

# How Ford Reached the

## Washington

The game book on Jerry Ford says he is pleasant, dogged, loyal to his President, straight-arrow, hard-working, effective leader, no enemies, a football player, still fit but losing his blonde hair.

If a major concern of President Nixon was the confirmability of his candidate for vice president, he couldn't have picked a surer bet than the minority leader of the House of Representatives, Gerald R. Ford (Rep-Mich.).

Ford was the one potential candidate of whom even the most partisan Democrats in Congress said there would probably not be one vote cast against him.

Ford has fought loyally for almost everything President Nixon has asked of Congress — his only recent defection was to oppose opening the highway trust fund for mass transit needs, an action understandable from an auto state congressman.

But he has fought his fights and marshalled his troops without making any enemies across the party aisle. And Ford will be 63 in 1976, almost certainly beyond the age of presidential hopes. His staff has been saying that the vice presidency would be a fine way for Ford to cap his career.

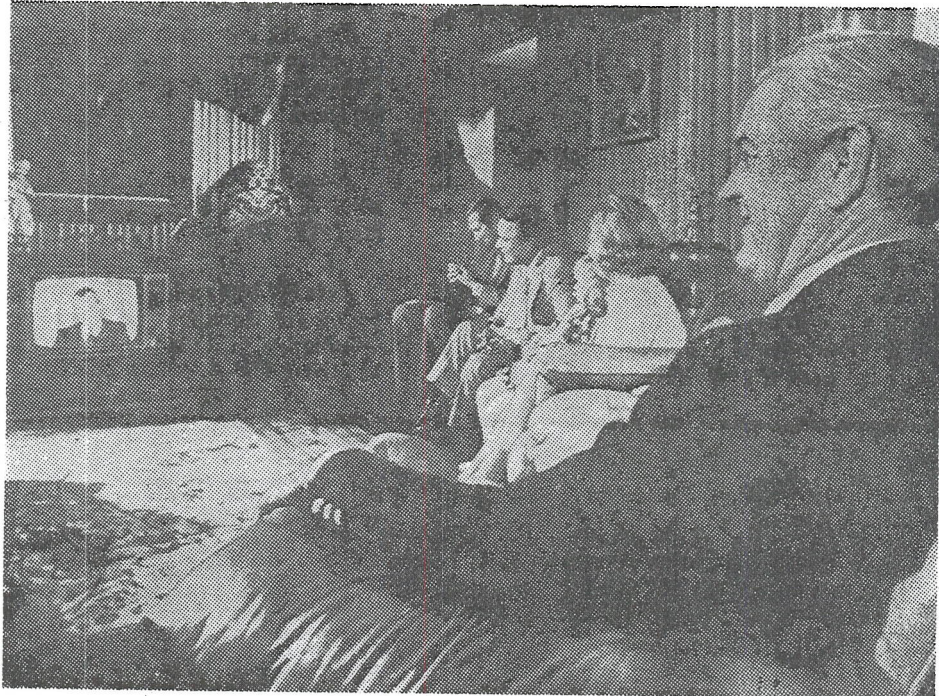
### Career

Ford became Republican leader of the House in 1965 by toppling Charles A. Halleck of Indiana after the Goldwater debacle of 1964 had sunk ranks of House Republicans to their lowest ebb since early New Deal days.

The smart guys said that Ford was the good-looking Boy Scout needed to give Republicans a better television image than cobnosed Charlie Halleck, but that tough politician Melvin R. Laird would soon knock him off and take over as leader.

Laird, then a Wisconsin congressman and now a top aide to President Nixon, never came close.

Ford is not an electric personality, but he works all the time and is considered the one Republican in the House who can achieve something close to party unity. Liberals who strayed from the party line said he never tried to twist arms.



UPI Telephoto

John Connally watched President Nixon on television with his family in their home at Floresville, Texas

In the nine years since he became party leader, Ford has been on the road constantly for any Republican who needed him, making 200 speeches a year. Most Republicans in the House are in his debt for a campaign speech.

