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The Story of  
**RONALD REAGAN**

\$2<sup>00</sup>

(A Photo Biography)

*By Richard P. Jennett*



# *The Story of*

# **RONALD REAGAN**

by

**Richard P. Jennett**

*Assistance in the preparation of this manuscript  
was rendered by Wendell Weston.*

*Winner By a Million Votes!*

Few political professionals took Ronald Reagan seriously as a candidate in '66. He first had to face former San Francisco Mayor Christopher in the GOP primary. Then he had to face Governor Brown in the run-off. For Brown had won his second term four years earlier by defeating former Vice President Nixon. A legend had since grown up that Brown was unbeatable. And Reagan, who had held no public office at age 55, was a Republican in a state where the Democrats had won every election since Ronald Reagan by a margin of 100,000 votes.

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# Mrs. Reagan

This booklet is dedicated to Mrs. Nancy Reagan, the woman behind the man.

In the following pages you will see evidence of the important role this surgeon's daughter has played in helping Ronald Reagan fulfill his destiny to date.

Time and time again she has sacrificed the comforts of the home life she prefers above all else, in order that her man might honor the duty he recognized to serve his fellow man.

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## Winner By A Million Votes!

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# Governor Reagan A Natural!

In 1966 some critics said that Reagan wasn't qualified to be Governor of California. They were surprised to discover that he is a "natural" as Governor.

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As late as 1960, Ronald Reagan had been a Democrat (although in three consecutive presidential elections he had supported Republican candidates). His transformation to Republican, accelerated in 1964, reached fruition in 1966 as he formally entered the race to become California's Governor!

Reagan launched at once into an attack on Gov. Brown's Administration. "Gov. Brown," he said, "calls his State budget lean and hard, and believe me, that's what he's doing — leanin' hard."

As for the Great Society, Reagan said: "It grows greater every day — greater in cost, greater in inefficiency, and greater in waste."

Day after day Reagan lashed out at Big Government as being inept and out of touch with the People. He called for a fresh solution, a CREATIVE SOCIETY that will "tap the talents of our people to bring the fresh air of common sense thinking to bear on their problems."

Reagan made it plain from the start that his aim was not to divide men but to bring them together, not to create fresh wounds but to heal old ones, not to tear down but to creatively and positively build up!

As he spoke during the campaign, the shape of his Administration slowly became clear. His would be a Government that served the people in such ways as a Government ought to serve its people, but would not intrude on their personal liberties or bleed their pocketbooks dry for abusive taxes.

# Seeks Not To Divide Men But To Bring Them Together!



Governor Reagan is shown here making his maiden address to the people of California. This speech has been compared to Thomas Jefferson's inaugural address — an 1801 masterpiece that successfully sought to bury old antagonisms.



*Ronald Reagan avoids the use of labels that divide one Republican from another — or one American from another!*

Ronald Reagan has an unusual ability to heal divisions within a faction, heal splits within a party, and even heal wounds left by years of combat between parties. He is first and foremost not a politician but an American! In real life he has fulfilled a remark he once made about Knute Rockne:

“He gave his team, torn with dissension, the knowledge of what it was like to play together, and to sacrifice their individual quarrels for a common goal.”



*PHOTOS: At left Reagan is with California Senator George Murphy. Above, he is shaking hands at a Governor's Conference with Governor Smylie of Idaho, while former Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania and Governor Volpe of Massachusetts look on approvingly.*

## Has Rare Leadership Qualities!

When Reagan was a boy, his father caught him fighting in the school yard. The elder Reagan broke up the fight, then lifted young Ronald right off the ground with the flat side of his boot. "That's not because you were fighting," the strong-willed elder Reagan declared . . . "but because you weren't winning!" Ever since then, any time Ronald Reagan has gotten involved in any kind of competitive scrap, he has fought to win!

The story of Reagan's string of victories probably begins when he was in high school at Dixon (90 miles from Chicago). He went out for the football team, but at 5 foot 3 and 108 pounds he wasn't given much of a chance of making the squad. His fighting spirit so impressed the coach that he used Ronald at guard in a scrimmage. Reagan played so hard he stayed on as a first-string regular!

He showed the same spirit while working his way through Eureka College. A former college star was helping out as coach one day and Reagan was given the assignment of trying to block the muscular 200 pound graduate. He threw a crunching block that lifted the ex-star off his feet and sent him flying through the air. From the moment that grad limped off the field, Reagan was a first stringer during three college football seasons!

He showed that spunk again when he enthusiastically talked his way into his first job as a \$5 per week radio sportscaster.

But his most determined bid for a new job came after he had moved to Hollywood. He heard that a movie was being cast about the life of one of his heroes, the late Knute Rockne. He wanted the part of George Gipp, a Notre Dame sports immortal. Reagan got an interview with the producer. It took but a few moments for him to realize the producer was giving him the brush-off. Fighting mad now, Reagan raced home, and put on his college football uniform and then stormed back in to ask the producer if NOW he looked the part.

Recognizing the true spirit of the late "Gipper" when he saw it, the producer booked an immediate screen test for Reagan.

No less a star than Pat O'Brien played in the test with Reagan. The result? What else! Reagan got the role — and turned in one of the greatest performances of his film career. (See photo at right from that movie — one of the most inspiring American films ever produced!)

*At right, Reagan is seen with Pat O'Brien in "The Knute Rockne Story."*

# When Reagan Goes After A Job

## He Fights Stubbornly

## And Gets It!



# As A Hollywood Union Leader

## He Insisted Producers Had

## A Right To Earn A Profit

Ronald Reagan is the last one in the freshman class at Eureka College that a by-stander would have picked out as a likely leader. He was just a shy, skinny kid working his way through a quiet Church-affiliated school by washing dishes and working as a life guard.

But one day, during the Depression, an event happened that was to change his whole life and set him on a road now leading directly towards the California Governor's office:

It so happened that Eureka College became very poor during the Depression. The new President decided he would solve this problem by firing most of the good faculty members, thus trimming expenses. Of course, this would also destroy the college's high academic standing and also make it impossible for many juniors and seniors to graduate with credits in their chosen major fields. The students, with much to lose, decided to stage a strike. There was nothing of the modern Berkeley riot atmosphere about this strike. It was marked by an air of moderation, calm and even politeness that captured the fancy of the public and won widespread attention.

Ronald Reagan, an almost unknown freshman, was chosen to propose the strike plan at a meeting — simply because the older students had much more to lose by mass faculty firings than did newcomers (whose courses could be adjusted to fit the new situation). Reagan found himself at one with this gathering. He presented the strike plan so forcefully and enthusiastically that most faculty members — who were present — came to their feet in a spontaneous burst of applause. The motion carried unanimously. And the strike began. The students on strike refused to attend classes. But they worked so hard on their studies that they kept up with and even ahead of their class work. In the end, the college trustees agreed to a compromise. Professors, who hadn't been paid in months, agreed to stay on without pressing for back pay — and the school dropped plans to fire them. Reagan had made his mark as an inspirational leader at a time of crises.

This attribute came to the surface again in Hollywood. A union was formed and Reagan was six times chosen as its President. So hard a bargainer was he that on one occasion he won concessions from the Producers that he hadn't really meant to win. Driven by a sense of fair play, he handed the concessions right back to the stunned producers on a silver platter — advising them that they had a right to earn a fair profit on their enterprises.

It was this sense of crusading zeal mixed with a rare sense of justice that stamped Reagan with the label "BORN LEADER" — and won the respect during troubled Hollywood union days of such famous actors as Charlton Heston (shown below). These same qualities will make Reagan one of the truly great Governors in California's proud history!

*Reagan as President of the Screen Actors Guild coming out of a tough bargaining session. With him is Charlton Heston, later to become SAG President himself.*



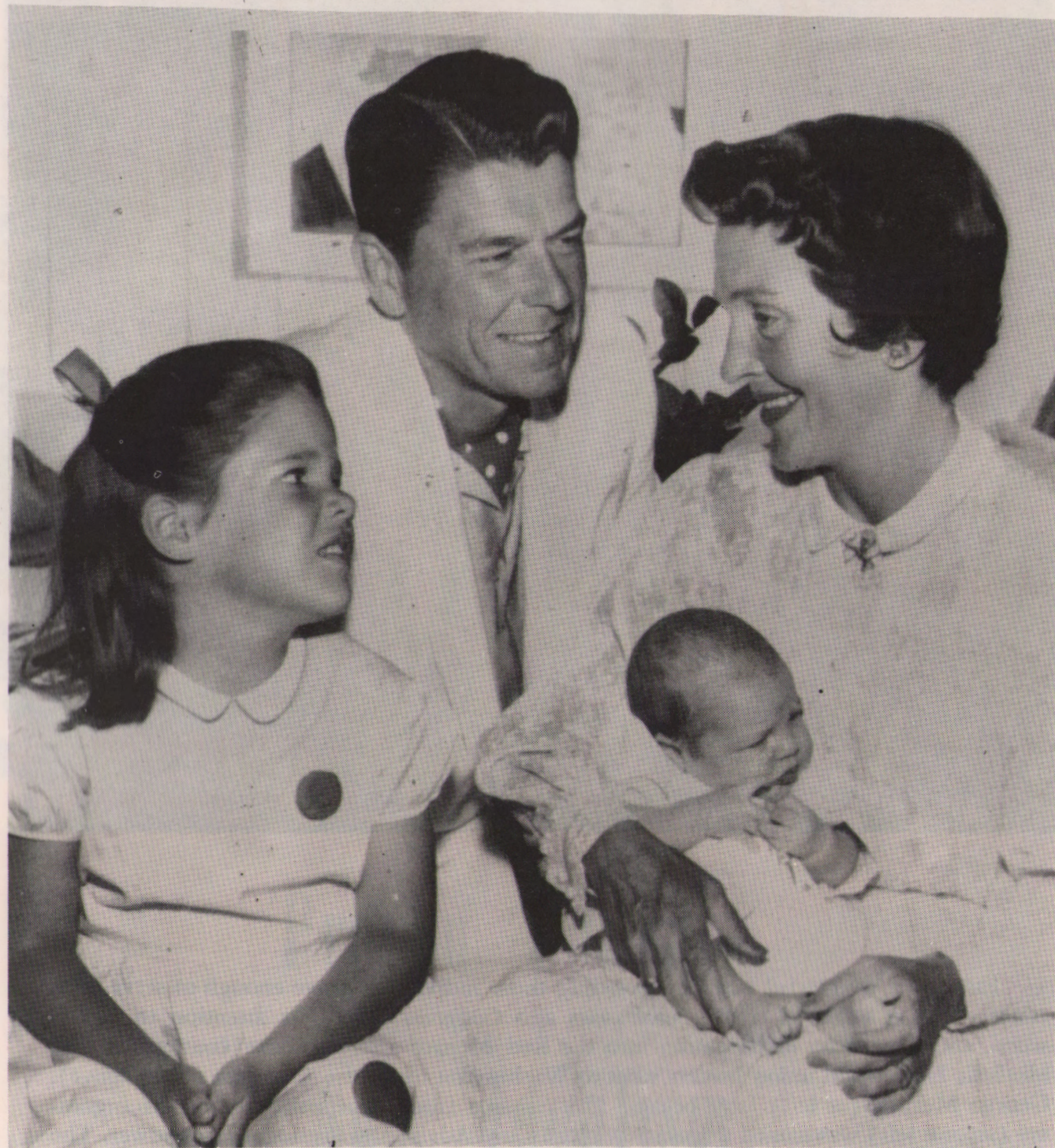




## Proven Courage And Idealism



Fate has a wonderful way of rewarding those individuals brave enough to serve their country well at a time of crises. Some years ago Congress turned its attention to Hollywood, and opened an investigation into the Red Menace there. These courageous and idealistic Hollywood union leaders went to Washington to testify. One (see photo above), George Murphy (at left) later became U.S. Senator from California. Robert Montgomery (second left) was named a Special White House Adviser by President Eisenhower. The third, Ronald Reagan (on the right in photo) was elected Governor of California!



Reagan was a beaming family man with a new baby son when he posed for this shot with his wife, the former Nancy Davis. (The daughter of a Midwest surgeon, she's an ex-actress.) At the time of this photo Reagan was serving as host on television's General Electric Theatre and was touring the nation as a speechmaker for G.E. His theme was then, as it is today, the evils of burgeoning government.

## He Has Constantly Sacrificed His Home Life When Duty Calls!

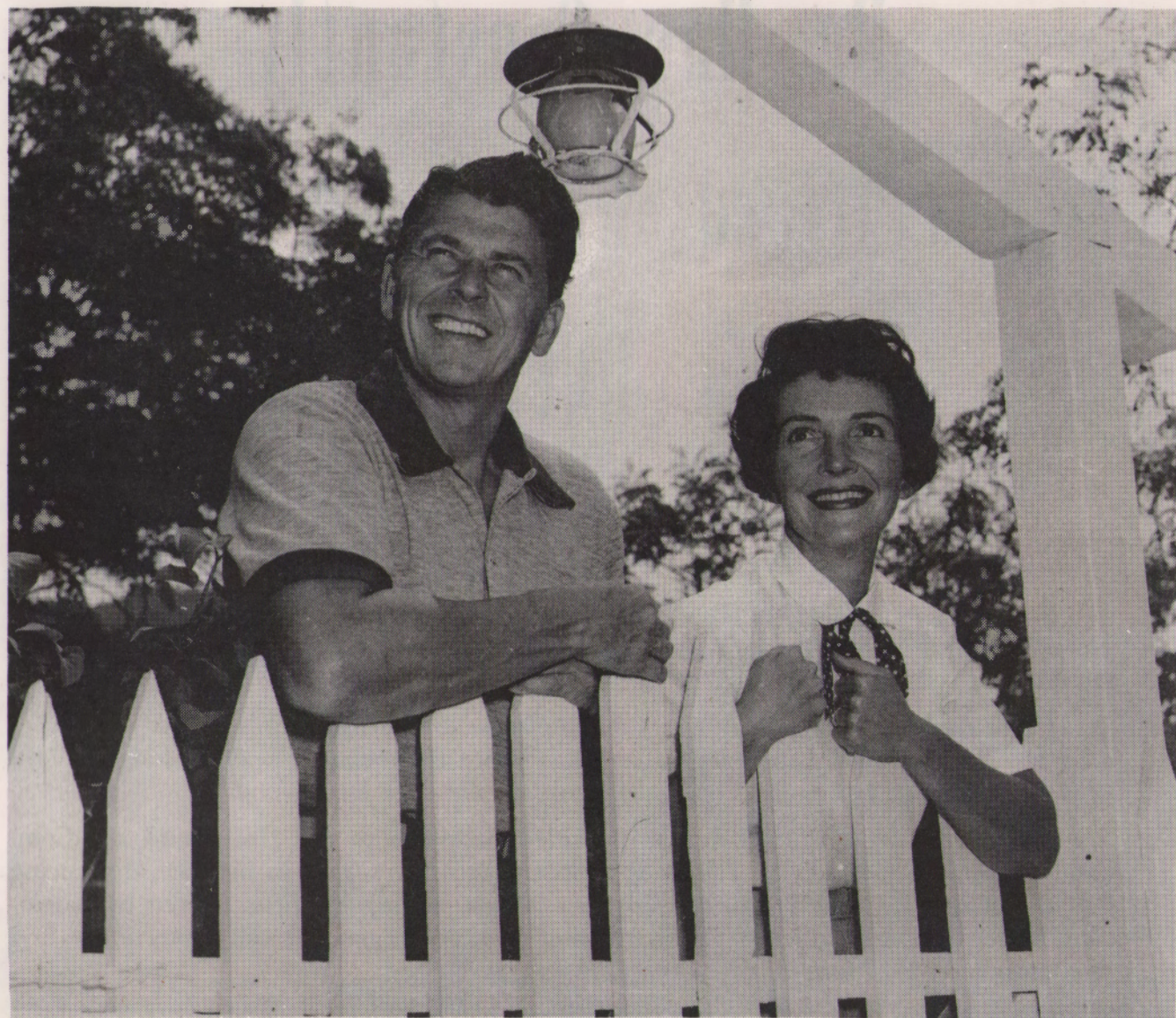
Six times the members of The Screen Actors Guild elected Ronald Reagan President, Never before and probably never since has that position demanded so much personal effort, sacrifice and courage.

Those were the years when the Communists — driven by Lenin's earlier commandment to seize control of movie industries everywhere as a means of brainwashing millions — were mounting their most determined drive to take over Hollywood.

Week after week, Ronald Reagan provided backbone to the Hollywood anti-Communist resistance movement. The Reds threatened to throw acid in his face, disfiguring him and ending his career — or possibly even worse, ending his life. Driven by patriotism, he responded by gaining a police permit to carry a gun for self-protection — and then redoubled his efforts to root out the Reds.

It was during this period that he met actress Nancy Davis. They dated, fell in love, and eventually married. Not only did Nancy not oppose his time-and-energy consuming involvement in such dangerous affairs, but she actually aided him — providing him with greater depth of purpose. So spirited was Reagan in his anti-Communist efforts that ex-Communist Sterling Hayden later told a Congressional Investigating Committee that "We (the Reds) were tripped up when we ran into a one-man battalion named Ronald Reagan."

Reagan went on from there to become the "Voice" of the American Medical Association, making speeches in opposition to socialized medicine. Thanks to his wife — the daughter of a midwest doctor — he understands and supports the benefits of private medicine. Many doctors, in turn, enthusiastically support him.



Once when he was on a speaking tour for General Electric Reagan was invited to meet the workers at a gigantic GE plant. As a former labor leader who deeply enjoys personal meetings with individual workers, Reagan enthusiastically agreed to make the tour.

The physical ordeal would have broken many a lesser man. But not Reagan! His feet swelled up so much from the effort that they had to cut his shoe laces at night to get his shoes off. But he never gave up — until he had met the last man, given the last autograph and shaken the last hand. That's the way Reagan is!



*The speaking tours for GE were tiring, even exhausting. But at home he drew new strength from Nancy.*



*A beaming Henry Cabot Lodge is shown here shaking hands with Ronald Reagan.*

## Reagan's Inspirational Leadership Won Respect of Famous People!

"The whole notion of entering politics was alien to my thinking," says Ronald Reagan. "I had thought we would win in 1964, and I'd go back to my business."

Fate, of course, had other plans for Reagan. And once he accepted his fate, he plunged into the campaign with a zeal that reminded people of Teddy Roosevelt's crusading ardor at the turn of the century.



*Former President Eisenhower here reveals his fondness for Ronald Reagan.*

# As A Republican Reagan Believes The Role of State Government Is Vital Under Our Federal System!

There are those who would seek to embarrass Reagan because he was a Democrat during much of his adult lifetime. Reagan points out that the Democratic Party had its beginning under Thomas Jefferson, an opponent of Big Government.

Jefferson called his party the Anti-Federalist Party when he founded it. Later he called it the Republican Party. Still later it changed its name to the Democratic Party. It also, as Reagan quietly notes, changed its principles to those opposite Jefferson's. Reagan, as a believer with Jefferson in simple government reduced to minimum size and conducted close to the grass roots, shares with Jefferson a belief that State Government is essential to maintaining the American Federal System.

Reagan found in Barry Goldwater a champion for some of these same ideas.

Goldwater, the son of a Jewish merchant in Arizona and the grandson of a Jewish libertarian who was driven out of Europe in the last century and sought freedom in the American West, came from a frontier family that had been strong Democrats in the early days. When the Democratic Party swung away from Jefferson's creed of self-reliance and local self-government, Barry Goldwater suddenly found himself a Republican. Reagan, who made the same switch in parties for the same reason, understood Barry's motives.

One reason Reagan has been so successful in spreading his political gospel is his personal integrity. In part, this came from training by his father. The elder Reagan's strong sense of fair play actually shortened his life. Once when he was travelling the road as a shoe salesman he registered at a small hotel and was told by the clerk: "You'll like it here, Mr. Reagan. We don't permit a Jew in the place." Grabbing his suitcase, the elder Reagan furiously retorted: "If you won't take Jews you won't take me either." It was the only hotel in town and Reagan had to sleep in his car, despite cold and snow. He contracted near-pneumonia and suffered the first of a series of heart attacks that were eventually to take his life.

Late in 1964's presidential campaign, millions of Americans sat rooted to their chairs in front of television sets as a charming, personable man named Ronald Reagan explained to them in crystal-clear terms why a former Democrat and ex-labor-union leader such as himself could support the candidacy of Barry Goldwater.

"You and I," Reagan said, "have a rendezvous with destiny. We can preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we can sentence them to take this first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children and our children's children say of us that we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done."



•NOTE: Reagan's famous 1964 TV speech appears in the appendix — pages 41 to 47.



# Draft-Reagan - For - Gov. Movement

Ronald Reagan didn't know it when he made that speech, but he had actually opened a new door in his life and he had without intending to stepped across a threshold to run smack into his own personal rendezvous with destiny! It is a mark of the potential greatness of Ronald Reagan the man that a number of those who heard his speech that night sensed his rendezvous with destiny even before he did. What's more, they somehow felt intimately bound up in this destiny themselves — as though it were their mission to draft this forceful crusader as a candidate for high elective political office.

