

# Leaders Across Nation Promise

## Support to New President

By Stuart Auerbach

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America rallied to its new President yesterday.

Liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, businessmen and labor leaders, organized religion and civil rights leaders all promised their support to Gerald R. Ford.

Mixed with the good wishes for Mr. Ford were expressions of bitterness from some of former President Nixon's most ardent supporters as they continued to claim he was forced out of office by Democrats, liberals and the newspapers.

And some of Mr. Nixon's old enemies, including a few who made his White House "enemies' list," continued to attack him.

But for Gerald Ford, the verdict was virtually unanimous.

Elliot L. Richardson, who held three Cabinet posts in the Nixon administration before quitting as Attorney General over the firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, called Mr. Ford "a man of high integrity."

"He is genuinely a good man—decent, sensible, respectable. He works well with other people."

Former Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York speaking last night at a Republican fund raising dinner in Bangor, Maine, praised President Ford as "a man of integrity, dedication and abiding faith in America."

"The tragedy of the past two years is ended—a tragedy that overshadowed the positive achievement of the Nixon administration, particularly those achievements in the pursuit of world peace which undeniably obtained greatness," Rockefeller said.

Leaders among the nation's mayors, county officials and governors also pledged their "fullest cooperation and assistance" to Mr. Ford in "reuniting the nation and restoring its sense of common purpose and direction."

In a joint telegram San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto, president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors; Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, president of the National League of Cities; Davis County, Utah, Commissioner Stanley M. Smoot, president of the National Association of Counties, and Utah Gov. Calvin L. Rampton, chairman of the National Governors Conference, asked for a meeting with President Ford "to personally express our support and seek yours."

The nation's top labor leaders also pledged their support. "Now is the time for all Americans to rally behind the new President," said George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO.

Teamster President Frank E. Fitzsimmons said his union's members "are ready to rally behind President Gerald Ford for the good of the nation, because it is a proud and great nation and whoever is this nation's president deserves our moral and physical support."

Fitzsimmons said he has "great compassion in my heart for Richard Nixon and his family." He called Mr. Nixon "my President and my friend," and said, "Those are not entities which one lightly discards."

The head of the nation's other large independent union, Leonard Woodcock of the United Automobile Workers, said, "Obviously the UAW will cooperate with the new Ford administration in any effort it would make to correct the enormous economic and moral difficulties the nation faces."

I. W. Able, president of the United Steelworkers of America, offered support to Mr. Ford along with his hope that the new President "will find it possible to turn American away from from the shames and corruption of the past toward a bright new era in our nation's proud history."

Business leaders also supported President Ford and offered effusive praise on his ability to govern the country.

Henry Ford II, president of the Ford Motor Co., said in a telegram to the new President:

"In my opinion we are all fortunate to have a man of your stature, integrity

and ability to accomplish this unprecedented transfer of authority and to lead the nation in its efforts to cope with the critical problems of our time."

E. Douglas Kenna, president of the National Association of Manufacturers, called for "a reconciliation of the nation under a new President."

"In Gerald Ford," he continued, "we have a President with outstanding qualifications—integrity, ability and experience—and the NAM looks forward to working with him in tackling priority problems such as inflation, the capital shortage and the energy crisis."

The president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Edwin W. Beeby, predicted that the resignation of Mr. Nixon will have a positive effect on business.

"The cloudy situation of Watergate has limited business opportunities abroad," he said. With Watergate out of the way, some of these

things can proceed."

Religious leaders of all faiths joined in praising Mr. Ford. In St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, Terrence Cardinal Cooke offered special prayers for the new President.

The head of America's Reformed Jewish Congregational Body, Rabbi Alexandra M. Schindler, said, "America has finally emerged from its dreadful nightmare, and we are much relieved."

He also called for a time for reconciliation.

The spiritual leader of the world's largest Jewish house of worship, Temple Emanuel in New York, Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel, asked that "God bestow wisdom and sensitivity upon our new President."

The leaders of the Mormons asked that Americans rally to strengthen the nation. Mormon Presidents Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner and Marion G. Romney also said they "regret the circumstances" that caused Mr. Nixon's resignation and "fully support" President Ford.

The first black clergyman to deliver an invocation at a presidential inauguration, Bishop C. Ewbank Tucker of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Louisville, offered his "deepest sympathy" to former President Nixon. He took part in Mr. Nixon's 1969 inaugural program.

But a conservative preacher who had organized Vietnam "victory marches" in Washington, the Rev. Carl McIntire, called Mr. Nixon's resignation speech "a disgrace" because it sidestepped Watergate.

"The worst thing about the speech," said McIntire, "was there was no sense of guilt, humiliation, and he

didn't ask the American people to forgive him," said McIntire, president of the International Council of Christian Churches.

But the National Prayer and Fast Committee, organized by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, expressed regret at Mr. Nixon's resignation.

More support for President Ford came from Robben W. Fleming, president of the University of Michigan, who said, "There will now be a realistic possibility of binding up the nation's wounds and getting on with the affairs of government."

He said that Mr. Ford, who graduated from the University of Michigan, has "unquestioned" integrity. "He is widely respected by

his colleagues in both parties and will have their support. He has a deep understanding of our people and our institutions. If he moves to establish a strong bipartisan support structure, which I hope he will, I believe this country will come together again with astonishing speed," Fleming said.

Most black leaders also voice support of President Ford. Vernon Jordan, executive director of the National Urban League, said blacks should give Mr. Ford the benefit of the doubt and pointed out that the new President has been accessible to blacks.

"We can do business with him," Jordan said.

He said that Mr. Ford, as

vice president, had met with black appointees of the Nixon administration, addressed the National Urban League convention, and has been close to blacks in his hometown of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Blacks, continued Jordan, "should not judge Jerry Ford as a congressman from Michigan, but take him at face value, then watch him, help him and then make a judgment."

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, another black leader, said Mr. Ford should consider naming a black as vice president. He noted that Sen. Edward W. Brooke, a black Republican from Massachusetts, was on

the list of possible successors to Mr. Ford.

Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, called Mr. Ford "a normal man" and said minorities will fare under the Ford administration about as well as they have in the past.

But Wilkins praised President Ford for "his willingness . . . to learn about the problems of minorities."

"I don't pretend that he's a flaming civil rights leader. He is far from it. But he gives every indication that we can expect to get a hearing from him on our problems," said Wilkins.

But Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich., a black congressman, said Mr. Ford may be "even worse" than Mr. Nixon be-

cause he was not elected and has no reason to be receptive "to the poor and the left-out."

As leaders of America praised President Ford, Mr. Nixon's friends and family offered a mixture of reactions to his resignation.

His cousin, Phillip Milhous, of Sacramento, said Mr. Nixon was brought down "by we the people, a flock of buzzards hollering for blood." An aunt, Jane Neson of Porterville, Calif., supported Mr. Nixon but conceded his resignation was probably for the best.

Claire Booth Luce, a long supporter of Mr. Nixon, said she felt "very low" after Thursday night's resignation

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speech. "Well," she said. "Nixon bit the dust but he didn't eat it. He went down with dignity."

Former members of Mr. Nixon's cabinet said the accomplishments of his nearly six years in office will be remembered long after what former Postmaster General Winston Blount called "the shabby events of Watergate."

One of Mr. Nixon's oldest friends, former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Robert H. Finch, called Mr. Nixon's resignation speech "a good effort. He rose to the occasion and made it positive and set the stage properly for Jerry Ford."

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