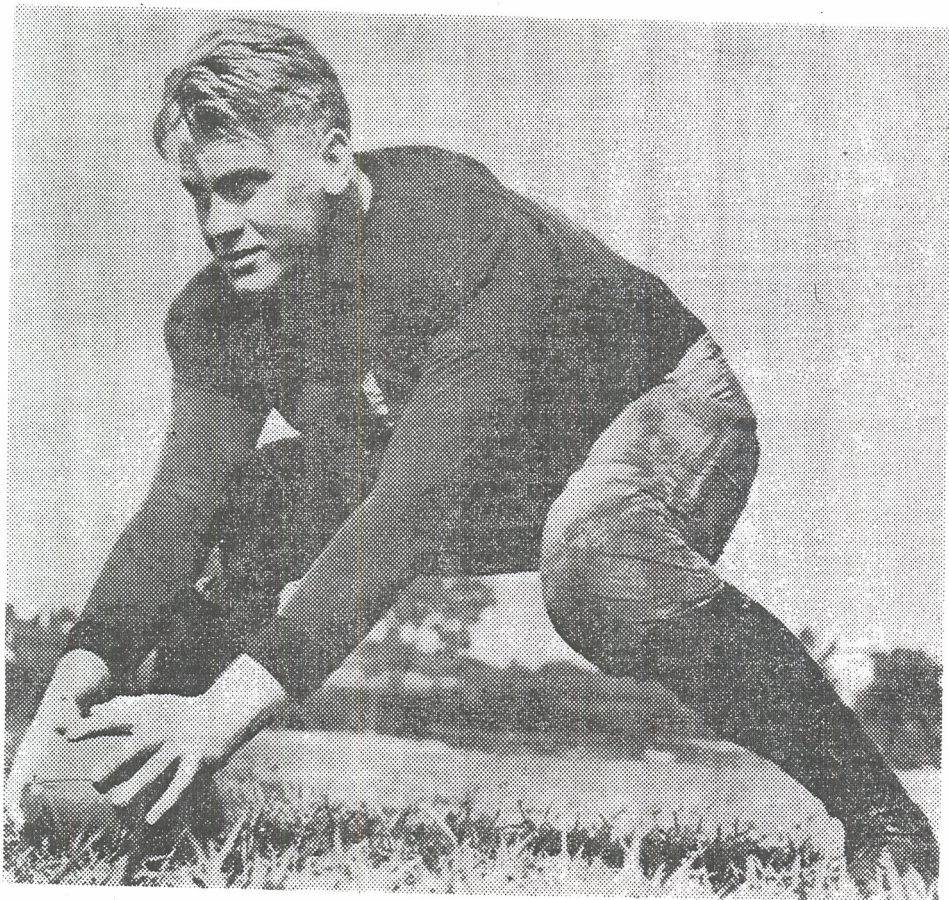
She had heard a great deal about Gerald Ford as a football player. "Before I married him, one of his relatives said Jerry has a temper," she recalled. "Obviously he did, as a young man. He's learned to control it. He's taught me to take just one step at a time. 'Let's go to bed and go to sleep and tomorrow's another day.' He hits the pillow and bang—he's asleep."

A Hawk on Vietnam

From the moment he entered Congress, in 1949, his views on most questions have been conservative. A self-described internationalist, he was an outspoken hawk on Vietnam. He has voted against virtually all social welfare legislation, has voted to weaken minimum wage bills, has strongly opposed forced busing, and while supporting key civil rights bills on final passage, has been severely criticized by civil rights backers for efforts to soften the legislation through amendments.

Mr. Ford has also been unfailingly attentive to some of the causes dear to his constituents. After a 1953 flood in the Netherlands, for example, he asked Congress to admit 50,000 Dutch immigrants. To get his messages across to his constituents, he put staff members into a house trailer that traveled around his district.

By 1959 he was being talked of as a candidate for leadership of the House Republicans. In 1960 Michigan Republicans endorsed him as the state's favorite son for the G.O.P. Vice-Presidential nomination. The Michigan Republican State Central Committee said the five-term



Associated Press

At the University of Michigan, he was an outstanding football player in the early 1930's

House member would give strength to the national ticket.

Within the House he was becoming ever more prominent. He headed a group of 15 G.O.P. House members who spent four months studying defense and economy, and—to no one's surprise—ended up supporting President Eisenhower's positions in the cold war. Mr. Ford was one of the three Representatives in the "truth squad" set up by the Republicans to trail Senator John F. Kennedy during the 1960 campaign.

When Mr. Kennedy was elected, and delivered his State of the Union message, Mr. Ford was one of five prominent Republican mem-

bers who signed a statement

denouncing the message as "a shabby attempt" to paint a bleak picture of the nation's economic and international situation.