They poured letters into his hands, pleading letters that begged him to accept his destiny and run for Governor of California. Reagan reacted with characteristic humility. He was grateful and even a little embarrassed by all the fuss being made over him. He protested against the draft movement with a sincerity that made him all the more desirable to his supporters.

## Demand Grew For His Candidacy!

The pressures upon him to run mounted steadily. The people — old and young, rich and poor, Democrats and Republicans — sensed some kind of rare quality in this man. Whatever that unique charisma was that the Old Testament records made the people of ancient Israel follow a young man named David to their greatest heights in history, that same mystical power to persuade and to enthuse had also been granted in this, the fullness of time, to Ronald Reagan!

## Reagan Humbly Agrees To Run!

He would agree in the end to run for office, of course. For if Ronald Reagan had any one single weakness in his personal makeup it was, and always had been, a chronic inability to say no when asked to sacrifice his personal comforts for the greater good of All.



**Mrs. Reagan  
Stood By His Side  
As He Filed  
To Run For Governor!**



*Reagan is shown just before a public debate with Governor Pat Brown.*

Governor Pat Brown of California was quoted early in the 1966 campaign as telling "LIFE" magazine he doubted Reagan's staying power for a rough campaign.

Those who knew Reagan best only smiled at Gov. Brown's remark. They knew that staying power is something Reagan has to spare. As the campaign developed, it grew obvious that Brown had unwisely under-estimated Ronald Reagan!



*After he became a candidate, Reagan attracted huge, enthusiastic crowds. He displayed much of the political charm that won the U.S. Presidency four times for Franklin Delano Roosevelt.*





*The Reagans are confident on election day.*

**By Early November, 1966,  
All America Was Watching  
The State Of California!**



*On election night (above) the nationwide TV newscasters alerted Americans early to a runaway Reagan win shaping up in California.*

Not since 1858 — the year Abraham Lincoln was running for the Senate in Illinois — has America's press and public focused so much attention on an election campaign in one state. From as far away as Boston, reporters travelled to California to cover the final days of the campaign (much as over a century earlier they had travelled to Illinois to report the final Lincoln-Douglas debate).

Finally, election-day 1966 arrived. The "experts" predicted an extremely tight election race in California. Many "experts" said Reagan would lose. But when the votes were counted, it suddenly became obvious the PEOPLE had spoken, and the "experts" had been proven wrong!



*Some of the crowd that surged into and around Reagan's headquarters*

# Millions Of Americans Watched Reagan's Victory On Nation - Wide Television!



*Hundreds of thousands of well-wishers turned out to greet California's new Governor.*

Ronald Reagan's victory was no mere election triumph in a state-wide race. Observers all over the United States sensed that. There were other land-slide Republican victories in 1966, to be sure, but those were mere personal victories for individual candidates. There was about Reagan's win more of an air of shared triumph by millions of people. It was an announcement to the nation — indeed to the world — that a new creative force had been unleashed in the affairs of Man!



*From this moment on (at a midnight swearing-in ceremony on New Year's Day, 1967, California's Governor Ronald Reagan has become a figure of national importance. Yet few Americans are aware of the depth of experience he brought to his job as Governor.*

## "Well, I Guess God Would Want It That Way!" -- Reagan

In an age of empty pseudo-sophistication, Governor Ronald Reagan dares to be different! At a breakfast of powerful leaders of the California State Legislature, he calmly defended a request for a new reform with the simple phrase: "Well, I guess God would want it that way!"

Some people had feared that the power of his great office would change him. (California has more people, money and strength than at least half the member-nations of the U.N.) But such fears have vanished! Governor Reagan has retained the simple, humble traits he absorbed during his Abraham Lincoln-like youth in Illinois!

Almost immediately upon assuming office, Governor Reagan set about to gather around himself as aides and advisors the best talent available to solve the problems of his State and its People! Not only did he recruit California businessmen to serve at personal sacrifice in bringing efficiency to State Agencies, he also reached out to other States to bring in for special counsel such talented professionals as Ohio Finance Director Richard Kragach — who had helped so much in Ohio's drive to institute sound fiscal policies. (See photo next page.)

Ronald Reagan is restoring for one-tenth of the American people (the citizens of California) the traditional American principles that once made America loved and respected around the world.

Governor Reagan is showing how creative co-operation between prudent Government and private citizens (with the emphasis decidedly on the PRIVATE half of this partnership) can achieve miracles in months that old-fashioned government agencies have been unable to achieve in 30 years! Governor Reagan has moved to replace government planning with free enterprise initiative, replace government welfare spending with private earning power, and replace the endless talk of Bureaucrats with the fast, decisive actions of competitive businessmen!

Now people in other States are asking why these exciting new Reagan reforms cannot be tried on a nation-wide scale, by the Federal Government!



*Students and professors turned out to protest against the proposed 10% tuition charge. Governor Reagan, who had known hunger as a youth and had worked his way through college in the Depression years, won widespread support not only in California but across the nation!*

## Is 90% Of College Tuition All The State Should Pay?

# Reagan Sees And Feels Apathy Breaking Up All Over America!

In his 1966 California Campaign, Ronald Reagan promised that he would "light a prairie fire visible across the nation." Within days of taking the oath of office, Governor Reagan had that "prairie fire" blazing!

It is now seen easily as far away as the Midwest, Florida, New England, New York, New Jersey and even Washington, D.C. Governor Reagan, in accepting just a few of the hundreds of requests he constantly gets to speak in other States, sensed the results of his Crusade for a Creative Society. "I can see and feel the apathy breaking up all over the country," he told "The Saturday Evening Post" in an exclusive interview. "People really care again!"

Not unexpectedly, many experts now say that Ronald Reagan is himself one major reason for this breaking-up of apathy!

Governor Reagan shows surprising leadership potential. He has that rare personal magnetism that makes even fellow-Governors stop talking and stare his way when he walks into a crowded, noisy room full of Very Important People.

Some, of course, fault him because of his background as an entertainer. But more than one expert has pointed out that he has not achieved success in politics because he was once an actor. Rather, he once achieved success as an actor because of the same qualities of sincerity and inspiration that he brings to his new duties! Some three thousand years ago, an entertainer named David (noted for his pleasing appearance and his talents in music) became King over ancient Israel. The Bible records that David unified his People, staved off hostile foreign enemies, and led his Nation to heights of prosperity, justice, peace and honor unmatched before then in World History.

A suggestion that Ronald Reagan might also prove to be such a leader came in mid-1967, during his now-famed television "debate" with Bobby Kennedy. Governor Reagan and Senator Kennedy, facing an obviously hostile and even anti-American panel of foreign students, took entirely different tacks. Senator Kennedy agreed with much that the students said and apologized for America's "shortcomings." Governor Reagan, on the other hand, refused to apologize for America. In fact, he said that never before have a People so powerful (we alone had the A-bomb in 1945 and could have conquered and ruled the World, he noted) deliberately disarmed themselves and instead poured out some 100 billion dollars in foreign aid! Bobby Kennedy (who possibly had thought he would emulate the success of his late brother John F. Kennedy in the famous 1960 TV debates with Richard Nixon) has, since this 1967 TV appearance, skidded rapidly in public esteem. Twenty million American TV viewers clearly decided that Ronald Reagan was the victor in this unusual "debate."



## As Popular In Northeast As He Is In California

The photo above shows Reagan being mobbed by well-wishers as he spoke to a gathering of predominantly moderate Republicans in Connecticut. Everywhere he goes, the response is the same. In mid-1967 he was invited to be the featured speaker at the four-day National Convention of Young Republicans in Nebraska. The Young GOP "new breed" activists went wild with enthusiasm when Reagan arrived!

And in Massachusetts, Governor John A. Volpe said of Ronald Reagan: "He has shown a capacity to meet problems, to answer questions, fully and directly. I would like to see a great deal more of him!"

# RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY

*On this and following pages you will find Ronald Reagan's 1964 TV speech — reprinted in full. Mr. Reagan wound up this speech with the statement: "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny." The statement (the theme of his speech) was far truer than even he realized at the time!*

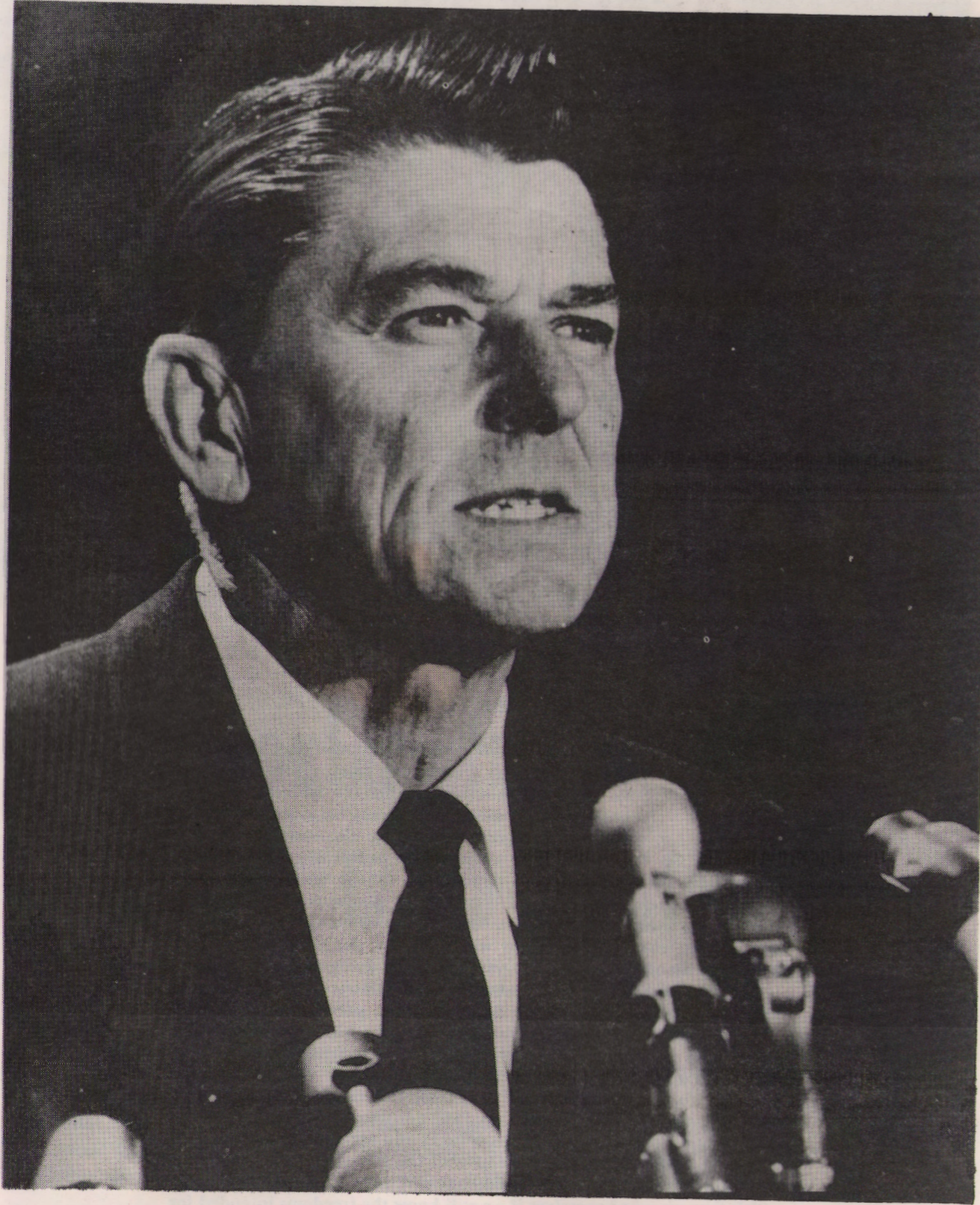
*His speech reminds historians of two earlier speeches: In 1856 a lawyer from Reagan's home State of Illinois made a speech for the GOP Presidential Candidate. The candidate lost, but that lawyer (his name was Abraham Lincoln) was drafted to run for the U.S. Senate in 1858. And in 1860 he was drafted to run for the Presidency.*

*In 1928 a little-known New Yorker delivered the nominating speech for the Democrat's Presidential Candidate. The candidate lost. But the speech-maker (his name was Franklin Delano Roosevelt) was drafted to run as Governor of New York (he won). And in 1932 he was elected to the first of his four terms as President of the United States!*

### APPENDIX

I am going to talk of controversial things. I make no apology for this. I have been talking on this subject for ten years, obviously under the administration of both parties. I mention this only because it seems impossible to legitimately debate the issues of the day without being subjected to name-calling and the application of labels. Those who deplore use of the terms "pink" and "leftist" are themselves guilty of branding all who oppose their liberalism as right wing extremists. How long can we afford the luxury of this family fight when we are at war with the most dangerous enemy ever known to man? If we lose that war, and in so doing lose our freedom, it has been said history will record with the greatest astonishment that those who had the most to lose did the least to prevent its happening. The guns are silent in this war but frontiers fall while those who should be warriors prefer neutrality. Not too long ago two friends of mine were talking to a Cuban refugee. He was a business man who had escaped from Castro. In the midst of his tale of horrible experiences, one of my friends turned to the other and said, "We don't know how lucky we are." The Cuban stopped and said, "How lucky you are! I had some place to escape to." And in that sentence he told the entire story. If freedom is lost here there is no place to escape to.

It's time we asked ourselves if we still know the freedoms intended for us by the Founding Fathers. James Madison said, "We base all our experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government." This idea



*Governor Reagan's 1964 TV speech captivated millions of Americans and made him — overnight — a major national political figure!*

that government was beholden to the people, that it had no other source of power except the sovereign people, is still the newest most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man. For almost two centuries we have proved man's capacity for self-government, but today we are told we must choose between a left and right or, as others suggest, a third alternative, a kind of safe middle ground. I suggest to you there is no left or right, only an up or down. Up to the maximum of individual freedom consistent with law and order, or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism, and regardless of their humanitarian purpose those who would sacrifice freedom for security have, whether they know it or not, chosen this downward path. Plutarch warned, "The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits."

Today there is an increasing number who can't see a fat man standing beside a thin one without automatically coming to the conclusion the fat man got that way by taking advantage of the thin one. So they would seek the answer to all the problems of human need through government. Howard K. Smith of television fame has written, "The profit motive is outmoded. It must be replaced by the incentives of the welfare state." He says, "The distribution of goods must be effected by a planned economy." Another articulate spokesman for the welfare state defines liberalism as meeting the material needs of the masses through the full power of centralized government. I for one find it disturbing when a representative refers to the free men and women of this country as the masses, but beyond this the full power of centralized government was the very thing the Founding Fathers sought to minimize. They knew you don't control things, you can't control the economy without controlling people. So we have come to a time for choosing. Either we accept the responsibility for our own destiny, or we abandon the American Revolution and confess that an intellectual belief in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves.

Already the hour is late. Government has laid its hand on health, housing, farming, industry, commerce, education, and to an ever increasing degree interferes with the people's right to know. Government tends to grow, government programs take on weight and momentum as public servants say, always with the best of intentions, "What greater service we could render if only we had a little more money and a little more power." But the truth is that outside of its legitimate function, government does nothing as well or as economically as the private sector of the economy. What better example do we have of this than government's involvement in the farm economy over the last 30 years. One-fourth of farming is responsible for 85 per cent of the farm surplus. One-fourth of farming has seen a steady decline in the per capita consumption of everything it produces. That one-fourth is regulated and subsidized by government.

In contrast, the three-fourths of farming unregulated and unsubsidized has seen a 21 per cent increase in the per capita consumption of all its produce. Since 1955 the cost of the farm program has nearly doubled. Direct payment to farmers is eight times as great as it was nine years ago, but farm income remains unchanged while farm surplus is bigger. In that same period we have seen a decline of five million in the farm population, but an increase in the number of Department of Agriculture employees. There is now one such employee for every 30 farms in the United States, and still they can't figure how 66 shiploads of grain headed for Austria could disappear without a trace, and Billy Sol Estes never left shore. Three years ago the government put into effect a program to curb the over-production of feed grain. Now, two and a half billion dollars later, the corn crop is 100 million bushels bigger than before the program started. And the cost of the program prorates out to \$43 for every dollar bushel of corn we don't grow. Nor is this the only example of the price we pay for government meddling. Some government programs with the passage of time take on a sacrosanct quality.

One such considered above criticism, sacred as motherhood, is TVA. This program started as a flood control project; the Tennessee Valley was periodically ravaged by destructive floods. The Army Engineers set out to solve this problem. They said that it was possible that once in 500 years there could be a total capacity flood that would inundate some 600,000 acres. Well the Engineers fixed that. They made a permanent lake which inundated a million acres. This solved the problem of the floods, but the annual interest on the TVA debt is five times as great as the annual flood damage they sought to correct. Of course, you will point out that TVA gets electric power from the impounded waters, and this is true, but today 85 per cent of TVA's electricity is generated in coal burning steam plants. Now perhaps you'll charge that I'm overlooking the navigable waterway that was created, providing cheap barge traffic, but the bulk of the freight barged on that waterway is coal being shipped to the TVA steam plants, and the cost of maintaining that channel each year would pay for shipping all of the coal by rail, and there would be money left over.

One last argument remains: The prosperity produced by such large programs of government spending. Certainly there are few areas where more spending has taken place. The Labor Department lists 50 per cent of the 169 counties in the Tennessee Valley as permanent areas of poverty, distress, and unemployment. Meanwhile, back in the city, under Urban Renewal, the assault on freedom carries on. Private property rights have become so diluted that public interest is anything a few planners decide it should be. In Cleveland, Ohio, to get a project under way, city officials reclassified 84 buildings as substandard in spite of the fact their own inspectors had previously pronounced these buildings sound. The owners stood by and watched 26 million dollars worth of property as it

was destroyed by the headache ball. Senate Bill 628 says, "Any property, be it home or commercial structure, can be declared slum or blighted and the owner has no recourse at law. The Law Division of the Library of Congress and the General Accounting Office have said that the Courts will have to rule against the owner."

**Housing.** In one key Eastern city a man owning a blighted area sold his property to Urban Renewal for several million dollars. At the same time, he submitted his own plan for the rebuilding of this area and the government sold him back his own property for 22 per cent of what they paid. Now the government announces, "We are going to build subsidized housing in the thousands where we have been building in the hundreds." At the same time FHA and the Veterans Administration reveal they are holding 120 thousand housing units reclaimed from mortgage foreclosure. Mostly because the low down payment, and the easy terms brought the owners to a point where they realized the unpaid balance on the homes amounted to a sum greater than the homes were worth, so they just walked out the front door, possibly to take up residence in newer subsidized housing, again with little or no down payment and easy terms.

Some of the foreclosed homes have already been bulldozed into the earth, others it has been announced will be refurbished and put on sale for down payments as low as \$100 and 35 years to pay. This will give the bulldozers a second crack. It is in the area of social welfare that government has found its most fertile growing bed. So many of us accept our responsibility for those less fortunate. We are susceptible to humanitarian appeals.

Federal welfare spending is today ten times greater than it was in the dark depths of the depression. Federal, state, and local welfare combined spent 45 billion dollars a year. Now the government has announced that 20 per cent, some 9.3 million families, are poverty stricken on the basis that they have less than a \$3,000 a year income.

If this present welfare spending was prorated equally among these poverty stricken families, we could give each family more than \$4,500 a year. Actually, direct aid to the poor averages less than \$600 per family. There must be some administrative overhead somewhere. Now are we to believe that another billion dollar program added to the half a hundred programs and the 45 billion dollars, will, through some magic, end poverty? For three decades we have tried to solve unemployment by government planning, without success. The more the plans fail, the more the planners plan.

The latest is the Area Redevelopment Agency, and in two years less than one-half of 1 per cent of the unemployed could attribute new jobs to this agency, and the cost to the taxpayer for each job found was

\$5,000. But beyond the great bureaucratic waste, what are we doing to the people we seek to help?

Recently a judge told me of an incident in his court. A fairly young woman, with six children, pregnant with her seventh, came to him for a divorce. Under his questioning it became apparent her husband did not share this desire. Then the whole story came out. Her husband was a laborer earning \$250 a month. By divorcing him she could get an \$80 raise. She was eligible for \$350 a month from the Aid to Dependent Children Program. She had been talked into the divorce by two friends who had already done this very thing. But any time we question the schemes of the do-gooders, we are denounced as being opposed to their humanitarian goal. It seems impossible to legitimately debate their solutions with the assumption that all of us share the desire to help those less fortunate. They tell us we are always against, never for anything. Well, it isn't so much that Liberals are ignorant. It's just that they know so much that isn't so.

We are for a provision that destitution should not follow unemployment by reason of old age. For that reason we have accepted Social Security as a step toward meeting that problem. However, we are against the irresponsibility of those who charge that any criticism or suggested improvement of the program means we want to end payment to those who depend on Social Security for a livelihood.

