Ford and Carter Lead Public Policy Conference

Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter came together at the Ford Library, February 9 and 10, for the first in a series of presidential library conferences on the public and public policy.

The conference, convened to discuss social security, jobs and productivity, and inflation, assembled former presidents, private citizens, pollsters, economists, congressmen, and officials from the present and past administrations. The inaugural conference on the public and public policy yielded another first, "I believe this is the first instance of two former presidents participating together in a conference of any kind," reported Director Don Wilson.

The two day gathering was co-sponsored by the Library and the Domestic Policy Association, a nationwide network of colleges, libraries, and community organizations. The Domestic Policy Association had sponsored over 300 local forums throughout the country and the "capstone" conference at the Ford Library was the culmination of these local meetings. Among the forty participants were David Mathews and Bill Usery of the Ford cabinet, former OMB director James McIntyre, Ford Foundation trustee Dick Cheney, and Bill Baroody of the American Enterprise Institute.

In his opening statement, Mr. Ford underlined his concern about the "vawning chasm" between the public and the policymaker. "The responsibility we all face," he said, "is how to restore the feeling that each of us can and does make a difference." Pressing public issues demand the public's common wisdom, the former president added.

At an evening banquet in honor of the participants, President Carter spoke about "The Importance of the Public — A President's View." He expressed the view that success in resolving complex issues rested upon a dynamic public involvement. "I think this particular forum will prove that the education of the public — of a knowing public — is a crucial element of the strength of our government," he said.

continued
Public Policy continued

Introducing President Carter to the 400 banquet guests, Mr. Ford remarked that former presidents were accorded certain privileges. "You are allowed to selectively remember what you choose to remember," he confided, "and selectively forget what you choose to forget. For example, I don't remember ever saying anything bad about Jimmy Carter. Further, I don't remember Jimmy Carter ever saying anything bad about me!"

After a curbside welcome from Gerald Ford Wednesday morning, Jimmy Carter began his visit to the Library with an hour long tour of the building accompanied by Mr. Ford, Don Wilson, and Bill Stewart. Devoting particular attention to the research room, manuscript stacks, and audiovisual areas, Carter said the Ford Library was a model he would use in planning his own library and museum in Atlanta.

After the conference President Carter went on to Grand Rapids to see the Museum and confer with curator Will Jones and Jordan Sheperd, chairman of the group that supervised its design and construction.

On the second day the former presidents took a short break from the conference to field foreign policy questions from a select group of 1,200 University of Michigan students who gathered in Rackham Assembly Hall.

Part of the conference proceedings was broadcast live via video-teleconference and selections then rebroadcast on PBS' "MacNeil-Lehrer Report." The second conference on the public and public policy is scheduled for early next year at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas.

Workshop on economic problems included Walt Rostow, Dottie Marlowe, Leonard Woodcock, Merle Shephard, Robert Woodson, moderator William Baroody.
First Research Grant Awarded

Donald F. Kettl of Charlottesville, Virginia is the first recipient of a Gerald R. Ford Foundation grant for research at the Library. A professor in the department of government and foreign affairs at the University of Virginia, Kettl is preparing a monograph that will treat the relationship between presidential policy and Federal Reserve Board decisions since the Johnson administration.

According to Paul McCracken, chairman of the grants-in-aid program, applications will be received at any time and awards made twice a year. Applications are invited from faculty, doctoral candidates, writers, journalists, and others whose research would benefit from use of the Library's archives. Forms and information are available from the Gerald R. Ford Library, 1000 Beal, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109.

Visit by Chinese

Five senior archivists from the People's Republic of China recently visited the Library during a 23 day journey across the United States. As with many social science disciplines, archival work in China is recovering from the effects of the Cultural Revolution and the delegation, led by Feng Zizhi of the State Bureau of Archives in Beijing, came to observe developments in archival management and technology. After a tour of the building, Don Wilson was host at a luncheon that featured a menu based on a Michigan harvest.
Foreign Policy Conference
A Singular Success

"Your conference was super and everything moved along without a hitch," one departing participant enthused, "even your pickets were well-behaved!" (He was referring to a group of demonstrators who lined a nearby road for an hour of speaking before drifting away.) While smooth logistics merit attention, everyone attending recognized that the indisputable success of the conference rested with a distinguished cast, headed by Gerald Ford.

"The Presidency, Congress and Foreign Policy" opened at 9:45 a.m. on Wednesday, November 10 and closed midday Thursday. Approximately thirty academics, former members of Congress, and officials from past presidential administrations took part, either as presenters or discussants, in the Library's first conference.

An audience of historians, political scientists, and former congressmen listened as both Democrats and Republicans generally endorsed President Ford's charge that Congress, in diluting presidential authority, had created "an imperiled presidency." Earlier, enlarging on this point, Mr. Ford remarked, "As a longtime member of Congress, I often wondered if the president was moving too fast on foreign policy. But as president, I found the bitter experience of Vietnam imposed too much tampering on 200 years of basic government machinery. . . ."

