

Watergate Halts Nixon Library Plan

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With a majority of its executive board of trustees directly implicated in the Watergate investigations, the Richard N. Nixon Foundation has put aside for the time being its plans to build a library and museum as a monument to the President.

"The matter is now on the back burner and, although there is no thought of abandoning the project, it is possible that the library may be deferred until the President is out of office," said Leonard K. Firestone, president of the four-year-old foundation.

Mr. Firestone is president of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company of California and has long been active in Republican

state politics. He said in an interview that no further decisions were expected to be taken on selecting a site for the library or beginning public solicitation of funds "until we see how matters shape up."

Asked about the possible effects of Watergate on the ability of the charitable, nonprofit corporation to raise the \$8-million to \$10-million needed to build the library and museum, he said:

"It is possible, of course, that this regrettable affair could effect the public support we will need, but we will just have to wait and see."

He declined to speculate on the possible replacement of the four members of the foundation's seven-member executive board who are involved in the

Watergate disclosures. Any such discussion at this time would be premature, he said.

"I presume we could not consider any changes in any event until the trustees meet again and no meeting has been scheduled," he explained. The foundation's last meeting was in January.

The four trustees of the foundation's executive group who have been involved with the break-in at the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex and the efforts to cover-up the episode are:

The group's chairman, H. R. Haldeman who, until his resignation, April 30, was the White House chief of staff; the executive trustee's vice chair-

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man, John D. Ehrlichman who also resigned April 30th as the President's chief assistant for domestic affairs; John N. Mitchell, former Attorney General and later director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, who has been indicted for allegedly seeking to influence the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Herbert W. Kalmbach of Newport Beach, the President's personal West Coast lawyer who has acknowledged that he disbursed large amounts of money from covert campaign funds. Mr. Kalmbach is secretary of the executive trustees.

The three other executive trustees in the foundation, none of whose names has figured in

the Watergate investigation, are: Robert H. Finch, former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and later a White House adviser; Mrs. Patricia Riley Hitt, assistant H.E.W. Secretary under Mr. Finch, and Leonard Garment, a lawyer who was recently named White House counsel replacing John W. Dean 3d.

Mr. Ehrlichman also serves as one of five members of the foundation's development committee, headed by Mr. Firestone, to direct studies and draw up recommendations for the library-museum project for which four different sites in southern California have been under consideration.

Mr. Firestone explained, however, that most of the developmental work has been done by himself and Taft Schreiber, a vice president of Music Corporation of America in nearby Universal City and that Mr. Ehrlichman "has not been very much involved in this work."

When the foundation was organized in May, 1969, shortly after the President took office, its 26 trustees were selected by Mr. Nixon himself from among long-time friends and financial supporters of his campaign, members of his White House staff and Nixon relatives. A majority of the trustees are heads of large corporations, bankers and lawyers.

The trustees also include the President's brothers, Donald and Edward Nixon, his son-in-

law, David Eisenhower, and the evangelist, the Rev. Billy Graham.

Mr. Firestone took the position that the involvement of the four executive trustees in Watergate was not critical to the foundation's operations "at this time" because he and three other permanent officers carry on the organization's day to day business.

The other permanent officers are:

Elmer Bobst, chairman of the Lambert Pharmaceutical Company of New York, vice president; Frank DeMarco Jr., a law partner of Mr. Kalmbach who joined the foundation in January and became secretary of the permanent directorate at Mr. Kalmbach's suggestion, and Jack Drown, Los Angeles publishers distributor who is the treasurer, Mr. Drown and his wife are long-time friends of the Nixons.

The money received by the Richard M. Nixon Foundation thus far, it was explained by Mr. Firestone, has consisted entirely of what he called "in house" contributions from the 26 trustees.

A financial report filed with the department of charitable trusts of the California Attorney General's Office shows a net loss of \$8,574 for the foundation in 1972, a result principally to a \$7,500 donation to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

The foundation's 1972 income was listed as \$6,179 with year-

end assets of \$114,076, down from \$122,650 a year earlier, and including \$36,592.38 in cash and deposits. The remainder of the assets were said to consist mainly of some \$70,000 worth of site surveys, architectural and other studies made by the development group.

When the foundation was set up it appeared that the most likely site for the library-museum would be at Whittier College, the small Quaker institution on the southeastern edge of Los Angeles where Mr. Nixon grew up and where he graduated from college in 1934.

Mr. Firestone said that Whittier remained a strong contender but that other appealing offers had been made, including a site near Newport Beach that is controlled by the Irvine Ranch, another in the vicinity of the President's estate on the ocean at San Clemente, adjoining the Western White House, and a more recent offer from the cluster of small colleges at Claremont, east of Los Angeles, near Riverside.

Mr. Firestone said the foundation had been seeking a site easily accessible and large enough to accommodate at least a million visitors a year.

"Mr. Nixon has told us repeatedly to keep it simple, and to make it a place that would stress primarily the office of the President rather than himself," he said.

Its architectural style will probably be that of the early California missions, he added.