**Fiscal Irresponsibility.** We have been told in millions of pieces of literature and press releases, that social security is an insurance program, but the executives of Social Security appeared before the Supreme Court in the case of Nestor v. Fleming and proved to the Court's satisfaction that it is not insurance but is a welfare program, and Social Security dues are a tax for the general use of the government. Well it can't be both, insurance and welfare. Later, appearing before a Congressional Committee they admitted that Social Security is today 298 billion dollars in the red. This fiscal irresponsibility has already caught up with us.

Faced with a bankruptcy we find that today a young man in his early twenties, going to work at less than an average salary, will with his employer pay into Social Security an amount which could provide the young man with a retirement insurance policy guaranteeing \$220 a month at age 65, and the government promises him \$127.

Now are we so lacking in business sense that we cannot put this program on a sound actuarial basis, so that those who do depend on it won't come to the cupboard and find it bare, and at the same time can't we introduce voluntary features so that those who can make better provision for themselves are allowed to do so? Incidentally, we might also allow participants in Social Security to name their own beneficiaries, which they cannot do in the present program. These are not insurmountable problems.

**Youth Aid Plans.** We have today 30 million workers protected by industrial and union pension funds that are soundly financed by some 70 billion dollars invested in corporate securities and income earning real estate. I think we are for telling our senior citizens that no one in this country should be denied medical care for lack of funds but we are against forcing all citizens into a compulsory government program regardless of need. Now the government has turned its attention to our young people, and suggests that it can solve the problem of school drop-outs and juvenile delinquency through some kind of revival of the old C.C.C. camps. The suggested plan prorates out to a cost of \$4,700 a year for each young person we want to help. We can send them to Harvard for \$2,700 a year. Of course, don't get me wrong—I'm not suggesting Harvard as the answer to juvenile delinquency. We are for an international organization where the nations of the world can legitimately seek peace. We are against subordinating American interests to an organization so structurally unsound that a two-thirds majority can be mastered in the U.N. General Assembly among nations representing less than 10 per cent of the world population.

Is there not something of hypocrisy in assailing our allies for so-called vestiges of colonialism while we engage in a conspiracy of silence about the peoples enslaved by the Soviet in the satellite nations? We are for aiding our allies by sharing our material blessings with those nations which share our fundamental beliefs. We are against doling out money, government to government, which ends up financing socialism all over the world.

We set out to help 19 war ravaged countries at the end of World War II. We are now helping 107. We have spent 146 billion dollars. Some of that money bought a \$2 million yacht for Haile Selassie. We bought dress suits for Greek undertakers. We bought 1,000 TV sets, with 23-inch screens, for a country where there is no electricity, and some of our foreign aid funds provided extra wives for Kenya government officials. When Congress moved to cut foreign aid they were told that if they cut it one dollar they endangered national security, and then Senator Harry Byrd revealed that since its inception foreign aid has rarely spent its allotted budget. It has today \$21 billion in unexpended funds.

Some time ago Dr. Howard Kershner was speaking to the prime minister of Lebanon. The prime minister told him proudly that his little country balanced its budget each year. It had no public debt, no inflation, a modest tax rate and had increased its gold holdings from \$70 to \$120 million. When he finished, Dr. Kershner said, "Mr. Prime Minister, my country hasn't balanced its budget 28 out of the last 40 years. My country's debt is greater than the combined debt of all the nations of the world. We have inflation, and we have a tax rate that takes from the private sector a percentage of income greater than any civilized

nation has ever taken and survived. We have lost gold at such a rate that the solvency of our currency is in danger. Do you think that my country should continue to give your country millions of dollars each year?" The prime minister smiled and said, "No, but if you are foolish enough to do it, we are going to keep on taking the money."

**9 Stalls for 1 Bull.** And so we built a model stock farm in Lebanon, and we built nine stalls for each bull. I find something peculiarly appropriate in that. We have in our vaults \$15 billion in gold. We don't own an ounce. Foreign dollar claims against that gold total \$27 billion. In the last six years, 52 nations have bought \$7 billion worth of our gold and all 52 are receiving foreign aid.

Because no government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size, government programs once launched never go out of existence. A government agency is the nearest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth. The United States manual takes 25 pages to list by name every Congressman and Senator, and all the agencies controlled by Congress. It then lists the agencies coming under the Executive Branch, and this requires 520 pages.

Since the beginning of the century our gross national product has increased by 33 times. In the same period the cost of Federal government has increased 234 times, and while the work force is only 1½ times greater, Federal employees number nine times as many. There are now 21½ million Federal employees. No one knows what they all do. One Congressman found out what one of them does. This man sits at a desk in Washington. Documents come to him each morning. He reads them, initials them, and passes them on to the proper agency. One day a document arrived he wasn't supposed to read, but he read it, initialled it and passed it on. Twenty-four hours later it arrived back at his desk with a memo attached that said, "You weren't supposed to read this. Erase your initials, and initial the erasure."

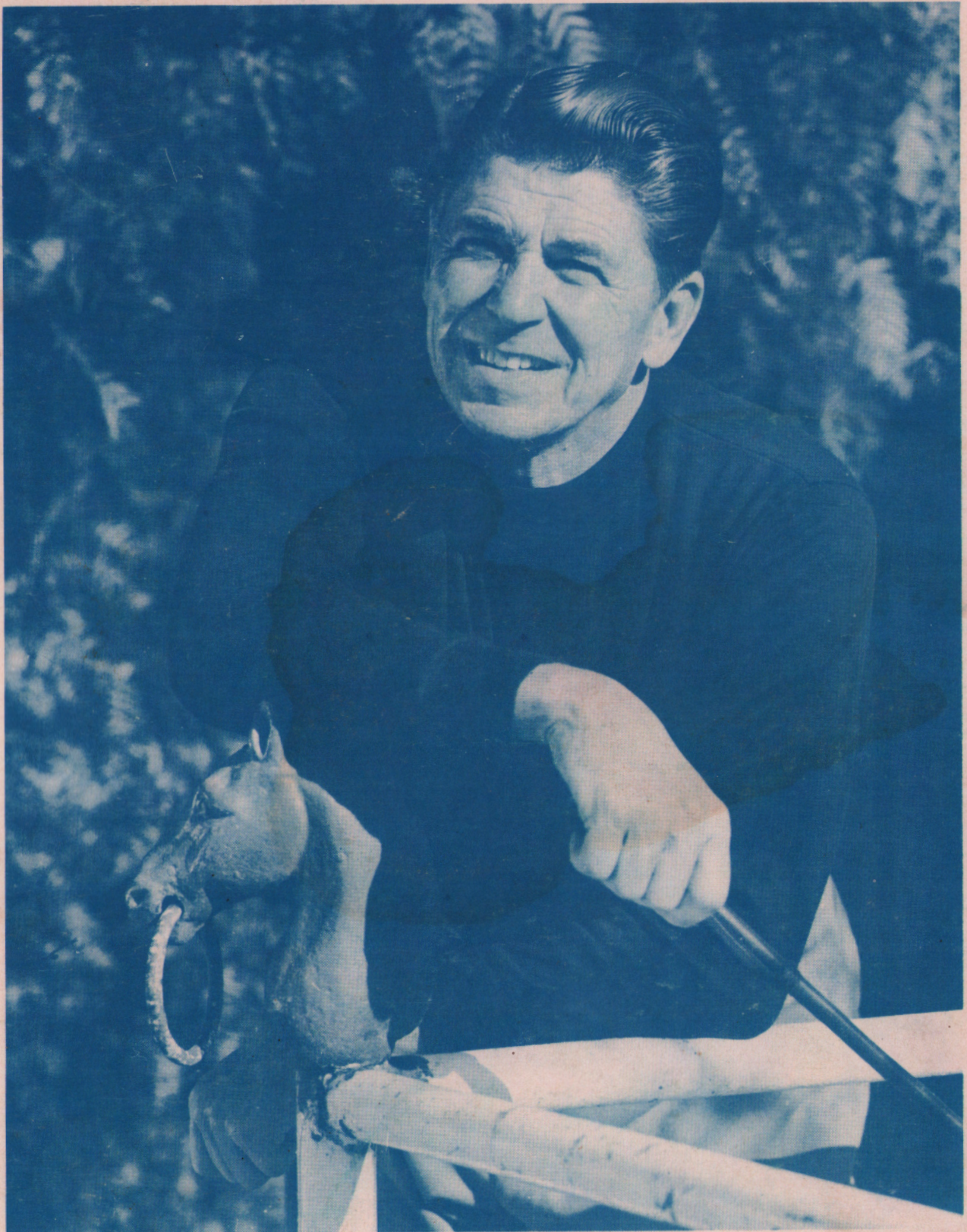
While the Federal government is the great offender, the idea filters down. During a period in California when our population has increased 90 per cent, the cost of state government has gone up 862 per cent and the number of employees 500 per cent. Governments, state and local, now employ one out of six of the nation's work force. If the rate of increase of the last three years continues by 1970 one-fourth of the total work force will be employed by government. Already we have a permanent structure so big and complex it is virtually beyond the control of Congress and the comprehension of the people, and tyranny inevitably follows when this permanent structure usurps the policy-making function that belongs to elected officials.

One example of this occurred when Congress was debating whether to lend the United Nations \$100 million. While they debated the State Department gave the United Nations \$217 million and the United



*Ronald Reagan looks ahead. He will finish his four-year term of office as Governor in 1971. He could serve a second term, retire to the family life he loves or — if destiny so decrees — he might be drafted again to run for an even greater public office. Only time will tell!*





*Raw courage, even in the face of great odds, has always been a prime Reagan virtue.*

**TV**  
GUIDE

# Ronald Reagan

AN AMERICAN ICON

**SPECIAL  
TRIBUTE  
ISSUE**

**THE ACTOR  
WHO BECAME  
PRESIDENT**

**THE ROMANCE  
OF RONNIE  
AND NANCY**

**HIS MOVIE  
AND TV  
CAREERS**

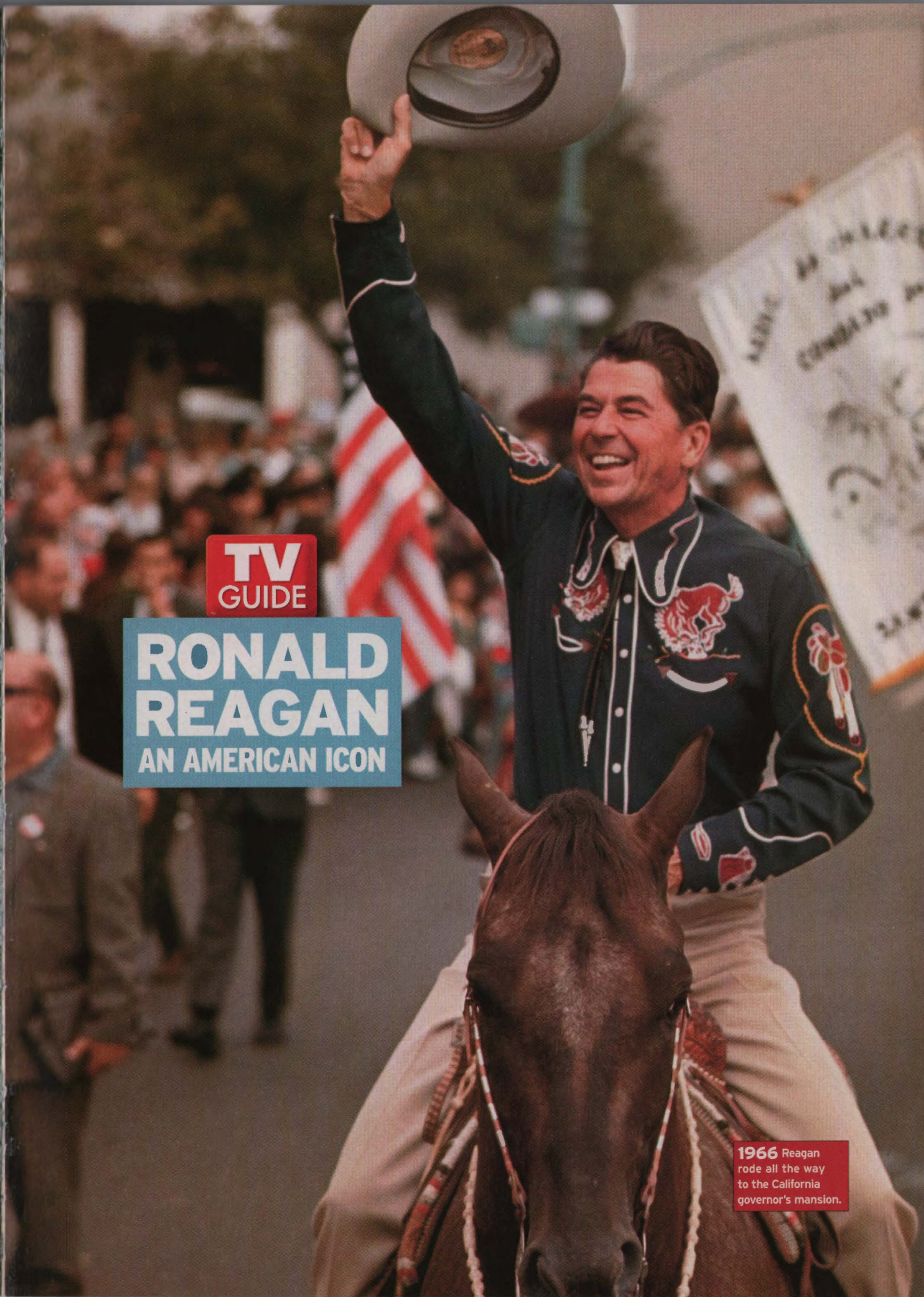
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LEFT: SOURCE VIDEO COURTESY OF FREMANTLE MEDIA, RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY, U.S. BORAX, ABC NEWS, CNN/WING KOSNER LLC, RIGHT: BILL RAY/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES



**TV**  
GUIDE

**RONALD REAGAN**  
AN AMERICAN ICON

**1966** Reagan rode all the way to the California governor's mansion.



# American ICON

**RONALD REAGAN HAD A UNIQUE TALENT  
FOR MAKING MEMORABLE IMPRESSIONS**

## **The Leader**

“Not since Lincoln, or Winston Churchill in Britain, has there been a president who has so understood the power of words to uplift and to inspire.”

**MARGARET THATCHER**, SPEAKING AT A GALA  
CELEBRATING REAGAN'S 83RD BIRTHDAY, 1994

COURTESY RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY

**1982** Reagan  
appears at a rally  
for Sen. David  
Durenberger  
in Bloomington,  
Minnesota.

## The Actor

"He was never content with the roles others assigned to him. He believed in himself. He believed...that he would make it in Hollywood against the odds."

BIOGRAPHER **LOU CANNON**,  
IN *GOVERNOR REAGAN: HIS RISE TO POWER*, 2003

**1939** Reagan recalled his experience as he stepped onto the set of his first film, "Love Is on the Air." "I was...surrounded by a wall of light, [which] gave me a feeling of privacy that completely dispelled any nervousness I might have expected."

**1957** Reagan played a hard-boiled ex-boxer in "No Skin Off Me," an episode of *General Electric Theater*.

LEFT: HULTON ARCHIVE/BETTY IMAGES. RIGHT: JOHN SPRINGER COLLECTION/CORBIS

## The Romantic

“Reagan said once that his life began when he met Nancy, and I believe that to be true. I think that he became a fulfilled person. He became able to do many things that he wanted to do because of Nancy.”

FORMER DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF **MICHAEL DEAVER**,  
ON PBS' *THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: REAGAN*, 1998



**1951** Reagan and Nancy Davis at Ciro's, a Los Angeles nightclub that they frequented in their early days together, before they were married.



**1971** Reagan was just one of the stars at his second gubernatorial inaugural gala. Here he stands with Frank Sinatra, Vicki Carr, Nancy Reagan, John Wayne, Dean Martin, Jack Benny and Jimmy Stewart.

### The Celebrity

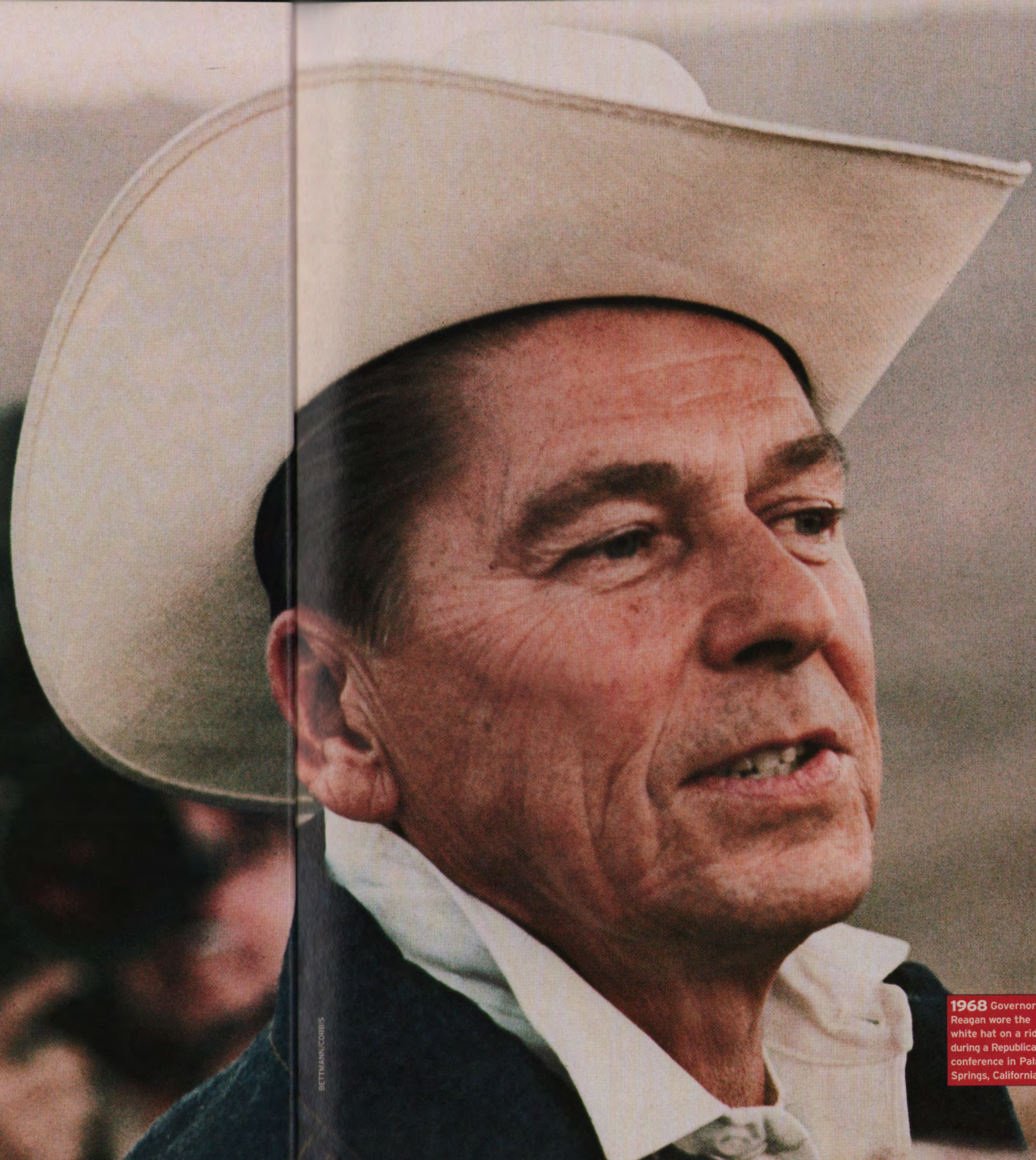
“One night [we] looked at each other, sitting in the living room in Sacramento, and said this makes everything else we’ve ever done look dull as dishwater.”

**RONALD REAGAN,** TALKING TO HUGH SIDNEY IN *TIME*, ABOUT LIFE FOR HIM AND NANCY AS GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA, 1987

## The Cowboy

“I want you to be a cowboy because that’s what the people here will identify with. He said, ‘Well, all right.’ So he went back in and changed into jeans and boots.”

FORMER PRESS SECRETARY **LYN NOFZIGER**, RECALLING HIS ADVICE TO REAGAN ABOUT SHAPING HIS COWBOY IMAGE, ON *THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE*, 1998



**1968** Governor Reagan wore the white hat on a ride during a Republican conference in Palm Springs, California.

BETTMANN/CORBIS



## The Winner

“More than anything else, I want my candidacy to unify our country, to renew the American spirit and sense of purpose.”

**RONALD REAGAN,**  
ACCEPTING THE REPUBLICAN  
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, 1980



**1980** The Reagans play to the crowd at the Republican national convention in Detroit.

## The Freedom Fighter

“As long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind.”