In the minds of many conferes the primary restricter of presidential initiative has been the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which limits a chief executive's use of military forces. Surprisingly, even former members of Congress contend that presidential authority must be reestablished. Speaking for a consensus during a session on congressional perspective of foreign affairs, Gale McGee, former senator from Wyoming, declared, "I firmly believe the authority of the presidency must be reasserted, understood, aided, and abetted."

For many the highlight of the two day forum was the panel discussion chaired by President Ford Wednesday afternoon. In a wide-ranging discussion on executive leadership in foreign affairs, Mr. Ford was joined by Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security advisor, and former secretaries of state Dean Rusk, William Rogers, and Alexander Haig.

Although the former president and the secretaries of state were interviewed before the conference, they met again with the media on Thursday, following the death of Leonid Brezhnev. Their assessments of the deceased Russian leader and their thoughts on Soviet succession received national coverage.

Other program participants included General Brent Scowcroft, William Simon, Kenneth Rush, Charles Chamberlain, and banquet speaker Walt Rostow. Remarks of welcome were offered by former Senator Robert Griffin, chairman of the board of the Gerald R. Ford Foundation, one of the conference sponsors. The University of Michigan, a co-sponsor, was represented by its president, Harold Shapiro.
Outstanding Exhibit Slated For Museum

Shown here are six photographs from "The American Image" exhibition which will be on view in the Museum for ten weeks beginning May 19. The 190 photographs comprising the exhibit were chosen from some five million still photographs, all from collections compiled by government agencies and now among the holdings of the National Archives. Many persons acclaimed as artists in the medium of photography are represented, including Ansel Adams, Mathew Brady, Dorothea Lange, Lewis Hine, Russell Lee, and Timothy O'Sullivan. Taken together, the work of these artists offers visual evidence of the major themes of American history between 1860 and 1960: war, exploration and settlement, rise of the city, mechanization, and immigration.


An Improbable Occurrence

Like all the other pictures selected for "The American Image", the photograph of carrier crewmen playing basketball joined the exhibition solely on its historical and artistic merits. No one on the selection jury was aware that the blond man straining for the tip-off was a 30 year old naval lieutenant named Gerald Ford. Credit for identifying Ford goes to Richard Holzhausen, Library audiovisual archivist and a visitor to the original 1979 exhibition in Washington. Richard recalled seeing the identical picture among the thousands of personal photographs President Ford donated to the United States before leaving the White House.
Students See Government Close-Up

The Ford Museum was host to one thousand West Michigan high school students participating in the Close-Up program. Since 1971 the Close-Up Foundation, in connection with local school districts nationwide, has encouraged students to see firsthand local, state, and national government at work. Museum curator Will Jones conducted tours for participants and discussed the National Archives and presidential libraries as one component of the federal bureaucracy.

As House minority leader, Gerald Ford was one of Close-Up’s congressional speakers. As president, he received hundreds of Close-Up students at the White House and also recorded a greeting for the 1975-76 program.

Museum Celebrates Scout Anniversary Week

Scout Anniversary Week was recognized at the Museum with several new programs. During the week of February 7 docents provided guided tours for 85 scouts from the area. The tours emphasized Gerald Ford’s boyhood and scouting years.

Eagle Scouts were present in the Museum during Anniversary Week to answer questions about scouting and Gerald Ford’s lifelong interest in the Boy Scouts of America.

In further recognition of the first Eagle Scout to become president a new publication, Gerald R. Ford’s Scouting Years, was released at the Museum. Published by the West Michigan Shores Council the book is available from the organization and at the Museum.

Acquisitions

Mrs. Julius Shiskin has donated the papers of her late husband. For many years a top government statistician, Julius Shiskin was commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 1973 to 1978.

The Library has accessioned an additional 14 linear feet of records of the Council of Economic Advisers. Also received were the financial records of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum Dedication Committee.

Other donors were James M. Wilson, Jr., a State Department official in the Nixon and Ford administrations, and Charles Goodell, who contributed papers relating mostly to his service as chairman of the Presidential Clemency Board, 1974-1975.

Trustees to Meet in Washington

The annual meeting of the trustees of the Gerald R. Ford Foundation will take place on March 29 at the Capitol Hill Club. Fundraising and program development will be among the topics taken up by the Board.

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Press Secretaries Meet at Ford Museum

Last fall Gerald Ford moderated a Foundation-sponsored debate on the press and the presidency in connection with Grand Rapids' annual civic celebrations. The museum event brought together a distinguished panel of three presidential press secretaries and three national journalists to discuss the natural antagonisms of newsmaking. Former Carter spokesman Jody Powell makes a point while President Ford, Reagan aide David Gergen, and former Ford press secretary Ron Nessen look on.