

# Sad, Emotional Nixon Bids Farewell to Staff



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"We leave with high hopes."

By Carroll Kilpatrick  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Richard Nixon bade a sad emotional farewell to his Cabinet and staff in the East Room of the White House yesterday morning as the final minutes of his presidency ticked away.

"We will see you again," he said as his family, standing behind him, fought to hold back their tears. The former President fought hard, too. He gulped at times, cleared his throat, put on reading glasses he never used in public, and perspired profusely.

He received a standing ovation when he entered the room and another when he and his family departed to board a helicopter to take them to Andrews Air Force Base and his last ride as President aboard the Spirit of '76.

When the presidential craft landed five hours later at El Toro Marine Base near San Clemente, the Nixons were warmly applauded by a crowd of several thousand well wishers. Mr. Nixon spoke briefly, promising to continue to work for peace without saying how. At one point the crowd sang a refrain of "God Bless America."

"We're proud that we have brought this whole world closer to the dream of peace," Mr. Nixon said. "I am going to continue to work for peace."

"We are home again," he concluded before boarding a helicopter for his San Clemente home.

After Mr. Nixon left, some people told why they had come to see him. Ralph Clay of Santa Rosa said he wanted "to thank him for ending the Vietnam war."

Jerome Byrne of Newport Beach said he never supported President Nixon but had come out to the airfield out of respect for the presidency.

Gary Lasley of Los Angeles summed up the feeling of the few anti-Nixon spectators by saying, "He should have made a full confession to the American people instead of blaming the Congress."

For part of his flight to California, Mr. Nixon was still The President. His resignation letter, which he signed before the last ceremonial meetings in the White House, was delivered to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger at 11:35 a.m., one hour into the flight to California.

It read: "Dear Mr. Secretary: I hereby resign the Office of President of the United States. Sincerely, Richard Nixon."

Alexander M. Haig Jr., White House staff chief, handed the letter to Kissinger in the Secretary's White House office 25 minutes before Gerald R. Ford took the oath of office as the 38th President of the United States.

The East Room was crowded when the Nixon family entered at 9:32 a.m. Members of the Cabinet and their families, White House staff members and families, and old Nixon friends, including Rabbi Baruch Korff, who headed a final citizens' campaign to save the Nixon presidency, applauded loudly and at length.

See NIXON, A20, Col. 5

"Folksy Nixon Invokes  
Memories of His 'Old Man'"  
SFC 10 Sep 72,  
filed Nixon

## NIXON, From A1

The Nixon legal team, including James D. St. Clair, Leonard Garment and J. Fred Buzhardt, was prominent near the front of the room.

The restraint that marked the President's formal resignation speech to the nation Thursday night was missing as he let his emotions dominate the scene.

He urged all those present to work with "devotion and dedication" for the new President, and he reminisced about the great houses he has seen all over the world.

"But this is the best house," he said. "It is the best because . . . this house has a great heart, and that heart comes from those who serve."

He said he already had said goodbye to the household staff—a staff, he said, that always gave him a lift no matter how tired or down he might be because "they always smiled."

Expressing pride in the Cabinet and staff, Mr. Nixon said, "We have done some things wrong in this administration," but no one in it has profited from his government position.

"Mistakes, yes," he said. "But for personal gain, never."

For emphasis, he repeated that no one in his administration had done anything for personal financial gain, an argument he had used often in attempting to explain away the Watergate scandal. "Not one single man or woman" in his administration profited at public expense, the outgoing President said.

He said he wished he were a wealthy man so he could pay his taxes and "recompense you for the sacrifices all of you have made to servie in government." The comment was greeted with laughter.

Suddenly, turning his thoughts to his parents, Mr. Nixon said: "I remember my old man. I think that they would have called him sort of a little man, common man."

But he wasn't, the man who in two hours would be an ex-President, continued. "He was a great man because he did his job, and every job counts up to the hilt, regardless of what happens."

Then, his voice almost





By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

**Nixon, followed by daughter Tricia and her husband, Ed Cox, arrives for last talk to his White House staff.**

breaking, the President recalled his mother. After a long pause, he said: "I guess all of you would say this about your mother—'my mother was a saint.'"

She will have no books written about her, he said, "but she was a saint."

Mr. Nixon referred to one of his favorite presidents—Theodore Roosevelt. "I am not educated, but I do read books," he said, and he put on his glasses to read a passage he found while reading

on "my last night in the White House."

It was a passage from TR's diary after the death of

his first wife. "And when my heart's dearest died," the diary recorded, "the light went from my life forever."

But Richard Nixon said that Roosevelt "went on" and became President and also served his country as an ex-President. He was always "in the arena, tempestuous, strong, sometimes wrong, sometimes right, but he was a man!"

Many people think that when things don't go right, the light goes out of their lives, but that is not so, Mr. Nixon said.

"It is only a beginning always," he said. "The young





By Douglas Chevalier—The Washington Post

Nixon to staff: "This is the best house . . . because this house has a great heart."





Photos by Frank Johnston—The Washington Post  
White House staffers listen to Mr. Nixon's farewell.

must know it; the old must know it. It must always sustain us because greatness comes not when things go always good for you, but the greatness comes when you are really tested, when you take some knocks, some disappointments, when sadness comes, because only if you have been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain."

"And so we leave with high hopes, in good spirit and with deep humility, and with much gratefulness in our hearts," he said as men and women in the room wiped tears from their eyes.

Mrs. Nixon, Julie and David Eisenhower and Tricia and Edward Cox maintained their composure with difficulty.

As soon as Mr. Nixon finished his 19-minute talk, he and his family, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Ford, walked outside to a waiting helicopter.

The departing President waved animatedly to the crowd as he boarded the chopper. Mrs. Nixon and Tricia and Edward Cox accompanied them. The David Eisenhowers remained in Washington.

When the Nixon family arrived at San Clemente, an anxious, friendly crowd of several hundred pressed against the outside gates of the compound. Many waved signs bearing affectionate comments. One read, "Thank You for being our President."

But the former President simply waved back and, together with the mayor of San Clemente and the owner of the San Clemente Inn who were on hand to greet him, stepped into a golf cart and rode off to his oceanside home.