**RONALD REAGAN**, SPEAKING AT THE BRANDENBURG GATE, WEST BERLIN, WEST GERMANY, 1987



**1987** Reagan told Gorbachev what to do with the Berlin Wall.

# Reagan

## AN ACTOR WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

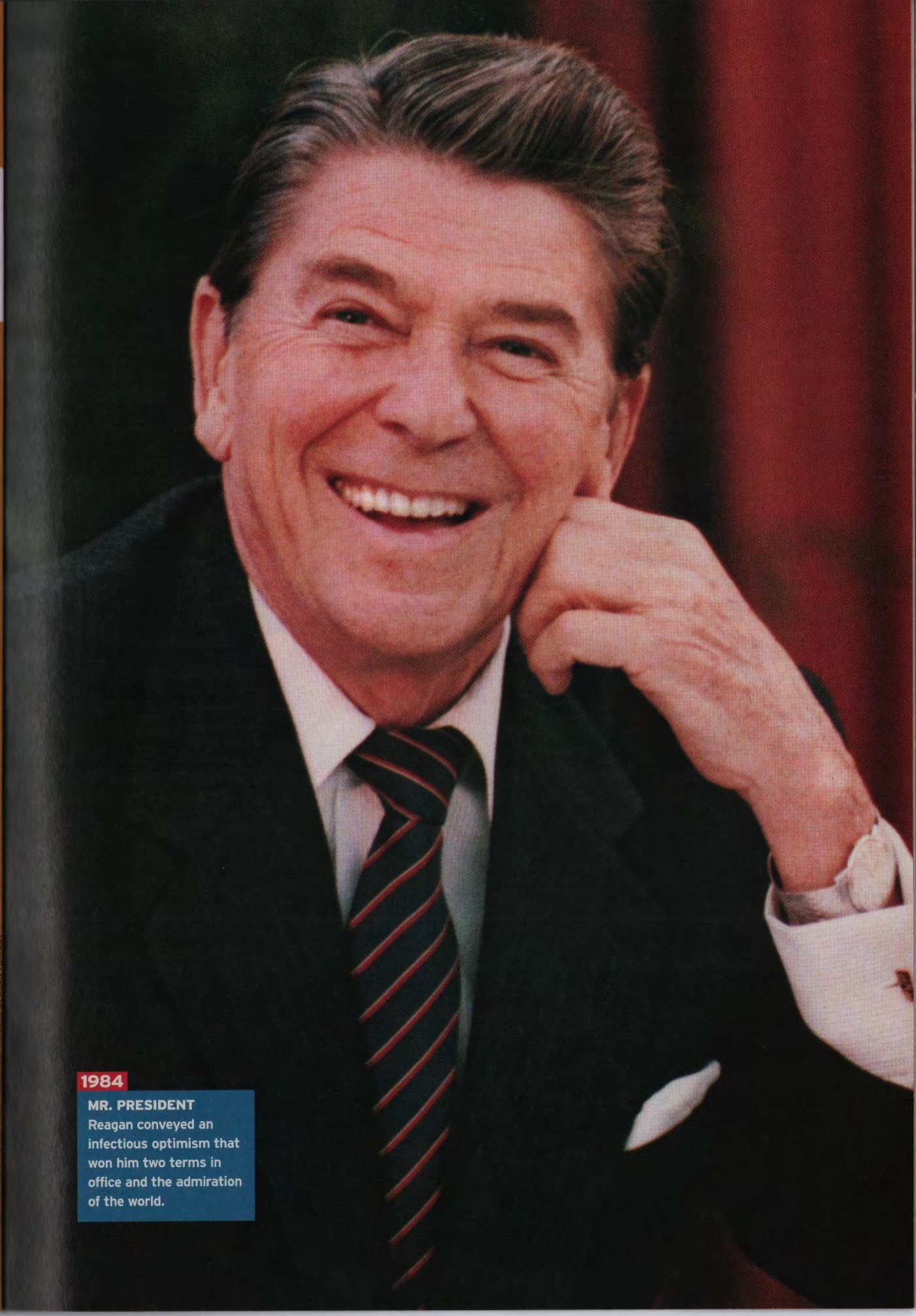


**1937** For his screen test at Warner Bros., Reagan read from *The Philadelphia Story*—the Broadway version.

**R**onald Wilson Reagan passed away on June 5, 2004, after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. The 40th president of the United States rose from humble beginnings to become a movie actor who starred on the political stage. Reagan took office in 1981, when inflation and interest rates were at near-record levels. Displaying a persistent optimism and giving the type of resonant speeches that would earn him a reputation as the "Great Communicator," Reagan set out to restore the nation's self-esteem. He cut taxes and strengthened the U.S. military arsenal, believing that by doing so, he would force the economically hard-pressed Soviet Union to the bargaining table. Then he capped off his presidency with his greatest performances—the candid talks with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that led to the end of the Cold War. Long after Reagan left office and the Soviet Union was only a memory, Gorbachev expressed the feelings of many when he called Reagan "really a very big person...a very great political leader."

BY LOU CANNON

LEFT: ADAM WOOD; RIGHT: COURTESY DONALD REAGAN LIBRARY



**1984**

**MR. PRESIDENT**  
Reagan conveyed an infectious optimism that won him two terms in office and the admiration of the world.

# The Early Years

1911-32: FROM TAMPICO TO EUREKA

**R**eagan was an American success story who traveled a unique path to the presidency. He was born in tiny Tampico, Illinois, on February 6, 1911, the second of two sons. His father, Jack, was a shoe salesman of Irish descent and an alcoholic whose drinking bouts seared his sons' memory of him. His mother, Nelle, of Scottish Presbyterian background, was a convert to the Disciples of Christ. She raised her younger son in her church while older brother Neil was brought up in his father's Catholic faith. From early childhood, Ronald Reagan shared his mother's sunny disposition and resolute conviction that everything that happened was part of God's plan and would turn out for the best. The Reagans were poor and nomadic, traveling from town to town in Illinois before settling in Dixon (1920 population: 8,191), where Jack Reagan opened a shoe store with borrowed money. Ronald Reagan, known by the nickname "Dutch," worked after school and in summers—notably as a lifeguard, where he later recalled saving 77 people from the turbulent waters of the Rock River. Although in many ways a loner, Reagan already displayed the amiable self-assurance that would recommend him to audiences and voters. He was elected high school student body president in his senior year. The words under Reagan's picture in his Dixon High yearbook read:

1927-32

**THE LIFESAVER**

Reagan was proud of his record as a lifeguard at Lowell Park, where he rescued 77 swimmers from the currents of the Rock River.



"Life is one grand sweet song, so start the music."

This optimism survived the Great Depression, which Reagan remembered as the shaping event of his life. Reagan was at the time a sophomore at Eureka College, 100 miles south of Dixon, where he was a popular but indifferent student who excelled in dramatics and athletics. The Depression cost Jack his shoe store and a subsequent job. Reagan graduated from Eureka in 1932 but joined the growing army of the unemployed.

The Reagans were Democrats who pinned their hopes on Franklin D. Roosevelt and cheered when he defeated President Herbert Hoover that November. FDR's "New Deal for the American people" provided work in relief agencies for Jack and Neil.

Ronald Reagan was inspired by FDR's buoyant optimism and his effective use of the exciting medium of radio. He listened avidly to the president's "fireside chats"—radio speeches intended to restore the shattered confidence of Americans—and developed a lifelong admiration for FDR. Although he would change political parties and philosophies, Reagan absorbed and made his own the cadences and phrases that provided a bond between the president and the people during the dark days of the Depression. "America has a rendezvous with destiny," Reagan would later say, echoing the words of FDR.

**LUCKY CHARM**

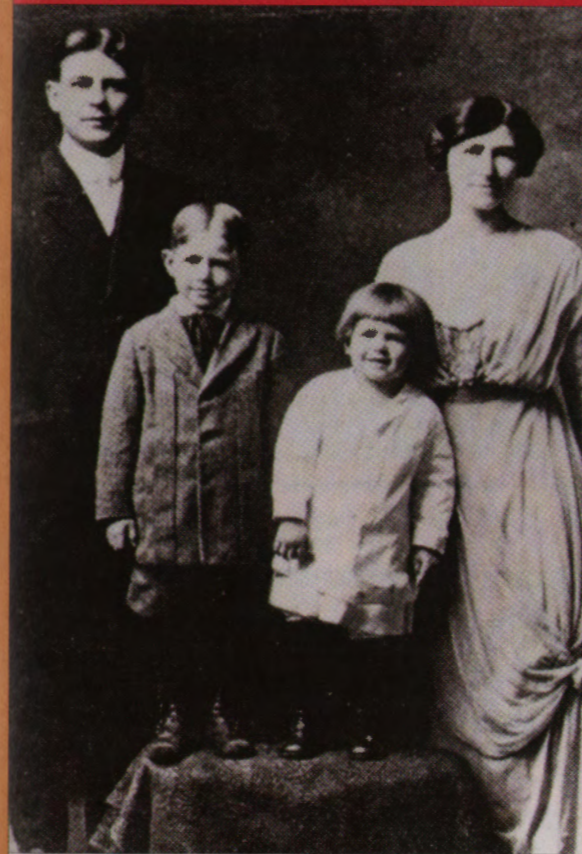
Reagan's favorite number followed him auspiciously:

**RIGHT GUARD:** As a football player on the Eureka College Red Devils from 1928 to 1932, his jersey number was **33**.

**STATE HOUSE:** In 1966, he became the **33rd** governor of California.

**SECOND TERM:** In 1984, he was renominated for president at the **33rd** Republican National Convention.

1913 Ronald Wilson Reagan at age 2 with father Jack, brother Neil and mother Nelle, from a Reagan family Christmas card.



1927 Reagan was a young thespian at Dixon High. Here he kneels facing his sweetheart Margaret Cleaver in a junior class production.



1927 Reagan, smiling, on the Dixon High varsity football team

**"Dutch"** Reagan's nickname came both from his father's comment that Ron looked like a "fat little Dutchman" and from the "dutchboy" haircut his mother gave him as a toddler.

DOROTHEA RANDALL  
"In A-1 student, the teacher's joy."  
Gym 2, 3; Cinean Lit. 1, 2; Joyce Klimer 3, 4; Play 3; Annual Staff.

DONALD REAGAN  
"Dutch"  
"Life is just one grand sweet song, so start the music."  
Pres. N. S. Student Body 4; Pres. 2; Play 3, 4; Dram. Club 1, 4; Pres. 2; Fresh. Soph. Drama Club 1, 2; Pres. 2; Football 3, 4; Annual Staff; Hi-Y 3, 4; Vice-Pres. 4; Art. 1, 2; Lit. Contest 2; Track 2, 3.

1928

1928 In high school, Reagan seemed to major in extracurriculars.



1931 Reagan (far right) was a member of the Eureka College student senate, and in his senior year was elected student body president.

# Hollywood Days

1933-51: FROM RADIO TO THE MOVIES



1933 WHO radio in Des Moines broadcasts Dutch Reagan's vivid re-creations of Chicago Cubs baseball games.



1942 Reagan gave his most moving screen performance in "Kings Row."

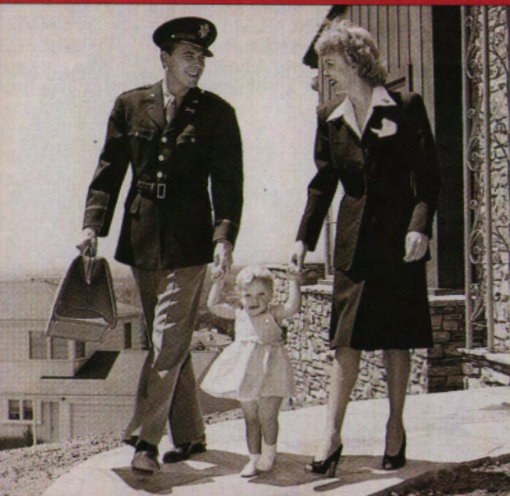
**Psychic Friend** Reagan said that Bob Cummings, his costar in the pivotal film "Kings Row," was always telling people on the set: "Someday, I'm going to vote for this fellow for president."



1940 Reagan married Warner Bros. costar Jane Wyman, and the studio's publicists turned them into icons of healthy romance.



1947 Reagan opposed Communism and informed willingly for the House Un-American Activities Committee, but he didn't name names.



1942 Reagan, shown here with Wyman and daughter Maureen, reports for active duty—he served by making Army training films.



1952 Reagan in his fifth year as president of the Screen Actors Guild

Reagan's own rendezvous with destiny was propelled by radio. Three months after graduating from Eureka, he landed a coveted job as a part-time football broadcaster for a station in Davenport, Iowa, which he parlayed into an announcer's job in 1933. By the mid-1930s, as Dutch Reagan, he became a premier radio sports announcer for WHO in Des Moines, Iowa, where he became known for his expert re-creation of Chicago Cubs baseball games. But he dreamed of an acting career in Hollywood, and a friend arranged a screen test in 1937. Reagan landed a contract with Warner Bros., which dropped the nickname "Dutch."

As an actor, Reagan proved a quick study. He became a durable light romantic lead in B-films made so quickly that Reagan said of them: "They didn't want them good, they wanted them Thursday."

But directors and audiences responded favorably to Reagan's wholesome looks and pleasant manner. Biographer Garry Wills observed that Reagan succeeded in films by playing the "heartwarming role" of himself. In 1940, Reagan was cast as the legendary football player George Gipp in "Knut Rockne—All American," starring Pat O'Brien as the famous Notre Dame coach. In Gipp's first scene, he shows up for football practice at Notre Dame and is asked by Rockne if he can carry the football. With an insouciance that suited the real-life Reagan, Gipp cocks an eyebrow and replies, "How far?"

**1940**  
**THE ALL-AMERICAN**  
Reagan contended that the idea for a movie about Knute Rockne starring Pat O'Brien was originally his.

The film was a springboard to heftier roles. In "Kings Row," Reagan was cast as a small-town playboy whose legs are amputated by a sadistic surgeon, played by Charles Coburn. But the film, which many critics considered Reagan's best, was released in 1942, when he was in the Army and unable to take advantage of his budding box-office appeal. He spent the war in Culver City as a member of an Army unit that made training films.



The postwar period was difficult for Reagan. Americans were going to the movies in record numbers, but they wanted new stars, and Reagan's career declined.

Meanwhile, Hollywood was shaken by labor unrest and investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee into alleged Communist influence in the movie industry. Reagan held a middle ground, opposing both Communists and the committee. Nonetheless, as president of the Screen Actors Guild, he helped implement the blacklist of suspect writers, actors and directors. Reagan was now increasingly preoccupied with union activity. His marriage to Jane Wyman, who won an Oscar as best actress for her role in 1948's "Johnny Belinda," fell apart the same year. She was granted custody of their two children, Maureen, born in 1941, and Michael, adopted in 1945.

**FOR THE GIPPER**  
Reagan's role as George Gipp in "Knut Rockne—All American" contained one of the most memorable speeches in the movies:

**GIPP** (on his deathbed, speaking to Rockne): "Some day when breaks have beaten the boys, ask them to go in there with all they've got and win just one for the Gipper. I don't know where I'll be then, but I'll know about it. I'll be happy."

# The Second Act

1952-74: FROM TELEVISION TO THE STATEHOUSE

**R**eagan's life regained its harmony after his marriage to actress Nancy Davis, on March 4, 1952. She gave up her career to become a wife, a mother and, ultimately, a savvy political adviser who protected her trusting husband from anyone who might take advantage of him. (They had two children: Patricia, in 1952, and Ronald Prescott, in 1958.) Reagan continued to make movies but at a slower pace. He made 55 films during a 24-year career, from 1937 to '61. A 56th movie, "The Killers," was made for television but judged too violent for the home screen and released in movie theaters in 1964.

In the 1950s, Reagan turned to television, aided by Music Corporation of America and his agent, Taft Schreiber, head of MCA's Revue Productions. As president of the Screen Actors Guild, Reagan did MCA an enormous favor in 1952 by granting it a blanket waiver to produce an unlimited number of television shows. In 1954, MCA hired Reagan as host of *General Electric Theater*. Reagan's contract with GE required him to tour company plants and give speeches. The contract became an eight-year political apprenticeship. *General Electric Theater* kept Reagan in the public eye, while his GE tours enabled him to polish the oratory that would take him to political heights.

Reagan had become affluent at a time when marginal tax rates were at an all-time high and individuals were not allowed to average their income. The combination of his high tax burdens and the antigovernment attitudes he encountered on his GE tours moved Reagan in an increasingly conservative political direction. Reagan campaigned for President Harry Truman in 1948, the last time he supported a Democratic presidential candidate. In

1952, Reagan became a Democrat for Eisenhower and in 1960 a Democrat for Richard Nixon. Two years later, he changed his registration to Republican. Then, on October 27, 1964, Reagan became an overnight political sensation and a hero to conservatives with a vibrant speech on behalf of GOP presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.

Although Goldwater lost in a landslide, Reagan's speech catapulted him into a candidacy for governor of California in 1966. He had never held public office and was underestimated by Democratic leaders, who dismissed Reagan as an over-the-hill actor and a "right-wing extremist," the label they had pinned on Goldwater. Reagan took it in stride. Asked how he would do as governor, Reagan flashed self-deprecating humor. "I don't know, I've never played a governor," he said. Voters responded positively to Reagan's cheerfulness and his promises to take a fresh look at government. Meanwhile, Democrats paid a price for urban riots, student demonstrations and growing dissatisfaction over the Vietnam War. Reagan defeated two-term incumbent Gov. Edmund G. "Pat" Brown by nearly a million votes.

After a shaky beginning, Reagan became an able governor. He had inherited a budget deficit and, to the surprise of many, readily agreed to a then-record \$1 billion tax bill that raised rates on banks and corporations.

After winning election to a second term as governor in 1970, he worked with a Democratic legislative majority to produce useful compromises on welfare reform and tax and school financing bills. He blocked attempts to build a high dam that would have destroyed wild rivers in northern California, and prevented construction of a trans-Sierra highway that would have bisected the John Muir Trail. On balance, said a prominent Democratic legislator, Reagan's "conservative bark was worse than his bite."

## STEALTH WEDDING

**DATE:** March 4, 1952

**LOCATION:** Little Brown Church in the Valley, near L.A.

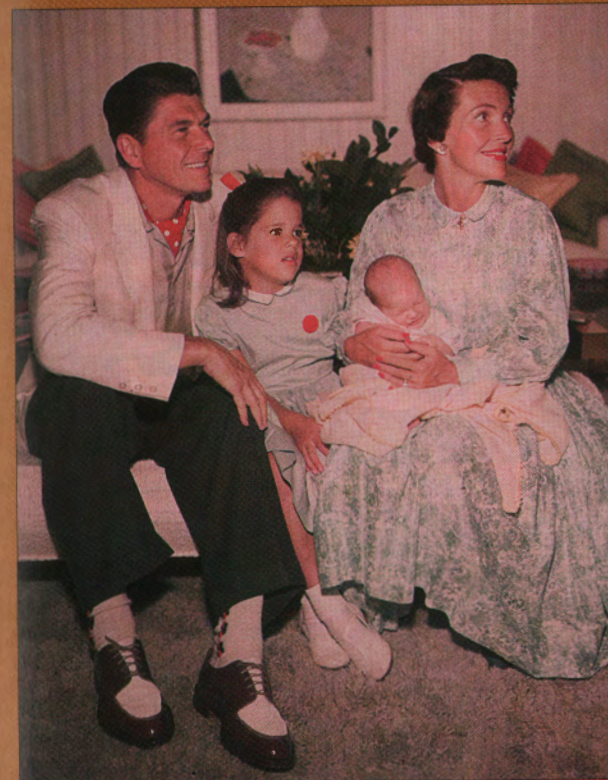
**IN ATTENDANCE:** Only William Holden, best man, and Holden's wife, Ardis, matron of honor

**AFTER:** Dinner at Holden's home with a photographer to document the event



1952

**HIS ONE AND ONLY**  
Reagan's marriage to Nancy Davis was one of the key turning points in his life.



1958 Ronald and Nancy with Patti and their newborn son, Ron Jr.

**Company Man** Reagan told TV GUIDE in 1958, "I want to meet and shake hands personally with each of the employees of GE." He had already met about 200,000.



1956 MCA had hired Reagan to be both host of *General Electric Theater* and a corporate spokesman. Far from being a burden, his speeches to GE's workers help him develop his political skills.

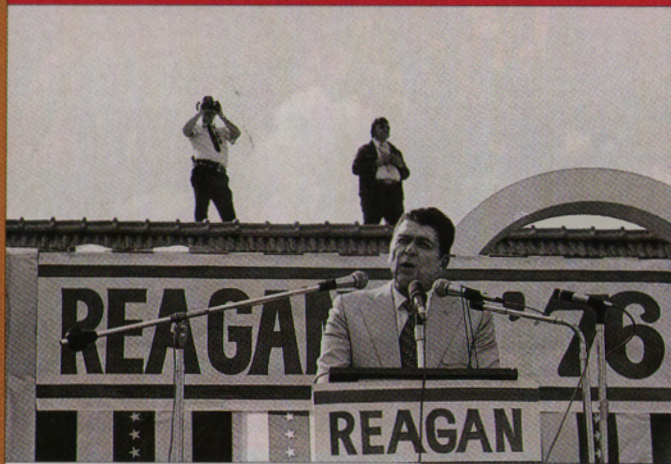


1966 Reagan was host of the Western anthology *Death Valley Days* when he announced his candidacy for governor of California.



