

Ford's Old Friends Include Big Corporate Lobbyists

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By MICHAEL C. JENSEN AUG 19 1974

President Ford's circle of friends from the business community includes several of Washington's most powerful corporate lobbyists, some of whom are helping shape his Administration during the transitional period.

A number of Mr. Ford's business friends are long-time golfing companions. Several have close ties with his family

and have taken vacations with the Fords.

One friend, Rodney W. Markley Jr., the Ford Motor Company's chief Washington lobbyist, was on his way to his vacation retreat on the French Riviera when he learned that Mr. Ford was to be sworn in as the nation's 38th President. Mr. Markley boarded a plane in Paris and rushed back to Washington.

Dinner With Fords

He arrived too late for the President's swearing-in at the White House, but joined the Fords later that evening at their home in suburban Virginia for a dinner gathering of old friends.

For Mr. Markley, dining with the Fords was nothing new. The 61-year-old automobile executive is one of a tight circle of corporate officials in Washington who are counted among President Ford's closest and most trusted friends.

Besides Mr. Markley, the President's innermost sanctum contains two other corporate figures who are widely known in Washington circles. They are Bryce N. Harlow, Procter & Gamble's chief Washington representative, who for years has moved easily in and out of Government and has advised a succession of Presidents, and William G. Whyte, vice president of the United States Steel Corporation and its top man in Washington.

Two other important business or professional friends are from Mr. Ford's home town of Grand Rapids, Mich., and already are working at the White House. They are Philip W. Buchen, Mr. Ford's former law partner who last week was named counsel to the President, and William Seidman, an accounting-firm executive who is assisting in the President's economic planning.

In addition to business friends, the President's inner circle includes the customary group of old political friends,

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

current and former Representatives and Senators, and staff members among others.

Mr. Whyte, Mr. Markley and the President have been frequent golfing companions at the Burning Tree Club. Their wives and children are friendly; for example, Mr. Whyte says his younger son has dated Mr. Ford's daughter and their families have vacationed together.

And Mr. Ford's accession to the Presidency has not interrupted their relationship. Last Monday, Mr. Harlow, Mr. Whyte and Mr. Markley joined a group of other Presidential friends for drinks and a late buffet at the Fords' house after President Ford had delivered his address to a joint session of Congress.

Subtle Changes

In subtle ways, of course, their acquaintanceship has been altered. Now suddenly, the man whom they have known for 20 or 25 years as "Jerry" has become "Mister President."

"I try to go the formal route," said Mr. Whyte of United States Steel, "but on the golf course, you may find me slipping."

Mr. Markley said his first dinner with Mr. Ford after the Presidential change-of-command was sprinkled with "Mr. Presidents."

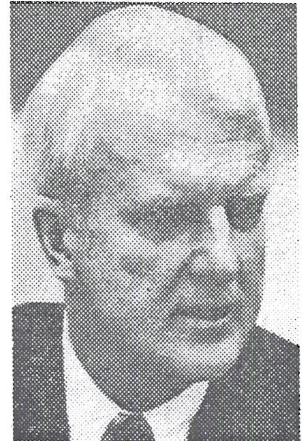
"As much as he teases me about it [use of the formal title] I'll still do it," Mr. Markley said in a telephone interview from his condominium in France. "He said, 'Don't do that,' but I'm determined to use it."

While Mr. Ford's inner circle of personal business friends includes a number of lobbyists among his old associates, other Presidents have chosen a different mixture.

Nixon Liked Millionaires

President Richard M. Nixon, for the most part, preferred the company of self-made millionaires such as Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo and Robert H. Abplanalp, although he also was close to such executives as Elmer Bobst, honorary chairman of the Warner-Lambert Co., W. Clement Stone, the Chicago insurance millionaire, and Donald M. Kendall, chairman of PepsiCo, Inc.