The Michigan Congressman fought carefully, doing his best not to make enemies out of opponents, and he won popularity among his fellow-Representatives. For years the young Republicans in the House had tried to win a voice in the party's Congressional leadership, and in January, 1963, Mr. Ford took over as third-ranking Republican—chairman of the party's caucus in the House. He beat out the incumbent veteran by a vote of 86 to 78.

It was the first move in an

attempt to rejuvenate the G.O.P. image, which many thought suffered by contrast to the youthful Democratic Administration. This was the time of the Ev and Charlie show on TV, during which two rather senior Republicans, Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen and Representative Charles Halleck, served as the party's spokesmen.

Senator Barry Goldwater named Mr. Ford one of the four Republicans he could "wholeheartedly" support for the Presidential nomination, and when he himself won that nomination he thought of Mr. Ford as a possible running mate.

On Warren Commission

Mr. Ford was one of two Representatives whom President Johnson named to the Warren Commission to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy. When a book was published on the commission's work, with Mr. Ford as one author and an assistant as the other, there were charges that the Congressman had profited from his position of public trust. He defended himself by saying that he had only been trying to make the work of the commission readable.

Two days after the release of the Warren report, Life magazine ran an article on the commission under Mr. Ford's name. Mr. Ford has testified that he wrote the article (although a Life text writer, David Nevin, was closer to the typewriter keys).

Life also ran the text of the diary of Lee Harvey Oswald, President Kennedy's assassin, and Time Inc. has refused to divulge the company file relating to the diary, which might show whether Mr. Ford played a role in its acquisition by Life. Mr. Ford has denied such a role.

Nothing stayed the momentum of his career. In 1964 he decided to challenge Mr. Halleck for the post of Minority Leader. Melvin R. Laird was another candidate, though both formally denied

that they wanted the job. In the end, there were enough upstart Republicans to sweep Mr. Ford into office, and the Ev and Charlie show became the Ev and Jerry show.

The new Minority Leader promised that under him every House Republican would be "a first-team player" and a "60-minute man."

Former Senator Charles E. Goodell, who was close to Mr. Ford when they were both in the House, credits him with "fulfilling quite effectively the role of opening up power and encouraging people to exercise it."

In these years Mr. Ford



The New York Times/George James

Gerald R. Ford being sworn in as Vice President of the United States as his wife, Elizabeth, held Bible and Chief Justice Warren E. Burger administered oath. Observ-

ing were President Nixon, right, and at rear, Carl Albert, left, the Speaker of the House, and James O. Eastland, right, who was then President pro tem of the Senate.

displayed an allegiance al-
literation. He charged that
the Johnson Administration
was leading the country into
"frustration and failure, baf-
flement and boredom." He

opposed "partisanship and
polarization," and he favored
"private, productive employ-
ment" as well as "sensible
solutions for the 'seventies."

Mr. Ford was also at home
with the tried and true.
"Where there's smoke there's
fire," he would say, and
talked critically of "treating
cancer with a Band-Aid."
"Politics should stop at the
water's edge," he suggested,
and proclaimed that we "are
embarking on a historic voy-
age into uncharted waters."
Once he exclaimed that "if
Lincoln were alive today
he'd be spinning in his grave."

An Editor's Opinion

The editor of a volume of
collected Ford speeches,
Michael V. Doyle, who used
to be a professor of speech
at the University of Illinois,
rates Mr. Ford as "middle to
fair."

"He doesn't have the intel-
lect and magnificence of
Adlai Stevenson, the flour-
ish of John Kennedy, or the
fire of Spiro Agnew," said
Professor Doyle, "but he
tends to be more believable
and sincere than Richard
Nixon."

Magnificent, flourishing,
fiery or no, Mr. Ford's con-
stituents kept returning him
to Congress with majorities
over 60 per cent.

Most of his campaign
money came from outside his
district, much of it from of-
ficers or employes of large
corporations such as United
Aircraft, General Dynamics,
General Motors, Boeing,
Armco Steel and Teledyne-
Ryan Aeronautical.

In the 1970 campaign Mr.
Ford failed to report \$11,500
in campaign contributions.
He subsequently explained
that he had complied with
the Michigan law limiting
contributions to candidates
by signing the money over
to Republican national head-
quarters. Roughly the same
amount was routed from Re-
publican headquarters to
Ford committees such as Vet-
erans for Ford and Latvians
for Ford.

Mr. Ford insisted that there
was no quid pro quo in-
volved, and that what he did
was "within the law." Michi-
gan law limits expenditures

only by the candidate, he
suggested, and "has no limit
on the amount of money
that a committee can re-
ceive or spend."