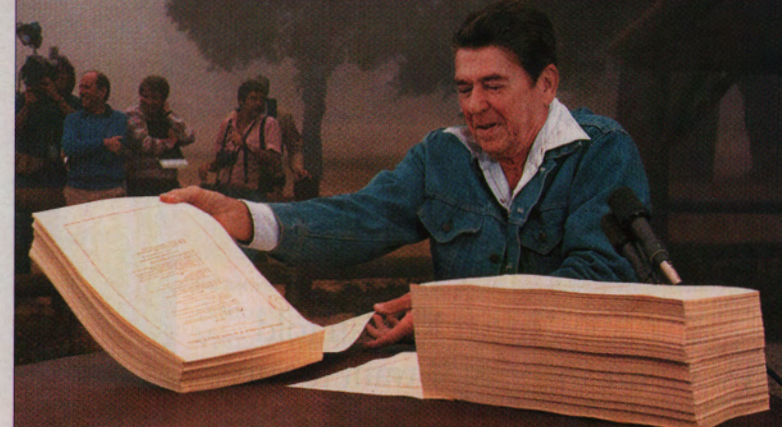
1966 Ronald and Nancy celebrate after his stunning victory over Democratic incumbent Pat Brown in the gubernatorial election.

**1976** Reagan loses his bid for the Republican presidential nomination to President Gerald Ford, but his strong showing makes him the man to beat in '80.



**1980** Reagan accepts the Republican nomination in Detroit and goes on to defeat President Jimmy Carter.

**Tax Cut** Reagan's fiscal philosophy took shape in the '50s, when the top tax rate was 91 percent. "This simply isn't fair," he told TV GUIDE in 1957, "and I don't think the so-called 'average man' would consider it fair, either."



**1981** Less than five months after surviving a near-fatal assassination attempt, Reagan signs into law the massive tax and budget cuts that were the key to his economic plan.



**1984** Reagan campaigns vigorously for his second term, trying to fend off criticism that, at 73, he was too old to be an effective leader.

# To Washington

## 1975-84: FROM THE OUTSIDE TO THE LANDSLIDE

**E**arly on in his tenure as governor, Reagan was seen by GOP conservatives as their best hope for winning the White House. He made an abortive run for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968. The winner that year was Richard Nixon, who won the presidency and was reelected in 1972. But Nixon was forced to resign in 1974 because of the Watergate scandal, and the presidency passed to Gerald R. Ford; after initial hesitation, Reagan tried to wrest the GOP nomination from Ford in 1976. Reagan lost the first five primaries, then won an unexpected victory in North Carolina. He battled Ford all the way to the Republican National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, where the president narrowly turned back the Reagan challenge. Ford then lost, also narrowly, to Democrat Jimmy Carter in November.

In 1980, Reagan tried again. He lost in the Iowa caucuses to George H.W. Bush but bested Bush in a dramatic confrontation at the debate in Nashua, New Hampshire, that was a prelude to Reagan's victory in that and a string of succeeding primaries. After Reagan was nominated, he unified the Republican party by choosing Bush as his running mate. The highlight of the fall campaign was another debate, this time with President Carter. In a famous riposte, Reagan said to the startled president, "There you go again." Reagan won the 1980 election decisively after a campaign in which he often used a line he had borrowed from FDR: "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"

Reagan's eight years as president began in near tragedy and ended in triumph. On March 30, 1981, when he had been in office little more than two months, he was the target of an assassination attempt outside a Washington, D.C., hotel. One bullet caused permanent brain damage to his press secretary, James Brady; another seriously wounded Reagan and narrowly missed a vital artery. Reagan, then 70, displayed a gallantry and wit

that won the hearts of Americans. "Honey, I forgot to duck," he told Nancy Reagan when she rushed to his side at the hospital. Reagan's popularity soared. Later that year, Congress passed budget and tax reduction bills that were the core of Reagan's economic program. Reagan also sent a resounding symbolic message of leadership when he fired striking air traffic controllers whose union had supported him in 1980.

Candidate Reagan had promised to increase military spending, cut income tax rates and balance the budget. President Reagan carried out the first two pledges at the expense of the third. In the fall of 1981, the nation plunged into recession and the budget deficit soared. Helped by hard times, Democrats regained lost congressional ground in the midterm elections of 1982. Soon after, however, the economy emerged from recession, and the nation entered a prosperous period that extended beyond the Reagan years. In 1984, Reagan was reelected in a monumental landslide, carrying every state except Minnesota, the home state of Democratic nominee Walter Mondale.

Reagan's second term was marred by disclosures that he had secretly approved selling small arms to Iran to gain the freedom of Americans held hostage in Lebanon. Some of the proceeds from the sale were diverted to the Nicaraguan rebels, called contras, who were trying to overthrow their nation's Marxist government. Reagan ardently supported the contras but denied knowledge of the diversion. Three separate inquiries, one by an independent counsel, found no evidence that he was aware of it. But in a nationally televised speech on March 4, 1987, Reagan acknowledged that he had traded arms for hostages with Iran and that it had been a mistake to do so. The nation forgave him; when he left office, a *New York Times*-CBS poll gave him an approval rating of 68 percent.

**1980**  
**THE THRILL OF VICTORY**  
Reagan pledged that he would renew America's economy and its sense of purpose.



### THE FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

**January 20, 1981** "We have every right to dream heroic dreams. Those who say that we're in a time when there are no heroes, they just don't know where to look."

# The Reagan Era

1985-89: ACTOR ON THE WORLD'S STAGE

**T**he great achievement of Reagan's second term was in U.S.-Soviet relations, which had been strained by the U.S. military buildup and Reagan's blunt descriptions of the Soviets as an "evil empire" and "the focus of evil in the modern world." But Reagan never wavered in his belief that the buildup, combined with American resolve, would bring the Soviets to the bargaining table. On March 11, 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the new Soviet leader. He was vigorous and eager to engage Reagan. The two men met in Geneva that November and held subsequent summits in Reykjavik, Iceland, and then in Washington and Moscow. Negotiations, especially in Reykjavik, were tense, but Reagan and Gorbachev formed an abiding mutual respect and signed the first treaty of the Cold War to reduce nuclear arsenals. In May 1988, Reagan strolled through Red Square with Gorbachev and proclaimed the end of the Cold War. Standing beneath a bust of Lenin at Moscow State University,

1988

**THE WHITE RUSSIAN**  
Reagan's Moscow trip revealed a country that was neither evil nor an empire.

Reagan was cheered by students when he called for "a new world of reconciliation, freedom, and peace."

Reagan left office on January 20, 1989, three weeks before his 78th birthday. He was the oldest president in the nation's history and one of its most captivating. The unusual road he had traveled to political leadership did not seem strange to him—indeed, he told an interviewer that there had been times when he wondered how anyone could do the job of president without having been an actor. Reagan was comfortable with himself and his country. He felt pride that he had restored confidence in a presidency that had seemed damaged almost beyond repair by Vietnam and Watergate and a string of unsuccessful presidents, but he gave most of the credit to the American people. "We meant to change a nation and instead we changed a world," he said in a farewell address to the American people on January 11, 1989.

It was quite an achievement for the onetime lifeguard from Dixon, Illinois.

Lou Cannon, a former *Washington Post* reporter, is the author of five books on Ronald Reagan, including *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* and *Governor Reagan: His Rise to Power* (PublicAffairs).

## GOOD BUDDIES

Reagan and Gorbachev jested during the INF Treaty signing at the White House on December 8, 1987:

**Reagan:** "We have listened to the wisdom in an old Russian maxim. And I'm sure you are familiar with it...though my pronunciation may give you difficulty. The maxim is: *Dovorey no provorey*—trust, but verify."

**Gorbachev:** "You repeat that at every meeting."  
[Laughter]

**Reagan:** "I like it." [Laughter]




1989

## FAREWELL TO THE CHIEF

"There was nothing he enjoyed more as president than saluting," says biographer Edmund Morris. "He would do that little extra flip.... It was a real Hollywood salute. But it meant a great deal to him."



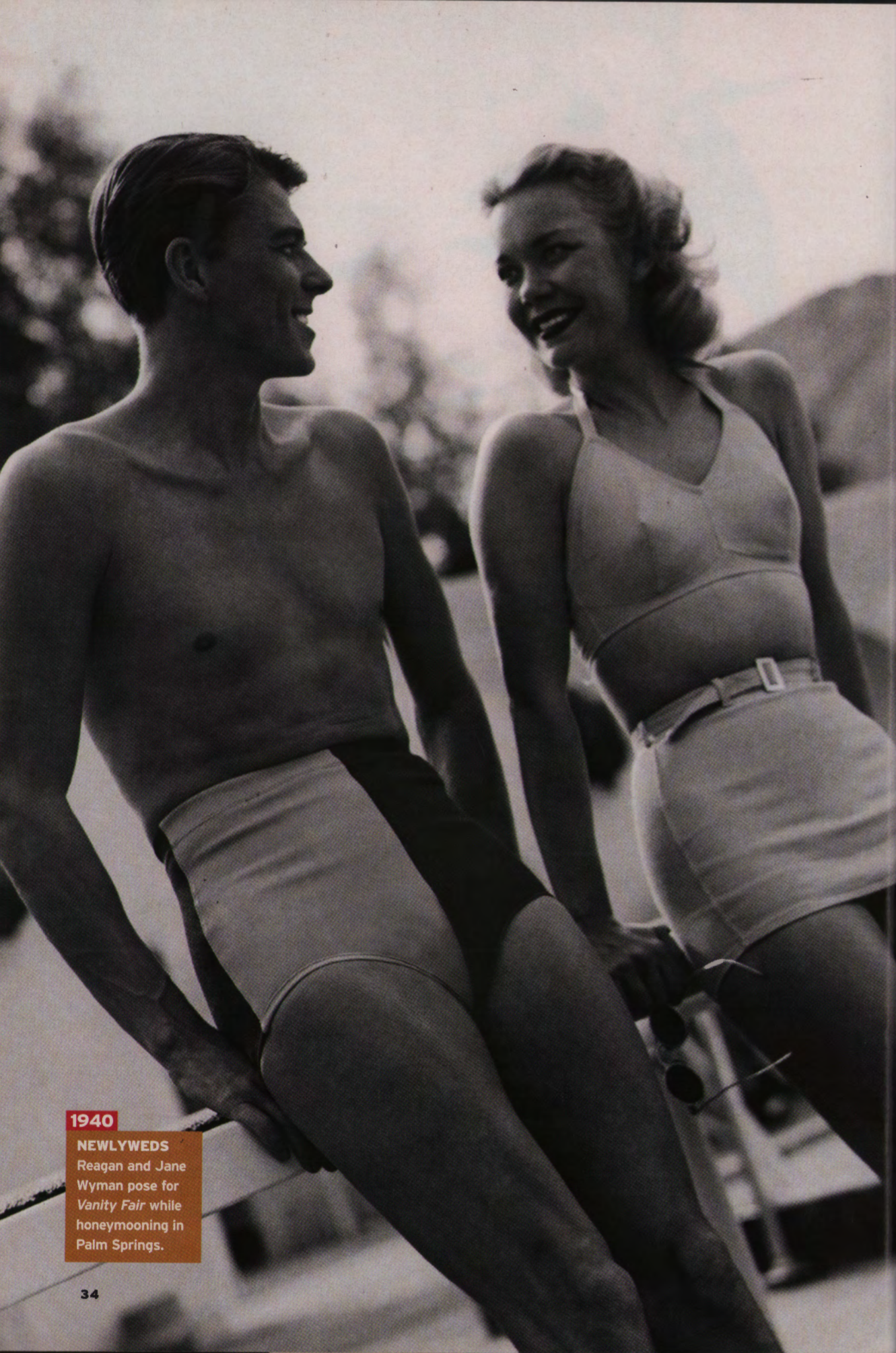


# Leading MAN

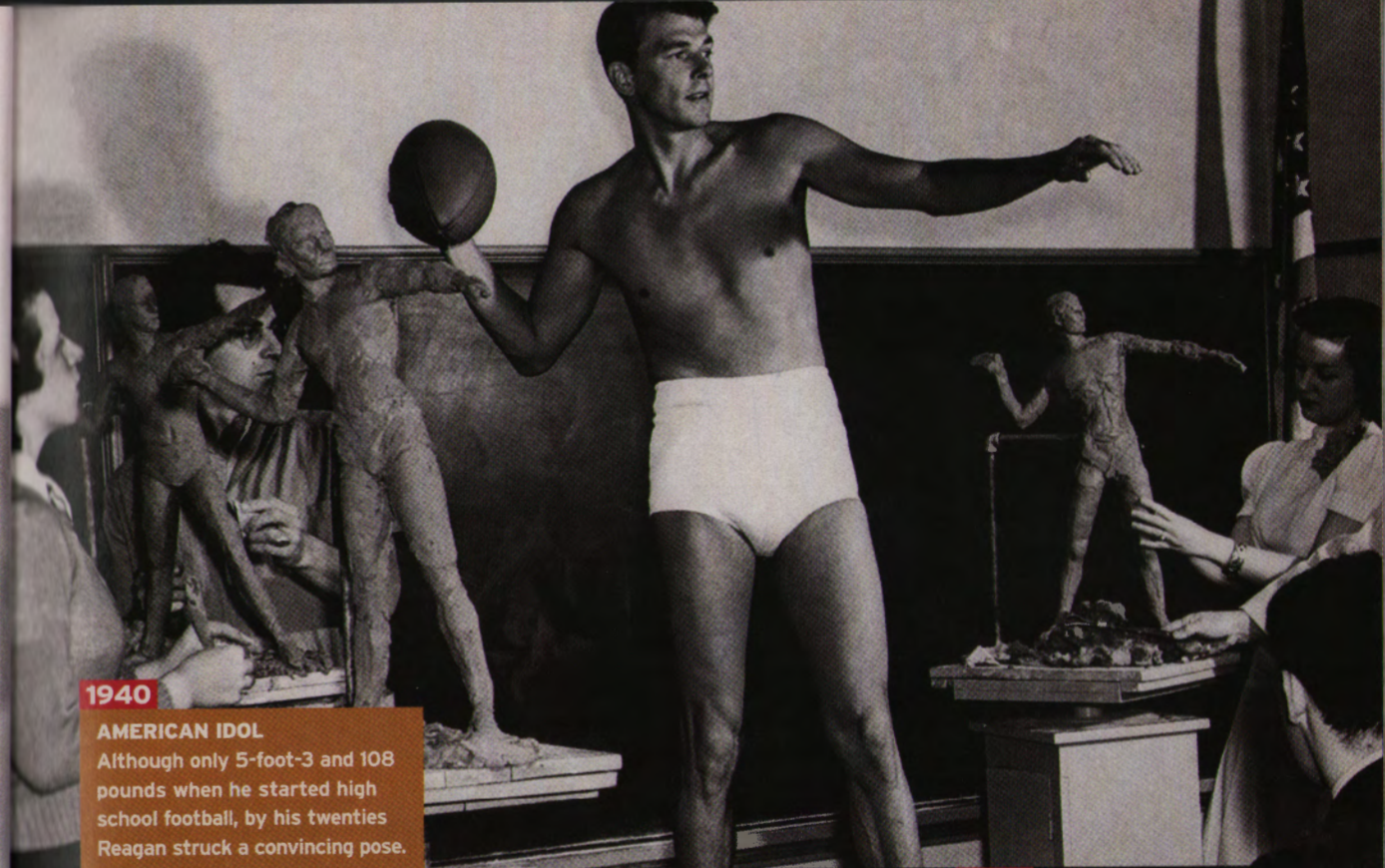
**REAGAN'S HOLLYWOOD YEARS WERE  
A STAR-STUDED AFFAIR FILLED WITH  
SWANK PARTIES AND GORGEOUS WOMEN**

**1959**

**ANOTHER 'RENDEZVOUS'**  
Reagan probably never told Marilyn Monroe that as an Army captain in 1945, he sent Pvt. David Conover to photograph young women working for the war effort. One of those women turned out to be 19-year-old Norma Jean Dougherty, and the rest—as with so much else in Reagan's life—is history.



**1940**  
**NEWLYWEDS**  
Reagan and Jane Wyman pose for *Vanity Fair* while honeymooning in Palm Springs.



**1940**  
**AMERICAN IDOL**  
Although only 5-foot-3 and 108 pounds when he started high school football, by his twenties Reagan struck a convincing pose.



**1940**  
**BATHING BEAUTIES**  
Reagan and six starlets enjoy the pool on the cruise ship *America* shortly before its conversion into a troop transport for the war.



**1945**  
**COCKTAIL HOUR**  
Reagan and Wyman relax with Humphrey Bogart and his wife, actress Mayo Methot.



**1950**  
**BUNCH OF DANDIES**  
Reagan was a fixture on the benefit circuit. Here he clowns with James Cagney while ventriloquist Edgar Bergen plays "swami" with his sidekick, Charlie McCarthy.



**1950**  
**STEPPING OUT**  
After his marriage to Wyman ended, Reagan dated film noir heroine Ruth Roman. She went on to star in Alfred Hitchcock's "Strangers on a Train."

1984

**THE FIRST COUPLE**

Looking back on his two terms in office, Reagan said, "The presidency wouldn't have been the joy it's been for me without her there beside me."



**Nancy Pants** "Man can't live without a heart and you are my heart."  
(Letter to Nancy, 1953)

# 'TruLuv'

## RONNIE AND NANCY WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER

**T**he tears weren't supposed to be real, but Nancy Davis couldn't help herself. It was 1957, and she was on the set of "Hellcats of the Navy," playing a World War II nurse who has fallen for a handsome submarine commander, played by her real-life husband, Ronald Reagan. He is leaving on a dangerous mission in Japanese waters and must bid his love goodbye. But the actress couldn't do the scene without breaking down in real tears, forcing the director to yell "Cut!" and start over.

"I guess there were too many real-life goodbyes in those days," Nancy wrote in 2000 in *I Love You, Ronnie* (RANDOM HOUSE). In more than 50 years of marriage, Ronald and Nancy Reagan never took well to being apart. Between 1949, when he and Nancy Davis had met, and the shooting of "Hellcats," their only screen appearance together, Reagan had been traveling regularly for General Electric, the Screen Actors Guild or movie roles.

"Whenever he was traveling, no matter how busy I was, I felt lonely and sad," Nancy wrote. On his first tour for GE, in 1954, Reagan had been kept on the road for eight weeks. The lengthy separation pained husband no less than wife, who was home with their toddler, Patti. After that, Reagan told GE he would not travel for more than three weeks at a time, and he didn't.

When Reagan later hit the campaign trail, Nancy would go with him. The longest they were ever apart during his presidency was one week. Nancy attended the July 1981 wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana on her own because Reagan was still recuperating from the



1953

**MOVIE DATE** They could go to a movie premiere, or just watch TV at home, as long as there was plenty of popcorn.

BY ERIC LEVIN

**1954** At Yearling Row, the Reagans shared the simple joys of ranch life. On their 40th wedding anniversary, Reagan said of the early days: "With Nancy, I soon realized, my life was complete."



**On Location** "Just a quick line from somewhere south of Tucson (pronounced TOOSON). I'm balancing this on my knee while I wait to ride gallantly over another hill. I know why the Confederates lost—they were so d--n hot in these uniforms they couldn't fight."  
 (Letter to Nancy from the set of "The Last Outpost," 1950)



**1961** Unlike Jane Wyman, Nancy Reagan shared her husband's interest in politics. Here they laugh it up with actor Don DeFore at a political rally. DeFore starred in the '60s sitcom *Hazel* and became a Reagan delegate.

assassination attempt four months earlier. Throughout their lives together, his face would brighten the instant she walked into the room. And even if they were only in separate rooms, they would miss each other.

Whether he was president of the Screen Actors Guild, governor of California or president of the United States, Reagan was just Ronnie to his Nancy. But his avid imagination bestowed on her many pet names through the years—Nancy Pants, Nancy Poo, Mommie Poo Pants, Little Mommie and just plain Mommie.

Their marriage, made in Hollywood, turned out to be more romantic than even the most happily-ever-after Hollywood movie. The frilliest hearts-and-flowers greeting card does nothing more than tell it like it is, as far as Ronnie was concerned. In fact, no matter where he was on Earth, Reagan loved sending his wife the most effusive Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, birthday and anniversary cards.