Ford was unbeatable as party leader as long as he wished to remain.

### Ambition

Ford's great ambition was to be speaker of the House, but Republicans have about given up winning the House in the foreseeable future and now Ford, if confirmed, will get to sit beside the speaker on the high platform in the House at Joint session.

He was mentioned for vice president in 1964 and 1968 but said the second time that he thought he could make his best contribution in the house.

Ford was born in Omaha on July 14, 1913, but grew up in Grand Rapids, Mich., which he has represented in the House since January 1949.

He played center on the University of Michigan's undefeated national champion football teams in 1932 and 1933 and was named most valuable player on the team in 1934. He turned down professional football offers to go on to Yale Law School and

helped coach the college football team.

After four years in the Navy during World War II he was released as a lieutenant commander and returned to Grand Rapids to practice law.

The war had transformed Ford from isolationist to internationalist, as it had Michigan's Republican Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg (also of Grand Rapids).

Vandenberg, who helped President Truman push the Marshall Plan of aid to post-war Europe through a Republican Congress, encouraged Ford to run against the Grand Rapids

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congressman of the time, Republican Bartel Jokman, who had opposed the Marshall Plan.

Ford won and has been re-elected by majorities of more than 60 per cent every two years since.

### Family

Ford was married just three weeks before his first election to Elizabeth Bloomer of Grand Rapids, a tall, slim onetime fashion coordinator. They have three sons and a daughter ranging in age from 16 to 23.

The Fords live in an unpretentious home in suburban Alexandria, Va., with an all-weather pool where Ford swims every morning

about 6:30 a.m. to keep in shape. The last time a reporter stopped by, there was an American flag on the front screen door and several elephants symbolizing the GOP — in ceramic, glass and papier mache — around the house.

For further relaxation, Ford takes his family to Colorado for a long skiing vacation at Christmas time.

In the House, Ford served on the Appropriations Committee and made his name as a hardworking specialist on the defense budget. He gave this up when he became party leader to concentrate on all issues.

Ford speaks on almost every important controversial

bill. He isn't a magnetic speaker, but he does his homework. And he is always on hand for a roll-call vote, standing in the well of the House urging Republicans to go with the President.

### Vietnam

Ford steadfastly supported Presidents Johnson and Nixon in Vietnam, a legacy of Cold War internationalism. He has strongly supported providing Israel with military aircraft.

Yesterday he stood up for the President again in opposing curbs on the President's power to wage undeclared war.

Like Mr. Nixon, Ford of-

ten uses the vernacular of sports to make a point. "Nobody is going to sit on the bench," he said when he became Republican leader of the House nearly nine years ago. "All of them will be 60-minute players from the beginning."

One element of Ford's record likely to come up in confirmation proceedings involves the financing of his 1970 re-election campaign, which was the subject of an associated Press investigation.

AP reported that Ford had used a circuitous process that concealed the sources of \$11,500 contributed by special-interest groups.

Ford had an election committee of his own.

The Corrupt Practices Act of 1925 required such committees to report the names and addresses of contributors who gave with the knowledge and consent of the candidate. The law put the responsibility for reporting on each committee's treasurer — in this case, Ford.

But the Ford committee did not report the names and addresses of the contributors. Instead it routed the \$11,500 to the Republican National Committee in Washington, the AP found. The GOP unit then funnelled back approximately the same sum to other Ford units in Michigan which reported the money as coming from the national committee.

Almost half the money, \$5000, was contributed by the Securities Industry Campaign Committee, which raises money from Wall Street firms. A check for \$3000 came from an oil man. The Bankers Political Action Committee gave \$2,000. The Boiler-makers-Blacksmiths Union, based in Kansas City, Kansas, gave \$1000.

Ford defened the unusual two-step procedure as within the law." He told the AP he had signed his checks over to the GOP national committee because his own campaign committee had reached the limit of contributions allowed under Michigan law. He said he was unaware that the national committee had sent back more than \$12,000 to the other Ford committees.