In the 1972 campaign the
total raised by four Ford
campaign committees was at
least \$97,456, while the total
raised from residents of his
own district was \$5,580. His
opponent, Jean McKee, raised
about \$11,000 from residents
of the district, but she got
only 38 per cent of the vote
to his 61 per cent.

Loan Charge Denied

Perhaps the most serious
allegations made against Mr.
Ford were in "The Washing-
ton Pay-Off," a book by Robert
Winter-Berger, a self-
styled "influence peddler."
Mr. Winter-Berger alleged
that he had "lent" Mr. Ford
\$15,000 that was never re-
paid.

"I've read his book, and I



Associated Press
During last Christmas season, Mr. Ford, then Vice President-Designate, posed with his
wife, Elizabeth, and their children, from left, Michael, Susan, John and Steven.

don't believe any of the
things he said about me or
any other person," said Mr.
Ford. "Those are just a dem-
agogic bunch of words that
didn't deserve publication."

After hearing Mr. Winter-
Berger at Mr. Ford's confir-
mation hearings, some of the
Senators agreed; the author's
testimony was replete with
contradictions, and at one
point he pleaded that he had
written with "literary li-
cense."

Mr. Winter-Berger had also
charged that Mr. Ford had
been treated by Dr. Arnold
Hutschnecker, the New York
psychotherapist who had
been consulted by President
Nixon (though not for psy-
chotherapy, insisted Dr.
Hutschnecker).

"Under no circumstances
have I ever been treated by
any person in the medical
profession for any psychi-
atry or otherwise," said Mr.
Ford.

Mr. Ford said that he had
visited for about 15 minutes
with Dr. Hutschnecker, talk-
ing politics, not medicine.
Dr. Hutschnecker confirmed
this story. "I had a feeling
he was not quite sure why
he was there," he told the
Senators.

During the confirmation
hearings, friends of Mr. Ford
in the House—on both sides



Gerald R. Ford Jr. as a
boy. He was born Leslie
King Jr., but was given
name of his stepfather.

of the aisle—circulated letters to colleagues, urging his confirmation. Many spoke forthrightly in his defense.

Representative Paul N. McCloskey Jr., Republican of California, said: "There is a basic trust which Jerry Ford inspires in those who work with him. . . . Never once have I seen him threaten, offer promise of reward, or in any way act in less than the manner all of us would hope a great statesman would act in the best of our national traditions."

"It's very difficult to think of negatives about Jerry Ford, unless you say he's too nice a guy," said former Senator Goodell. "In personal habits he's temperate. I've never heard any rumors or anything else—which on Capitol Hill is quite a tribute in itself."

"I cannot dislike him personally—he's cordial and gracious," said Representative Robert F. Drinan, Democrat of Massachusetts. "But he's consistently wrong, and consistency is a virtue of small minds. He's never proposed a constructive solution to anything. He's against spending money, doesn't believe in social programs."

Four Ford Children

When a long day of buffeting at the Capitol ends and Gerald Ford returns to his home in Alexandria, Va., what he does not want to hear is more of the same. His wife is careful to watch the TV news before he arrives.

Mr. Ford is regularly taken to task by his children as well as by his Congressional critics. They soured on the war and became ecologically minded before he did.

The Fords have four children, three sons and a daughter, ages 24 to 16. The only child now living at home is Steven, 18. Mrs. Ford wanted to name the first son after her husband, but recalling that as a boy he had been called "Junie," from Junior, Mr. Ford said: "No sirree, I'm not going to have any Juniors around here." The boy was named Michael Gerald Ford, and he was followed by John Gardner, Steven Meigs and Susan Elizabeth.

"He's been a very, very fine father," said Mrs. Ford of her spouse, "and he's been a wonderful husband—or we wouldn't have four children."

Not that he's handy around the house. "He hangs the screen doors upside down," she said. "When I said, 'Jerry, you've done it all wrong,' he said 'Okay, if you don't like the way I did it, hire somebody.' I got the message right there. Don't ask him to do anything around the house."

Early Morning Swim

Mrs. Ford stays in bed when her husband rises at 6 A.M. and (except during the late fall and winter) goes for a swim in the backyard, heated swimming pool. Her husband and Steven make breakfast for themselves. Mr. Ford likes toasted English muffins and peanut butter, and Steven occasionally makes pancakes or French toast for his father.