To these he would append his own heartfelt declarations. His main theme was that he would rather be delivering the message in person, but often he took pains to point out that the printed words on the card fell short. Under a birthday card's message of "I love you," he wrote in his own studious hand, "I not only say it, I live it and think it a thousand times a day." And for every tablespoon of sincerity, there was a teaspoonful of playful humor. At the bottom of a Valentine's card whose verses concluded with "You're first in my thoughts, and you're first in my heart," he wrote, "Every word of it—every word of it!!—Guess Who—I'm just to your left if you need a hint."

Reagan practically made an art form of the postscript. He ended one anniversary card with, "P.S.—I'm at the ranch. P.P.S.—I'll see you tonite. P.P.P.S.—I'm looking forward to it. P.P.P.P.S.—Don't leave without me."

Parting is such sweet sorrow. Shakespeare said it, Ronnie and Nancy personified it, Michael Deaver witnessed it. When Reagan was governor, Deaver, his deputy chief of staff, showed up a few minutes early for a meeting

with the boss. Just then Nancy called, and Deaver politely got up to leave. But Reagan signaled him to stay, indicating the call would be quick. Deaver, in his 2004 book *Nancy: A Portrait of My Years With Nancy Reagan* (HARPER-COLLINS), recalls Reagan then bidding his wife a fond "Goodbye" seven or eight times. "Finally," Deaver writes, "with one last 'bye,' no more really than a puff of wind, he hung the phone up as carefully as if it were made of the finest crystal. Then he looked up at me and winked.

"I began to say something, but he gently cut me off as only he could do. 'You know, it's funny, but neither of us ever wants to be the last one to say goodbye.'"

And to think it all started with a case of mistaken identity and a blind date. One day in 1949, Nancy Davis was horrified to see her name on a list of Communist sympathizers published in a Hollywood newspaper. It turned out to be a different Nancy Davis, so the actress asked her friend, director Mervyn LeRoy, to plant an item with gossip columnist Louella Parsons clearing up the confusion. He did. But Davis was still worried, so LeRoy offered to call Reagan, the president of the Screen Actors Guild, on her behalf.

This struck Davis as an excellent idea. "I had seen some



**1964**  
**PERFECT PAIR**  
 Daughter Patti Davis told *The American Experience: Reagan*, "My parents...really sort of complete each other. They're kind of two halves of a circle."

**1965** Ron Jr. has said, "They're very, very different people, Dad and Nancy, but in a way that complements the other very well."



**The Look of Love** "Do you know that when you sleep you curl your fists up under your chin and many mornings when it is barely dawn I lie facing you and looking at you until finally I have to touch you ever so lightly so you won't wake up—but touch you I must or I'll burst!"

(Letter to Nancy, 1963)



**1968** The cowboy governor and his leather-clad lady changed their look considerably by the time they got to the White House.

of his pictures, and on screen, at least, he seemed nice and good-looking—someone I thought I'd like to meet," Nancy wrote in *My Turn* (1989, RANDOM HOUSE). LeRoy called Reagan, who assured him that Davis had nothing to worry about. The next day, LeRoy called back and said the actress was still worried. He suggested that Reagan take her to dinner and reassure her himself.

On the night of the dinner, Nancy and Ronnie hedged their bets by telling each other they had an early call the next morning. But they hit it off so well—Nancy loved his sense of humor, his interests in many things other than his own acting career—that they confessed to the fictions long before Ronnie dropped her off at her apartment at nearly 3:30 am.

On that first night, Ronnie was smitten with Nancy's "wide-spaced pair of hazel eyes that looked right at you and made you look back." Also with her laugh, which he so loved to hear that he "spent most of my time trying to say something funny." Yet he was in no rush. Jane Wyman had divorced him the preceding year, a terrible blow to his ego, and he continued to date other women after he met Nancy. She took the long view, counseled by her mother, who also had had to give a man (Dr. Loyal Davis) time to recover from the trauma of divorce.

So things progressed. They met each other's parents. She met his kids, Maureen and Michael. Unlike Wyman, Nancy loved listening to Ronnie talk about whatever interested him, even politics. They dated for two years. "Gradually," Reagan would write, "I came out of a deep-freeze and discovered a wonderful world of warmth and contentment." Often they had dinner at her apartment, watching television and popping popcorn. Or they would visit Reagan's ranch north of Los Angeles, where Ronnie taught Nancy to ride horses and paint fences.

Still, no proposal. So in January 1952, as Nancy wrote in *I Love You, Ronnie*, "I decided to give things a push." She told him that she was thinking about asking her agent if he could get her a part in a play in New York. "As I recall, he didn't say anything, but he looked surprised. Not long afterward, while we were having dinner in our usual booth at Chasen's, he said, 'I think we ought to get married.'"

They wed in March at a tiny chapel outside L.A. Then press-shy, Reagan insisted on no witnesses but their best friends, actor William Holden and his wife, Ardis. The next couple of years were difficult, not because Nancy didn't cook (Reagan never minded that) but because his acting career was fizzling and he had not yet found the TV work and travel for GE that would set him on the road to a life in politics.

Nancy's worrying about being labeled a Communist wasn't disingenuous or out of character. She was a worrier, while Reagan most definitely was not. Instead of getting on each other's nerves, their opposite styles perfectly complemented each other. As Deaver observed in *Nancy*, "That's how it's always been: Nancy worries, Reagan crusades."

Outsiders did not always take well to Nancy's vigilance. When Deaver went to work for the new governor in 1967, Nancy was already being referred to by many of Reagan's staff as "Dragon Lady." He himself picked up the phone with clammy hands the first time she called him, to discuss



**1976**

**SWEET DREAMS**

Nancy campaigned with Reagan tirelessly during his bicentennial bid for the presidency, and their hopes were fulfilled—four years later.

1983

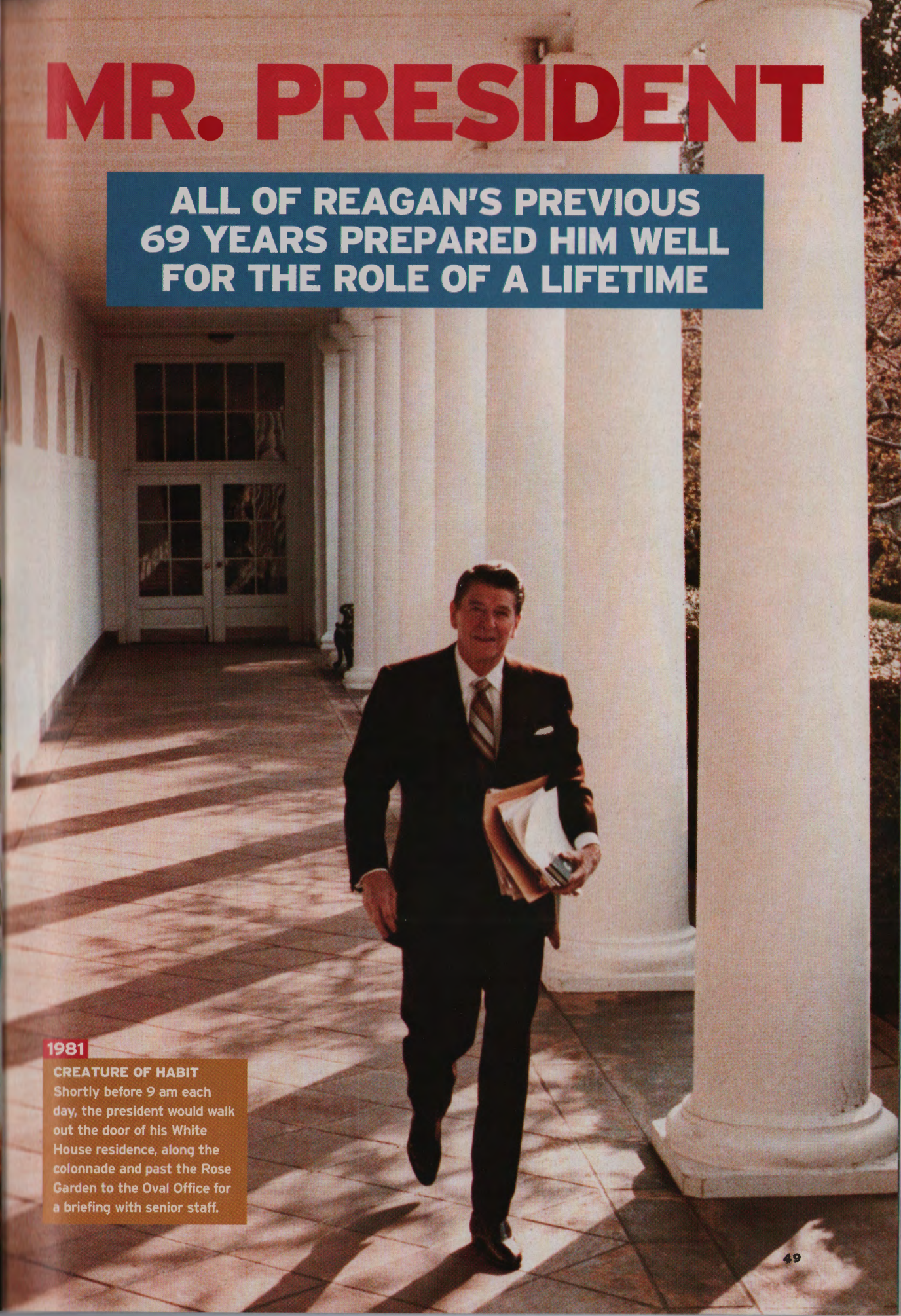
**EXECUTIVE WORDSMITH**

Reagan was a heavy editor of his speechwriters' efforts. He relentlessly tightened their drafts until they rang with his own voice. The hard work often paid off—his address on threats to American interests in Lebanon and Grenada garnered public support for U.S. operations there.



# MR. PRESIDENT

**ALL OF REAGAN'S PREVIOUS  
69 YEARS PREPARED HIM WELL  
FOR THE ROLE OF A LIFETIME**



1981

**CREATURE OF HABIT**

Shortly before 9 am each day, the president would walk out the door of his White House residence, along the colonnade and past the Rose Garden to the Oval Office for a briefing with senior staff.

1984

**PARTY ANIMALS**

The Reagans loved to go out. But by the time of his second presidential inaugural, Reagan noted that bandleaders slowed the tempo when he and Nancy hit the dance floor.



1985

**PATRON OF SAINTS**

Reagan presents Mother Teresa with the Medal of Freedom. She would have received it a month earlier, he explained, but she was "busy as usual saving the world."



1982

**THE GIPPER**

The gift of an autographed football from the Southern California team prompted this reprise of Reagan's 1940 role as George Gipp.



1981

**STATESMEN**

Reagan toasts former presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter in a light moment prior to their departure for Anwar Sadat's funeral in Egypt.

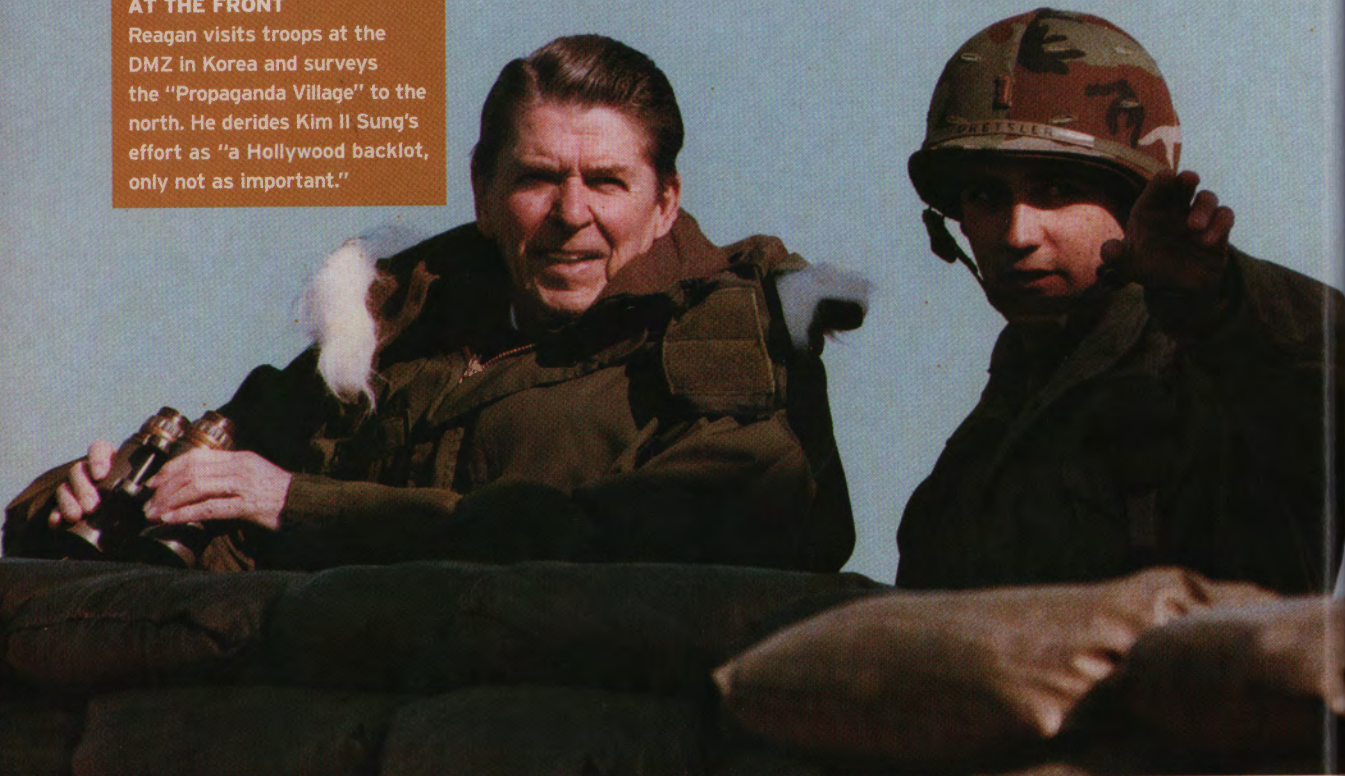




1983

**AT THE FRONT**

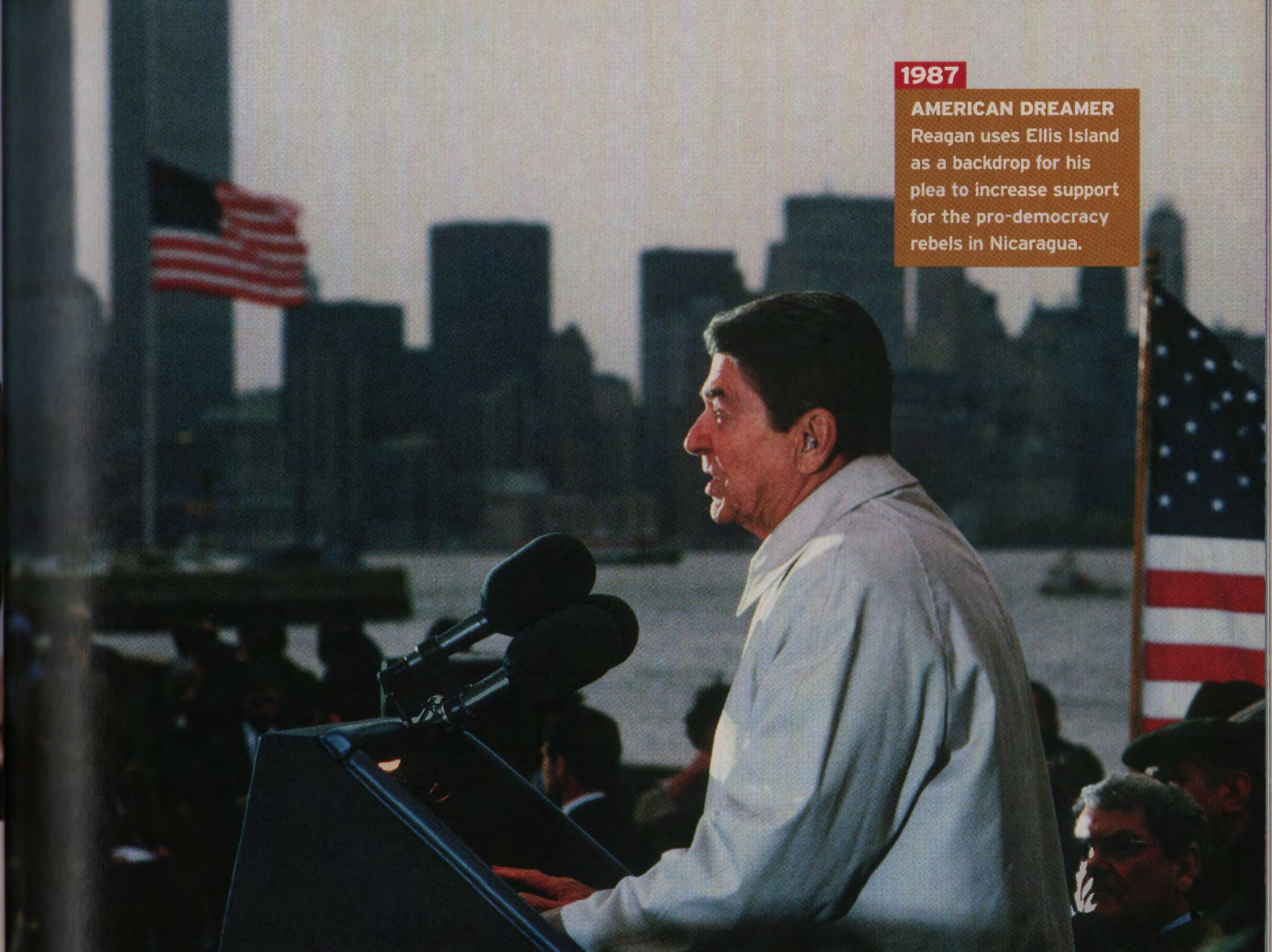
Reagan visits troops at the DMZ in Korea and surveys the "Propaganda Village" to the north. He derides Kim Il Sung's effort as "a Hollywood backlot, only not as important."



1987

**AMERICAN DREAMER**

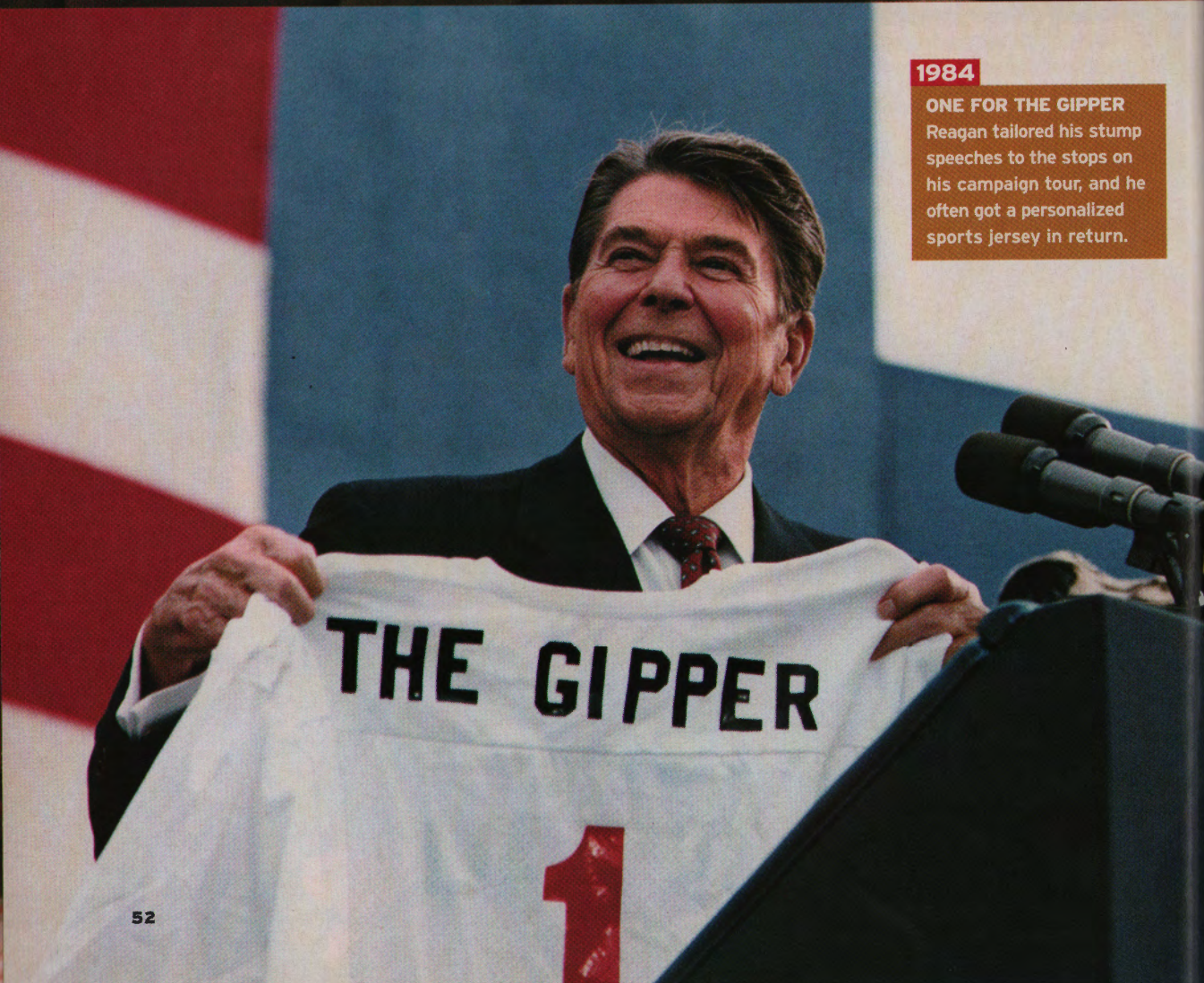
Reagan uses Ellis Island as a backdrop for his plea to increase support for the pro-democracy rebels in Nicaragua.



