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FORD REPLACES NIXON AS U.S. PRESIDENT

By MARGIE BAUMAN

Gerald R. Ford took the oath of office Friday as the 38th President of the United States, less than an hour after Richard M. Nixon formally resigned from office.

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the Un-

ited States, so help me God," Ford said.

The transfer of powers came as Congress was preparing for impeachment debates and the anticipated trial of Nixon. Now those impeachment plans lie moot.

Ford made clear as he took office that he realized he had not been elected by the people, but was asking that the country unite behind him, nevertheless.

"If you have not chosen me by secret ballot, neither have I gained office by any secret promises," he said shortly after the oath of office was delivered by Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Warren E. Burger.

"I have not campaigned either for the presidency or the vice presidency. I have not subscribed to any partisan platform. I am indebted to no man and only to one woman; my dear wife,"

Ford said.

(Ford's acceptance of the presidency, as well as Nixon's resignation, were heard live in Fairbanks, via radio and television).

"I have not sought this enormous responsibility, but I will not shirk it. Those who nominated and confirmed me as vice president were my friends and are my friends.

"They were of both parties, elected by the people and acting

under the constitution in their name.

"It is only fitting then that I should pledge to them and to you that I will be the president of all the people," Ford said.

".....there is no way we can go forward except together and no way anybody can win except by serving the people's urgent needs. We cannot stand still or slip backwards. We must go forward

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Gerald R. Ford . . .

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now, together," he said.

Ford also said that "to the peoples and the governments of all friendly nations, and I hope that could encompass the whole world, I pledge an uninterrupted and sincere search for peace.

"America will remain strong and united. But it's strength will remain dedicated to the safety and sanity of the entire family of man, as well as to our own precious freedom," he said.

OPENNESS

Ford said that in all his public and private acts as president "I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor, with full confidence that honesty is always the best policy in the end.

"My fellow Americans, the long national nightmare is over. Our Constitution works. Our great republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule . . .

"But there is a higher power; by whatever name we honor Him, who ordains not only righteousness but love; not only justice, but mercy.

"As we bind up the internal wounds of Watergate, more painful and more poisonous than wars, let us restore the Golden Rule to our political process and let brotherly love purge our hearts of suspicion and of hate."

Ford said at the state of his speech that he was asking the prayers of all Americans.

"Now," he said, "Before closing I want to ask again your prayers, for Richard Nixon and his family.

"May our former president, who brought peace to millions, find it for himself. May God bless and comfort his wonderful wife and daughters, whose love and loyalty will forever be a shining legacy to all who bear the lonely burden of the White House."

Ford said he pledged to uphold the Constitution, to do what is right, as God gives me to see the right and to do the very best I can for America. God helping me, I will not let you down," he said.

WHO IS FORD

The 38th President of the United States, with 25 years of congressional service and nine months as vice president behind, had told his wife just about a year ago that he would run one more time for Congress, and then retire from politics, in January, 1977. His wife had wanted him to get out of politics.

Ford had said that he never wanted to be President of the United States; all he ever wanted to be was the Speaker of the House.

Ford was born July 14, 1913 in Omaha, Nebraska and spent most of his boyhood in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His name, at

birth was Leslie King, but his parents were divorced when he was an infant and when his mother remarried Gerald R. Ford Sr., he adopted young Leslie and renamed him.

Ford attended the University of Michigan, where he was center on the UM football team during their 1932 and 1933 championship seasons. He was also named captain and most valuable player for the Wolverines 1934 team, one of their worst in history. Ford turned down offers to play for the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers, opting instead to attend Yale Law School. .

After serving in World War II Ford went back to Grand Rapids, Michigan and began practicing law. Three years later he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, ousting the Republican incumbent in the primary.

In 1948 he married one of his most ardent campaign workers, Elizabeth Bloomer.

Ford won a reputation early in his congressional career as an expert on the military budget. He also supported President Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam war effort. As early as 1965, Ford was calling for the type of blitz bombing of military targets around Hanoi and Haiphong in North Vietnam that President Nixon launched at the end of the war.

In the House, Ford voted in support of big defense budgets, but also consistently to cut federal spending, particularly in programs for rapid social and civil rights changes.

Ford was staunchly opposed to school desegregation busing. He also voted consistently in favor of environmental bills and many consumer bills.

In 1970, Ford led more than 100 House members in an effort to impeach U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

He called for an impeachment investigation of Douglas' association with a foundation built partly on gambling money and also the appearance of some of Douglas' writings in Playboy Magazine.

The House Judiciary Committee subsequently dismissed Ford's charges, concluding there was no link between the Supreme Court Justice and gambling and that the other charges did not warrant impeachment.

Ford is described by the media as an open man, a plain person with a penchant for work and simple, straight talk.

He is seen within his own party as a man with a clean reputation, with an unflappable disposition, a solid base of party support and, as one newsman put it, "a certain gray acceptability to almost everyone."