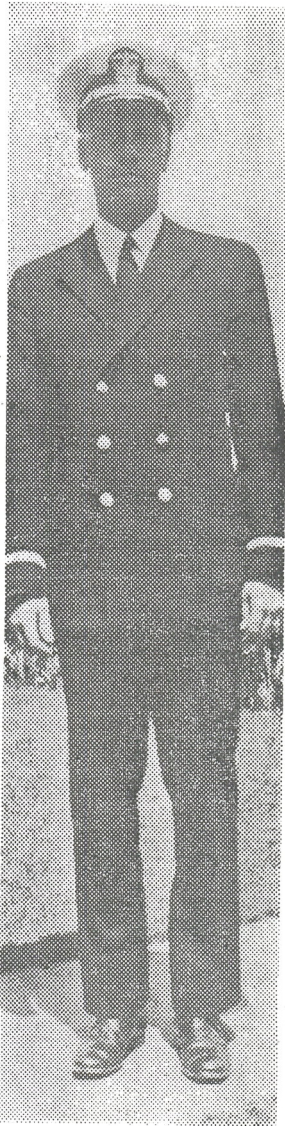
In order to get an early start, Mr. Ford lays out his shirt and tie for the next day before retiring at night. Occasionally he takes out three ties and asks his wife

to choose one. "Sometimes when he doesn't ask me he comes home and I say, 'You don't mean you wore that!' she said. "I tend to be more subdued in selecting his ties."

"By the time Jerry gets home in the evening he's quite anxious for dinner, and of course Steven is wanting to eat," Mrs. Ford went on, adding that she is not a good cook. "So it's, 'How soon will dinner be ready?' When they put me in a casket they'll put a ribbon across me saying, 'When will dinner be ready?'"

Monday night and during much of Sunday, Mr. Ford sits in front of the TV downstairs, watching football, calling plays out loud and exulting when teams do as he suggested.

When his sons played high school football, Mr. Ford arranged his schedule to attend the games. And when President Johnson told Crown Prince and Princess Vong Savang of Laos that he



On leave in 1942, in a snapshot taken by mother.

didn't think college football was an accurate picture of America ("To see some of our best-educated boys spending an afternoon knocking each other down while thousands cheer them on hardly gives a picture of a peace-loving nation"), Mr. Ford objected: "Personally I am glad that thousands of fine young Americans can spend this Saturday afternoon 'knocking each other down' in a spirit of clean sportsmanship and keen competition . . ."

Rarely Reads a Book

Mr. Ford rarely reads a book. Recently he and his wife were both trying to get through the autobiography of Frank Capra, the movie director. "It's an inspirational book," said Mrs. Ford, "because when he doesn't have a dime to make a phone call he turns down a college roommate who offered him \$3,000 a week to be a chemist."

President Johnson once said: "Jerry's the only man I ever knew who can't chew gum and walk at the same time," but Mrs. Ford suggested that President Johnson must have been kidding. She remembers the dinner party at the White House when, as she recalls, "President Johnson put his arm around me and said, 'I just wish we had more Democrats like your husband.' They were both political . . . I guess the word is 'animals,' isn't it?"

"I can't possibly believe Jerry's a dumb-dumb," she said. "He couldn't possibly have been re-elected from the district all these years and he couldn't have gotten the minority leadership. How many really intelligent Presidents have we had? I think a President has to be able to think like the people think—like the nation."

'Never Any Different Style'

Her husband recently said: "Oh, I've read all those comments and I don't deny that I'm a hard worker, that I don't have a lot of the so-called charisma that others have, but I never had any different style, whether it was in school, or in athletics, or in politics. I've always felt if you did a job, that if you were in the right place at the right time you might get recognized."

When he was named Vice President, Mr. Ford said, he was concerned that "my friends might stop calling me Jerry." And to make sure that his friends would look kindly on his appointment, he was ready to provide all the documentation demanded, including a statement of net worth indicating that as of Sept. 30, 1973, Mr. and Mrs. Ford were worth \$256,378. They had \$1,282 in bank accounts, and \$162,000 in real estate: the Alexandria home, a vacation condominium in Vail, Colo., a rental dwelling in Grand Rapids, and a one-quarter interest in a cabin in South Branch Township, Mich.

In addition to his minority leader's salary of \$49,500, Mr. Ford made an additional \$20,000 annually from appearances and speeches before groups around the country, with fees ranging from \$300 to \$2,000.

His Alexandria home does not suggest the life style of a wealthy man. Its principal objet d'art not long ago was a color photograph of the Fords and the Nixons, taken on the evening when Mr. Ford was named Vice President.

Mrs. Ford was quite happy to lose a \$5 bet with her daughter, who had predicted that the President would choose Mr. Ford. In fact, thinking about it all, Mrs. Ford expressed only one regret. "I wish I'd married a plumber," she said. "At least he'd be home by 5 o'clock."