1984

**ONE FOR THE GIPPER**

Reagan tailored his stump speeches to the stops on his campaign tour, and he often got a personalized sports jersey in return.



1984

**THE COMMANDER**

Reagan was the first president to return the salutes of military personnel—a precedent co-opted so far by all of his successors.

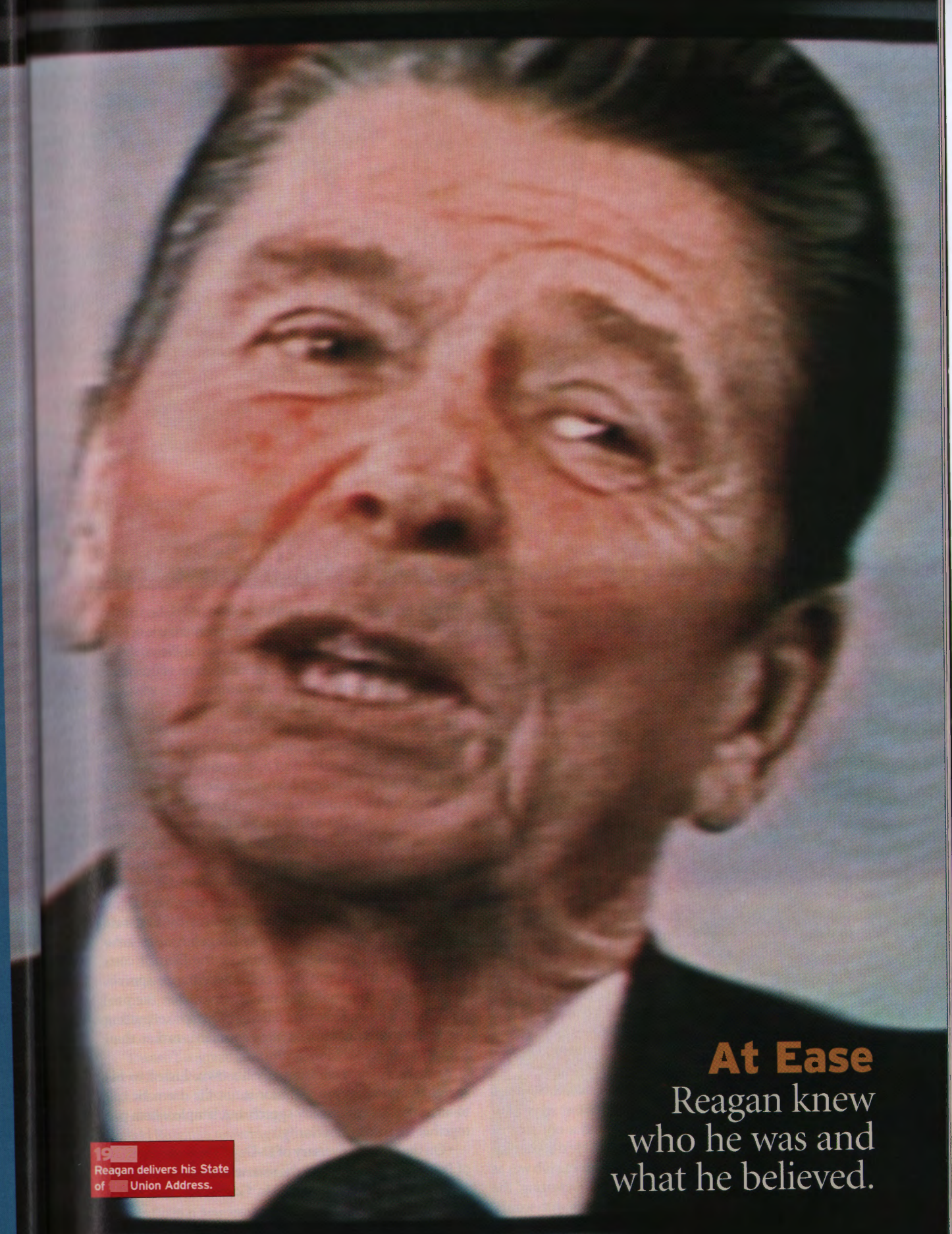


# The Great Communicator

**WHEN REAGAN SPOKE,  
THE COUNTRY NOT ONLY  
LISTENED—IT HEARD**

**P**eople said it all the time when he was president. “Of course, he’s good on television; why wouldn’t he be? Look at all those movies. Look at all those years hosting *General Electric Theater*. He knows how to smile, how to wave, how to tear up on cue, how to pause for dramatic effect, how to read a script—or a speech. He was an actor, wasn’t he?” □ All that was true. And it misses the point, big time. Yes, Reagan’s years in Hollywood made him comfortable in front of a camera—no small thing for a politician, most of whom are frozen by fear into mimicking the gestures and words of their handlers. Longtime aide Lyn Nofziger says his acting “gave him a sense of timing that very few people in politics are used to.” □ But it was Reagan’s other gifts that made him superb on the tube—gifts that have almost nothing to do with body-language lessons or predigested sound bites.

**BY JEFF GREENFIELD**



**At Ease**  
Reagan knew  
who he was and  
what he believed.

1954  
Reagan delivers his State  
of the Union Address.



**1981**  
Reagan pitches his tax plan to the nation.

## Taxes

“Isn’t it time that we tried something new?”

First of all, Reagan knew who he was and what he believed. For all the talk that he was simply the product of his image makers, one of the best known of them, Michael Deaver, says that with Reagan, the image *was* the reality.

“The guy was the most comfortable person with himself I’ve ever met,” Deaver says. “I once went to talk to him about doing something for the cameras, like taking his jacket off and throwing it over his shoulder, and he said, ‘I can’t do that. I wouldn’t be comfortable doing that, and if I’m not comfortable, then the people watching aren’t going to be comfortable.’”

This was a man who, his aides said, never worked in shirtsleeves in the Oval Office, because he felt it would show disrespect for the presidency, yet whose formality was balanced with a sense of humor that came not from joke writers, but from inside himself. He was always at ease with the fact that he was the oldest man ever to be elected president. Back in 1980, he told a white-tie New York City audience his secret for looking younger and younger: “I just keep ridin’ older horses.”

A dozen years later, he broke up the Republican National Convention with this twist on a famous political riposte: “This [Clinton] fellow they’ve nominated claims he’s the new Thomas Jefferson. Well, I knew Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson was a friend of mine...”

But amiability and a sense of humor alone do not a Great Communicator make. Perhaps his most significant and least appreciated gift was that he had a remarkable command of the spoken word. Why not? He’d grown up listening to FDR’s fireside chats, and his first big job was as a sports announcer in Des Moines, Iowa, “re-creating” the games of the Chicago Cubs, painting pictures with words.

(When he lost the GOP nomination in 1976, he turned down lucrative TV offers to do radio commentaries).

And though he is remembered as General Electric’s TV spokesman, his most valuable training came off camera. Journalist Lou Cannon (*see story on page 20*), who followed Reagan’s political career, explains: “Part of Reagan’s G.E. contract was that he go and give a certain number of speeches, and spend certain weeks on the road each year. Reagan was given the kind of audience—the small-town audience, the worker-and-his-wife audiences—that were always his natural audience anyway.” Not only did he speak in countless cafeterias full of blue-collar workers, Reagan also answered questions from the crowd. He likely spent more time than any of his political contemporaries talking with and listening to the much-pandered-to “real” Americans outside of conventional political arenas.

And he listened well. Aided as he was by first-rate speechwriters and advisers, it was Reagan himself who shaped his own message. In 1980, at the Detroit convention, I watched him deliver his acceptance speech. Several times, his words did not exactly match the prepared text; he seemed to be editing as he spoke, putting the words together so that they sounded, rather than read, more effectively.

And the voice was essentially his own. Listen to his speeches, and what you will hear is not the dramatic call to arms of a John Kennedy speech, but simple words put together for maximum clarity:

- On the 40th anniversary of D-Day, “These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc; these are the men who took the cliffs...”

- In his speech at Berlin, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”



**1984**  
Reagan commemorates the 40th anniversary of the Invasion of Normandy.

**D-Day**  
“These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc; these are the men who took the cliffs...”

- In his appeal for his tax plan before Congress, “Isn’t it time that we tried something new?”

It is an often used cliché, that the camera never lies. That is, especially in the case of a television camera, not exactly true. The camera cannot always detect artifice, or manufactured emotion, or pretended intelligence.

But about some things the camera cannot be fooled. And what did the camera show us about Ronald Reagan? It showed us that he was an optimist, sometimes to a fault (“I didn’t have cancer,” he said after an operation on his intestine. “Something inside of me had cancer.”) It showed us that he did not take himself too seriously—he could not only laugh at himself, but that he regarded his political adversaries as simply adversaries, not enemies. His critics said that his optimism often led him to dismiss unpleasant news, such as the impact of his economic plan on our indebtedness. History will be the judge of that, but what is clear about such optimism is that no leader who feels that sunny about life is likely to become a keeper of enemies lists. TV often captured Reagan uncertain about his facts, willing to offer reassuring folktales in place of reality. But we never saw the face of a hater on the screen, because it was not a part of who Ronald Reagan was.

“I wasn’t a great communicator,” Reagan said in his farewell address. “But I communicated great things.”

And it was this understanding—that the message, not the medium, is the message—that, above all else, made Ronald Reagan a towering figure on television.

CNN senior analyst Jeff Greenfield’s most recent book is “*Oh, Waiter! One Order of Crow!*” *Inside the Strangest Presidential Election Finish in American History* (2001, Putnam).



**1987**  
Reagan delivers his message to Gorbachev.

## Berlin

“Tear down this wall.”

# On the Tube

## REAGAN'S TURNING POINTS ALL SEEMED TO HAPPEN ON TELEVISION



### GENERAL ELECTRIC THEATER

**SEPTEMBER 26, 1954** With his movie career fading, Reagan decided to plunge full-time into TV on CBS' *General Electric Theater*, introducing (and occasionally performing in) the half-hour Sunday-night anthology series. Highlights from his appearances include (from top) closing the show in boxing satins at the end of "No Skin Off Me," playing the gumshoe boyfriend of the amnesiac Kim Hunter in "Try to Remember" and his role as the anguished Capt. John Arnette in the Western "A Question of Survival."

He acted alongside Nancy in two episodes, as well as in a series of commercials about the building and outfitting of their new home in Pacific Palisades. Below, from left: Ron and Nancy inspect the construction site; they quiz Patti on the location of electrical appliances in the house (all supplied by G.E.); Ron proudly shows off a portable TV on their balcony.



### IN TV GUIDE: NOVEMBER 22, 1958

After four seasons on *General Electric Theater*, Reagan is less concerned about catching Emmy's roving eye than about the way Sunday's show will set with the swing shift at the sponsor's factory—or factories.

Reagan's conclusion: "People will accept art on TV. They want art, not just amusement. They'll accept an unhappy ending. But they do want to know what happened after the story ended and they want to know why. They do not want to be left dangling in the air after a TV show. They want to see real life, but real life tied up with a ribbon and no loose ends—a beginning, a middle and an end."

And he also determines: "They want stars, stars and more stars."



### IN TV GUIDE:

**MAY 27, 1961** Now 50, Reagan still retains the boyish good looks that have been his hallmark since he began in movies 24 years ago. Although he has made only two movies during his association with *GE Theater*, he doesn't feel TV has hurt his movie career. "I've had to turn down pictures," he says. "When you're identified with a successful TV show, you can't just get money hungry and make a quick picture for the sake of a dollar. You must at least match the stature of what you're doing on TV."



### SPEECH FOR BARRY GOLDWATER

**OCTOBER 27, 1964** Republican partisans bought time on NBC for Reagan—whose politics had been drifting steadily rightward—to rally the troops behind the flagging Goldwater presidential campaign. He echoed one of FDR's famous proclamations with the phrase, "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny." Most significantly, he laid out the themes of individual freedom and responsibility, combined with a hard line on foreign policy, that would become touchstones of his political career. The overwhelming popular response to "A Time for Choosing" elevated Reagan's visibility in GOP circles, prompting a group of wealthy benefactors to urge Reagan to run for governor of California in 1966.



### DEATH VALLEY DAYS

**1964-66** After *General Electric Theater* ended, he starred in some episodes of the syndicated western anthology *Death Valley Days*, and eventually replaced the Old Ranger as host. The series featured the kind of Western stories Reagan loved to watch and read. Highlights include his roles as the heartfelt frontier lawyer in "Tribute to the Dog" (below) and as the sly banker in "Raid on the San Francisco Mint" (right).





**DEBATE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER**

**OCTOBER 28, 1980** Reagan's debate performance against incumbent President Carter was credited with turning what had been a close contest into a landslide less than a week later. Two remarks stand out: "There you go again," Reagan gently scolded Carter for charging that the Republican campaigned against Medicare (which, it turns out, was true, but what people remember was Reagan's folksy but firm response). And for his closing remarks, Reagan delivered a heat-seeking missile right to voters' wallets with his brilliant rhetorical question, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?"

**DEBATE WITH GEORGE BUSH**

**FEBRUARY 23, 1980** Viewers got to see another side of the usually genial Reagan during a New Hampshire primary debate—and they responded well. Front-runner George Bush thought he would be debating Reagan one-on-one, but Reagan's handlers arranged for other candidates to show up. The editor of a Nashua newspaper, who moderated the debate, thought Reagan was changing the rules and ordered his mike turned off. An angered Reagan responded by shouting, "I paid for this microphone, Mr. Breen," echoing a similar phrase used by presidential candidate Spencer Tracy in the 1948 film "State of the Union." Audiences cheered wildly at this controlled but emotional outburst. The gesture made Reagan seem forceful, and he went on to win the primary, nomination and presidency.



**THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL**

**JANUARY 20, 1981** The oldest man elected U.S. president was sworn in on an unusually warm day, an apt metaphor for the sense of national renewal his address advocated. Reagan was the first president to be sworn in on the west side of the Capitol, and he used the vista of D.C. landmarks to great effect in his address. News coverage that night, of the unabashed celebrations of wealth and power at the inaugural balls (estimated cost: \$8 million), set the tone for the affluent '80s. Johnny Carson quipped on *The Tonight Show*, "This is the first administration to have a premiere."

**ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT**

**MARCH 30, 1981** Reagan had a brush with death at the hand of John Hinckley Jr. Unlike the Kennedy assassination 18 years earlier, news crews captured the entire sequence in color and on videotape—the waving president, the sudden popping of bullets, a grimacing Reagan shoved into a limousine by Secret Service agents and spirited away. When he saw Nancy later at George Washington University Hospital, he told her, famously, "Honey, I forgot to duck." Lou Cannon has said that following the shooting, Reagan's "resonant performance endowed him with a mythic quality."



**THE OSCARS**

**MARCH 31, 1981** Marking the first time a president had participated in an Oscarcast, Reagan greeted viewers at the beginning of the ceremonies. The segment had been taped earlier that week at the White House, prior to the assassination attempt. Host Johnny Carson chatted with the president earlier that day and said it was Reagan's "expressed wishes" that the segment be shown.



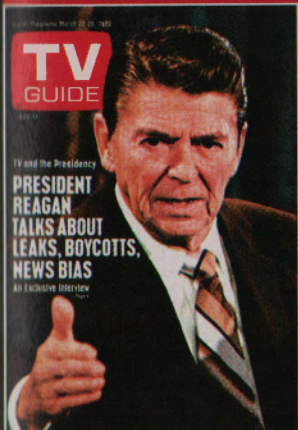
**IN TV GUIDE:**

**MARCH 20, 1982** Mr. Reagan emphasizes that television news has been helpful to him. The networks, he says, have been "generous." And he adds that much of the success he has had in promoting his economic policies is due to his exposure on television. "The basis of achieving what we did with regard to the budget cuts, taxes and so forth was Congress hearing from the folks back home. Television has been very good in making time available for us to take our side of the story to the people. I doubt if we could have had those [victories] without it."



**"IT'S MORNING AGAIN IN AMERICA"**

**SEPTEMBER 11, 1984** The 18-minute, \$425,000 film (which had premiered earlier that summer at the Republican national convention), produced by a New York ad exec, was expanded to 30 minutes and simulcast on the three broadcast networks. "The most luxurious, symphonic and technically proficient political commercial ever made," said the *New York Times* of the nostalgic film narrated by Reagan, which showcased some of the finest photo opportunities that Michael Deaver created for the president. It featured (below, from left) soft-focus images of America waking up, Reagan sharing burgers with troops in South Korea, and one of the "boys of Pointe du Hoc," crying at Normandy.



**DEBATE WITH WALTER MONDALE**  
**OCTOBER 21, 1984** In the second debate with the Democratic challenger, Reagan lobbed a zinger that defused one of the campaign's most sensitive issues: "I am not going to make age an issue in this campaign," said the president, then 73. "I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent's youth and inexperience." Mondale was 56 at the time.



**THE CHALLENGER DISASTER**

**JANUARY 28, 1986** Reagan postponed that evening's State of the Union speech to comfort a nation numbed by that morning's explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger*, in which seven astronauts were killed. In a televised address that afternoon, written by Peggy Noonan, the mourner-in-chief memorialized the crew by observing, "They had the special grace, that special spirit that says, 'Give me a challenge and I'll meet it with joy.'"



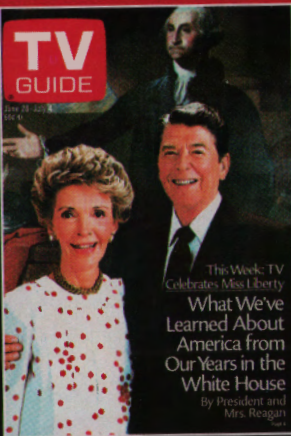
**THE TOWER REPORT**

**MARCH 4, 1987** Reagan addressed the nation about the Iran-contra affair: "I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart...still tells me that's true, but the facts and evidence tell me it is not."



**IN TV GUIDE:**

**JUNE 28, 1986** "The real lesson, then, and one we know better than ever after five and a half years in the White House, is to trust the American people. Americans have always had the vision to see what needed to be done and the courage to do it.... We should pause and look back with some satisfaction, and then look forward with confidence and great hope."



**THE BERLIN WALL**

**JUNE 12, 1987** During a trip to Germany, the master of the sound bite uttered one of his most memorable. Standing at the Brandenburg Gate, which divided East and West Berlin, the president issued a dare to the Soviet leader: "Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" (The wall tumbled down two years later.)

**STATE OF THE UNION**

**JANUARY 25, 1988** Frustrated that he had not been able to do as much as he had hoped to pare down the federal bureaucracy, Reagan argued for the line-item veto. He made an exaggerated show of lifting the paperwork of that year's budget and said, "That was a total of 43 pounds of paper and ink.... Congress shouldn't send another one of these. No, and if you do, I will not sign it."

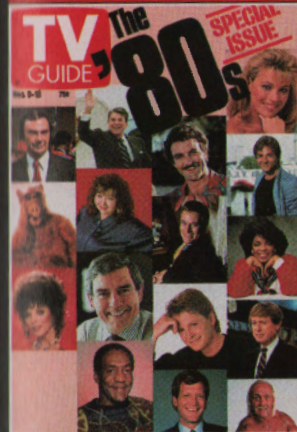
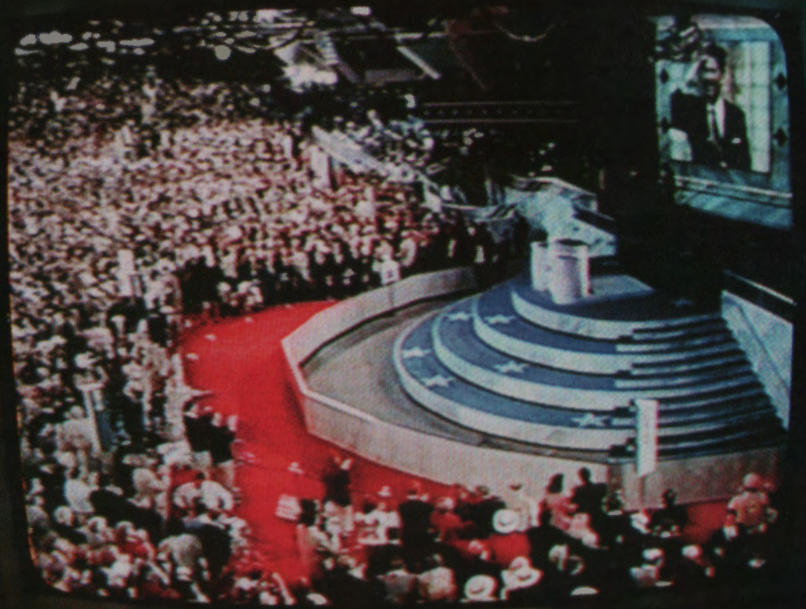


**FAREWELL ADDRESS**

**JANUARY 11, 1989** Reagan began his goodbyes on a poignant note by committing to keep speaking out on the issues that concerned him: "So I'm back where I came in—out there on the mashed potato circuit. I have a feeling I'll be giving speeches until I'm called to the great beyond and maybe even after. All it will take is for St. Peter to say, 'Ronald Wilson Reagan, what do you have to say for yourself? Speak up.'"