President Lyndon B. Johnson



Associated Press

Philip W. Buchen

was not close to many businessmen, although he counted among his most intimate friends lawyers with strong business ties—men such as Abe Fortas and Clark M. Clifford. President John F. Kennedy's closest personal friends were generally his old Navy associates or school and college associates, rather than businessmen. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, on the other hand, welcomed friendships with businessmen, but preferred chief executives to Washington lobbyists.

Mr. Ford, whose Congressional career began in 1949, has therefore had a greater exposure to Washington lobbyists than he has to other types of businessmen.

Other Lobbyists Included

Beyond the first circle of the President's business intimates there is a wider group that is said to include such Washington lobbyists as Kimberley C. Hallamore of Lear Siegler, Inc., and John F. Mills of the Tobacco Institute, Inc..

Another friend is said to be Stark Ritchie, chief general counsel of the American Petroleum Institute.

The President's friends also include Max M. Fisher, a Detroit industrialist; John M. Shaheen, a New York oilman; Leon W. Parma, a California businessman, and Earl (Red) Blaik, the 77-year-old former football coach at West Point and ex-officer of the Avco Corporation. But these aren't so close as Messrs. Harlow, Whyte and Markley.

The day before Mr. Nixon resigned, for example, Mr.



Bryce N. Harlow
Procter & Gamble



William G. Whyte
U. S. Steel



Rodney W. Markley Jr.
Ford Motor Company

Continued on Page 38, Column 3



United Press International
L. William Seidman

Whyte was host for a Presidential transition meeting at his home. Mr. Harlow and Mr. Buchen, among others, attended.

Mr. Harlow, who has known President Ford since the late nineteen-forties served as a White House counselor to Mr. Nixon, and is considered a power in the Republican party.

He played a major role in writing the last three Republican party platforms while he was employed by Proctor & Gamble. He was also a close personal aide of President Eisenhower's. Mr. Harlow said in a telephone interview that he was not going to return to Government service in the Ford Administration.

Markley Discusses Duties

Like some other corporate officials close to President Ford, Mr. Markley is a registered lobbyist, but he said he believed that was too narrow a definition of his duties. He said he represented the Ford Motor Company before regulatory agencies, in court actions, and in a variety of other Government related activities.

Many of the businessmen close to Mr. Ford pointed out that the new President had an extraordinary number of business friends. "There are probably 1,000 guys around the country who would say they are Jerry Ford's friend," said one executive.

Mr. Hallamore of Lear Sieg-

ler made the point that Mr. Ford did not have "cronies," but rather "friends."

Some of Mr. Ford's business friends across the country, point out that theirs is not an individual, but a family, relationship. For example, Leon Parma, a group executive of Teledyne, Inc., in San Diego, has enjoyed Easter vacations with the Fords for seven or eight years in Palm Springs, according to one of Mr. Parma's associates.

Other friends have known Mr. Ford through a combination of business and sports.

Mr. Blaik, now retired and living in Palm Desert, Calif., said he had known President Ford since 1934. "We played golf about two weeks ago in Newport Beach," he said. "I didn't win," added Mr. Blaik, who was a handicap of 13. "He's pretty good."

Mr. Buchen, the new White House counsel, most recently was a partner of the medium-sized Grand Rapids law firm of Law, Buchen, Wethers, Richardson & Dutcher. Besides a

number of local clients, the firm lists as some of its representatives clients large national companies such as the Brunswick Corporation, the Ford Motor Company, and Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Company and United States Steel.

Seidman Gives Advice

Mr. Seidman, as partner in the accounting firm of Seidman & Seidman, currently on leave of absence, has not yet settled into a formal position in the White House, but is working closely with the President on economic matters.

For the most part, the business community has welcomed Mr. Ford's accession to the Presidency. Even the new President's mild jawboning of General Motors last week, after the automaker announced a 10 per cent price increase for 1975 models, did not seem to distress many executives.

"I think we're going to see a lot of that," said E. Douglas Kenna, president of the National Association of Manufacturers, "and you know, it could be effective."