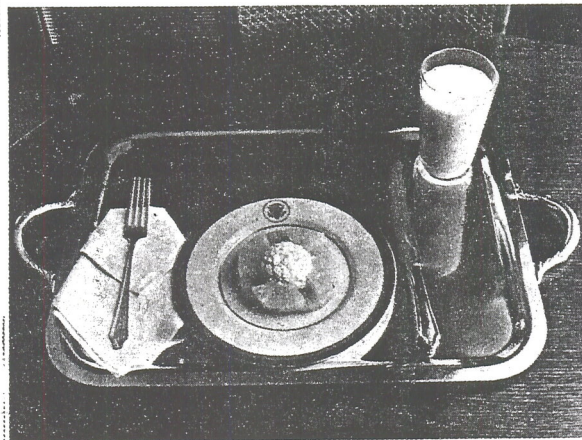


The End of a Presidency —in Photographs

by Lloyd Shearer



WASHINGTON, D.C.

All his life he coveted power, privilege, prestige, and position. When finally, after years of political struggle, he acquired them, he craved their retention so fiercely that to ensure his reelection he needlessly abused power as no President before him had.

It was this unconstitutional abuse of power which in the end brought Richard Milhous Nixon, after 2000 days in office, to his bitter and begrudging resignation.

A man with no really close friends—except possibly Charles "Bebe" Rebozo, his business partner and secret campaign funds collector—Nixon clung always to his handsome family.

To the world outside, his wife Pat, his daughters Julie and Tricia, his sons-in-law David Eisenhower and Eddie Cox—these seemed to be the only people who genuinely stimulated his love and laughter.

He wrapped them around him like pierceless armor designed to shield his person from the slings and arrows of his enemies, real and imaginary, whom he hated with a vengeance that contaminated his staff.

In the last hours of his incumbency he gathered his loved ones together. On the third-floor solarium, photographer Ollie Atkins took the last White House photo of the Nixon family minutes after the President had told them of his irrevocable decision to resign. They smiled bravely.

Later, Atkins clicked off two photos in the Oval Office of Nixon briefing President-to-be Gerald Ford. At noon he photographed the President's last White House lunch—typical, sparse, and dietary—a glass of milk, a dab of cottage cheese rimmed by a slice of pineapple. Then he snapped Nixon outside in the White House rose garden with daughter Tricia, and finally he photographed him walking sadly to his Oval Office where this strange, strong man, his political power destroyed by the Watergate scandal, reviewed the speech announcing his resignation as the 37th President of the United States.