**IN TV GUIDE:**

**DECEMBER 9, 1989** Reagan ranked fourth on our list of the 20 top TV personalities of the '80s: "The first made-for-TV President. Reagan's ease and agility in front of a camera... established him as a natural communicator. Genial, charming, grandfatherly (yet still boyishly handsome), he projected an image of reassurance and unflappability that Americans seemed to want—and need—in their Chief Executive following a tumultuous decade of war, political scandal and inflation."



**REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**AUGUST 12, 1996** On the first night of the convention in San Diego, the Republicans offered a video tribute to the former president, now suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The video—delivered before a cheering, weeping and chanting crowd—chronicled the achievements of his presidency and contained tributes from Billy Graham, vice-presidential nominee Jack Kemp and Lee Iacocca. It was followed by a brief, moving address by Nancy Reagan, who said, "It reminded me again of how grateful Ronnie and I are for the privilege that you in America gave us for the wonderful eight years in the White House." When she finished, a picture of Reagan saluting appeared on two giant screens; speaker Colin Powell marched to the podium, turned around and returned his former commander-in-chief's salute before beginning his speech.



# ALL IN THE FAMILY

REAGAN'S CHILDREN FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE—BY FINDING THEIR OWN WAY



1981

THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL

Geoffrey Davis Anne Davis Dennis Revell Maureen Reagan Michael Reagan Colleen Reagan Cameron Reagan President Reagan Nancy Reagan

Bess Reagan Neil Reagan Patricia Davis Patti Davis Dr. Richard Davis Doria Reagan Ron Reagan

**B**efore he was president, and before he was the first actor-turned-governor of California and even before he was Nancy's husband, Reagan was a father.

Daughter Maureen was born in 1941 during Reagan's marriage to Jane Wyman, and adopted son Michael entered the picture four years later. For this strapping young movie star, fatherhood seemed the ideal role. In her book, *First Father, First Daughter: A Memoir* (1989, LITTLE, BROWN AND CO.), Maureen recalled her dad's theatrical way with a bedtime story, and how he sang lullabies "with a soft, deep and soothing baritone that could lull any daughter to dreamland in 10 hot seconds."

Athletic by nature, the former life-guard taught his kids to ride horses and, of course, swim. "If you're a Reagan, if you don't know how to swim, you're out of the family," Michael says. "At a very young age, he threw us all in the deep end and said, 'They're going to swim, or they're going to sink—one of the two.' We all swam, I think."

After his divorce from Wyman in 1948, Reagan continued to spend time with Michael and "Mermie," as he affectionately called Maureen, on Saturdays at his ranch in Southern California. "I remember sitting on the curb at 333 South Beverly Glen, waiting for his station wagon to pull up," Michael says. "Those were really great moments for me, looking forward to those Saturdays that I'd be able to spend with my dad out at the ranch."

The year 1952 brought Reagan's March marriage to Nancy Davis and, seven months later, the birth of their daughter, Patti. For Maureen and Michael—whose mother remarried and became a stepmother the same year—it was a difficult period. "Dad was starting out all over again with a new family, and Mother was starting out all over again with a new family," Maureen wrote. "I was happy for my parents, sure, but I also felt utterly

BY ALISON SLOANE GAYLIN

displaced by the whole business.”

Though she and her brother continued to see their father, his new life put distance between them. By the time Ron Jr. was born in 1958, Maureen was getting ready to enter college. Michael bridged the gap by moving into the Reagan home when he was 14, but by then, she was living on her own in Washington, D.C. On a rare visit to her father's home, Maureen discovered that Patti had never been told she had a half-sister. “It seems Patti was introduced to us siblings on a need-to-know basis,” she wrote.

Interestingly, Maureen maintained a close relationship with her father as an adult, while Patti turned rebellious, penning an unflattering tell-all, *The Way I See It: An Autobiography* (PUTNAM), in 1992. Much has changed since then. “[When] I wrote [the book], we were still a family in turmoil,” Patti confessed to *Time's* online edition last year, “and while I did write about healing and letting go of the past, I still had a firm grip on those grudges.”

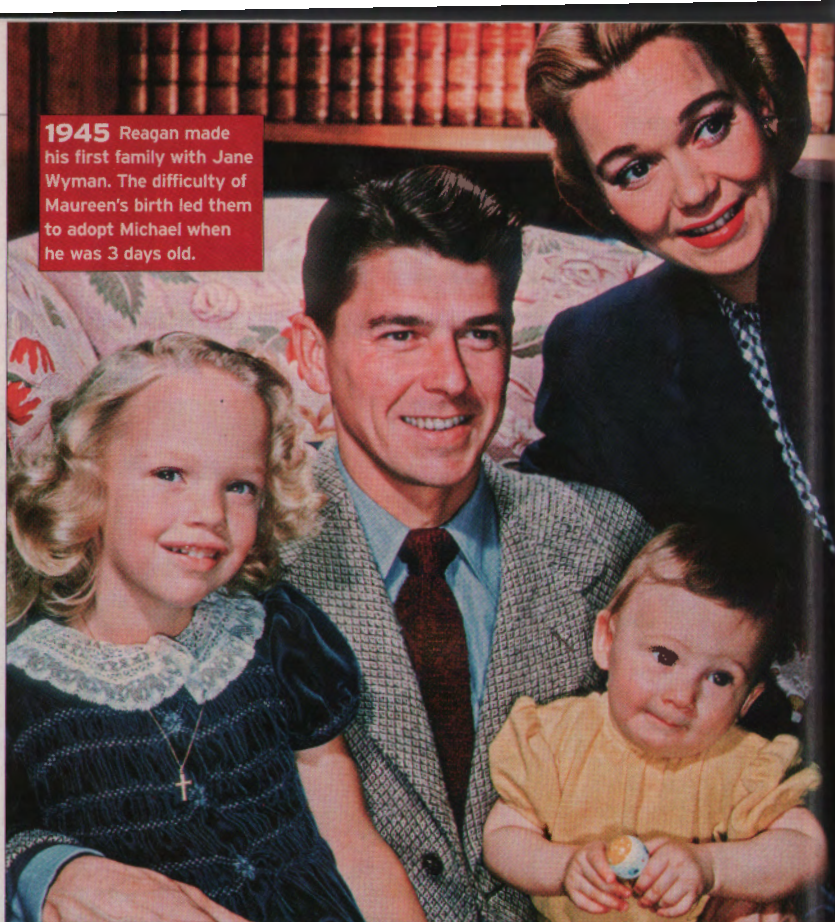
When Reagan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 1994, his children let go of all grudges and stood close by. This man, once renowned for his wit, lost his memory and, later, the ability to speak. He passed away unaware that his beloved Mermie died of melanoma in 2001.

Asked if his father had moments of recognition toward the end, Ron replies, “Not so much.” But, he hastens to add, “He retained his personality. He [was] very sweet with everybody, even though he [couldn't] really talk to them anymore.”

Alison Sloane Gaylin, is a writer, editor and mother. Her first novel, *Hide Your Eyes*, will be published by New American Library.

**Michael:** “At a very young age, he threw us all in the deep end, and said, ‘They’re going to swim, or they’re going to sink—one of the two.’ We all swam, I think.”

**1945** Reagan made his first family with Jane Wyman. The difficulty of Maureen's birth led them to adopt Michael when he was 3 days old.

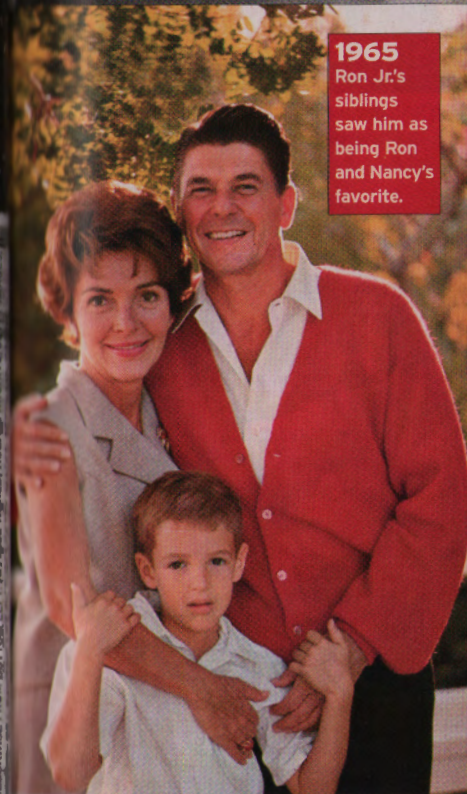


**1966** Daughter Patti Davis remembers, “I tried to keep up with him athletically, because it was something I loved—but it was also a way to spend time with him.”

**1960** Big brother Michael moved in with his father's second family when he was 14, but Maureen remained a mystery to Patti and Ron Jr.



**1965** Ron Jr.'s siblings saw him as being Ron and Nancy's favorite.



**1976** At a rare gathering of all the Reagan children, the former governor and Nancy stood with Patti, Michael, Maureen and Ron Jr.





**Maureen:** “[My dad would] guide me along masterfully until my decisions were pretty much in line with his own.”

**A** former actress and talk-show host who became a congressional candidate, political analyst and tireless advocate for Alzheimer's research, Maureen was widely regarded as the Reagan child to follow most closely in her father's footsteps. Although elected office eluded her twice, she was a leading figure on the Republican National Committee.

Indeed, Maureen admired many things about her dad—particularly his courageous good humor. In her book, she recalled visiting him in the hospital for the first time after he was shot by John Hinckley Jr. “I expected to find him lying semiconscious...but when I walked through the door, he was smiling and alert,” she wrote. “‘Dad,’ I said, ‘how are you?’ ‘I’m OK, Mermie,’ he said, ‘except that I was wearing a new suit when I was shot. It’s the first time I ever wore it. I understand this guy Hinckley’s father is a rich oilman. Do you think he’d buy me a new suit? Leave it to dad to make a joke at a time like this.’”

On the day Maureen and her family learned of Reagan's Alzheimer's disease, he was in similar spirits. “We got to the house and he took our daughter Rita [then 9 years old] by the pool. Nancy explained [the situation] to Maureen and me,” says her husband, Dennis Revell. “The next thing we know, he and Rita came dancing down the hall. Rita was trying to teach him a new dance step.”

In her own brave battle with cancer, Reagan's eldest drew on similar resources. “Both of Maureen's parents gave her a perspective,” Revell says. “So that when she approached adversity with her own life and death, she faced it with incredible strength and resolve. [She felt] that if God meant for her to have a major change of address, it was OK.”



**2000** Maureen took part in a candlelight vigil to support Alzheimer's awareness. Less than two years later, she was eulogized as “the Joan of Arc of Alzheimer's.”



**1992** As president, Reagan did not feel he could endorse Maureen's 1982 candidacy for the Senate, but he actively supported her bid for a seat in the House a decade later.

**Michael:**

“I remember sitting on the curb, waiting for his station wagon to pull up. Those were really great moments for me, looking forward to those Saturdays that I'd spend with my dad out at the ranch.”

**T**he greatest thing about growing up with Dad was the amount of time he tried to spend with us,” says Michael, a conservative radio commentator.

Though his parents divorced when he was just 3, Michael remembers the Reagan ranch, Yearling Row, as his childhood home away from home—complete with pets. “My sister and I had two Nubian goats,” he says. “I always wanted my mom to meet my goat. So, on this one Saturday, Dad comes in from the barn, and here's Maureen and me already in the car.”

Since Michael and his sister were usually quite reluctant to leave, their dad “knew there was something going on. Sure enough, what we had done was taken my Nubian goat, and we had it in the back seat, covered up with blankets.”

Reagan protested at first, but finally gave in. “We drove home—me and my sister and the goat,” Michael says with a chuckle. He remembers a brief but eventful standoff between his mother and the cherished pet. “Mom's coming out of the den, she and the goat see each other. And the goat defecates all over her floor. I can still see mom whizzing by, as Dad's headlights are [heading] out the driveway. And she's standing on the steps, yelling, ‘Ronnie, come back here!’” Reagan retrieved the animal the following day, but Michael will always remember how—practical or not—his dad gave in, and let him have his wish. “Mom got to see my goat!” he says, laughing.



**1985** Reagan, here with Michael and his children, Cameron and Ashley Marie, wrote, “I sometimes envy the freedom Michael has to show affection to my grandchildren.”



**1998** What did Michael learn from his father? “To be a conservative!” he says. “At least I was listening.”

**Patti:** “He passed along to his daughter a deep, resilient faith that God’s love never wavers, and that no matter how harsh life seems, or how cruel the world is, that love is constant, unconditional and eternal.”

In the past, journalist and author Patti Davis was known as the most outspoken Reagan child, frequently voicing the many political differences she had with her father.

But in a recent essay, she revealed a socially tolerant side of Reagan that is often ignored by the press. Responding to the controversial TV biopic, *The Reagans*, in which he was depicted as self-righteous and judgmental toward gays, Davis relayed a memory, from when she was “8 or 9 years old,” on *Time* online. “My father and I were watching an old Rock Hudson and Doris Day movie,” she wrote. “At the moment when Hudson and Doris Day kissed, I said to my father, ‘That looks weird.’”

“My father gently explained that Mr. Hudson didn’t really have a lot of experience kissing women; in fact, he would much prefer to be kissing a man. This was said in the same tone that would be used if he had been telling me about people with different colored eyes, and I accepted without question that this whole kissing thing wasn’t reserved just for men and women.”

Davis’ book, *Angels Don’t Die: My Father’s Gift of Faith* (1995, HARPERCOLLINS), affirmed her spiritual connection to her father and paved the way for the healing of her relationships with both parents. “My father’s doctor doesn’t know how he has lived so long with this disease, especially after breaking his hip in January 2001,” she reported in *People* in 2003. “I think it’s the tenacity of his soul—he just isn’t ready to leave his reunited family.”



**1995** Davis’ work on *Angels Don’t Die* spurred her reconciliation with her father. In 1990, he wrote, “I still dream and hope for a day when Patti and I will develop a close relationship again.”



**1981** Patti briefly put aside her conflicts to visit her father in the Oval Office. Reagan treasured this picture and displayed it behind his desk.

**Ron Jr.:** “You know, there’s something that [Dad] holds back. You get just so far, and then the curtain drops, and you don’t get any farther.”

Despite his contention that he doesn’t “know anybody who has figured [his father] out,” Ron Jr. has a clear sense of the playful side of his powerful parent. “My dad liked nothing better than to play hooky from whatever duties he might have as governor of California, come out on the front lawn and throw the football around,” says Ron, a former ballet dancer and now a TV commentator and political analyst.

“Sometimes he would work at home, and he’d be at his desk writing a speech, or going over papers. I’d have friends over, and we’d be one person short of having even sides for a football game, so I’d start bugging him. My mother would be shooing me away, saying, ‘He’s got work to do.’ But you could tell that my dad was itching to come out and play. “We’d often move the game to the front yard, because I knew his window looked out on it,” he continues. “Eventually, it would be irresistible to him.”

Reagan didn’t play favorites. “He would insist on playing quarterback for both teams. And when he was on my team, we had an unspoken agreement that I would be the last person he would throw the ball to.” That sense of “fair play,” Ron says, completely permeated his father’s life. “I never saw him belittle anybody, I’ve never seen him talk down to anybody. I’ve never seen him treat anyone any differently than anybody else.”

Much as he loved to tell jokes, Ron says his dad’s material was rarely off-color—and never so in mixed company. “The one exception was my mother’s mother, Edith Davis, who could swear like a longshoreman,” he says with a laugh. “She’d call him up with the filthiest jokes. And they would just howl on the phone together.”

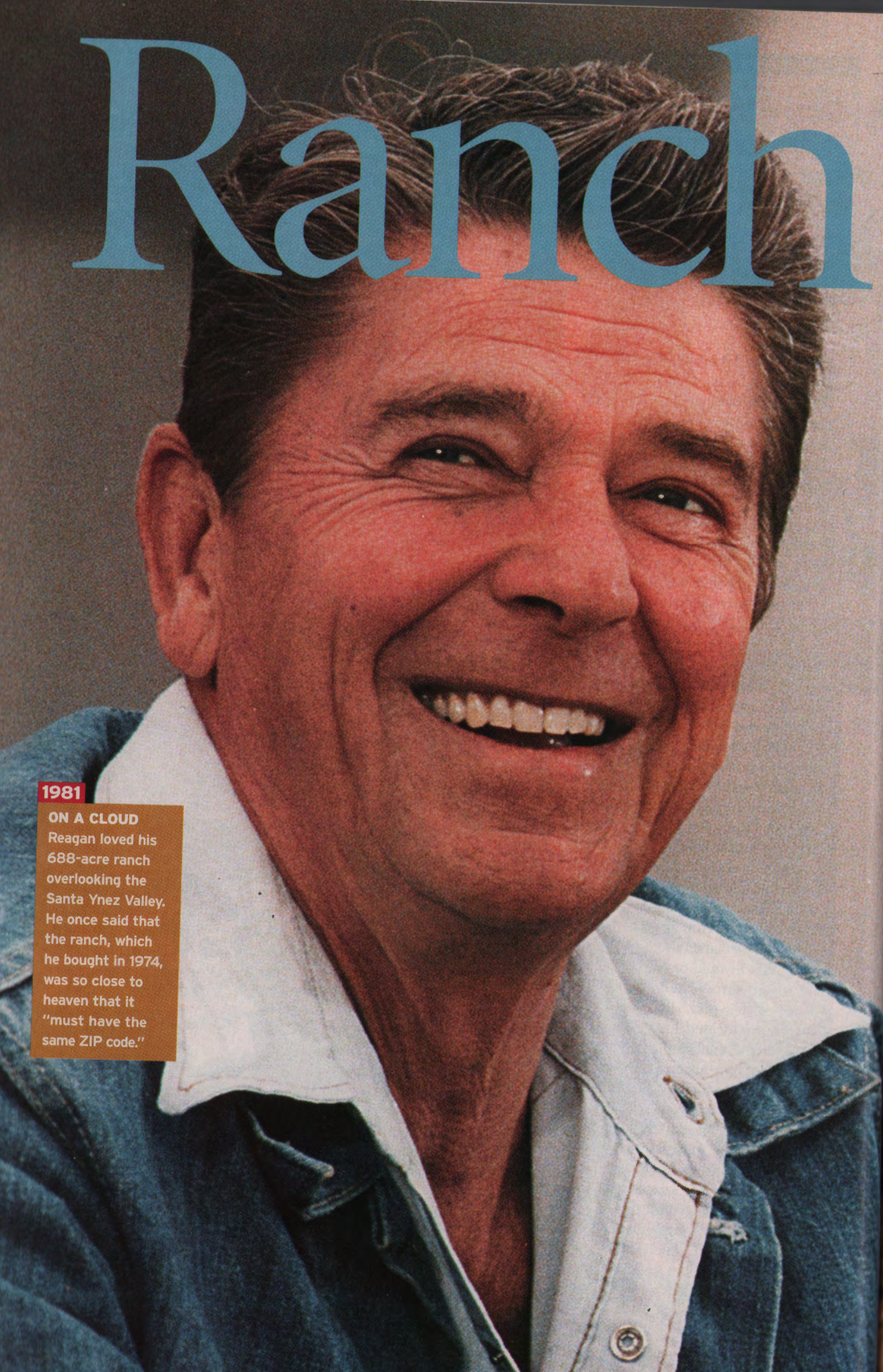


**2001** Ron credits his dad with teaching him a golden rule, “That no one person is better than any other person.”



**1981** Reagan later wrote of watching his son dance with the Joffrey Ballet, “He had a grace that reminded me of Fred Astaire.”

# Ranch Hand



1981

**ON A CLOUD**

Reagan loved his 688-acre ranch overlooking the Santa Ynez Valley. He once said that the ranch, which he bought in 1974, was so close to heaven that it "must have the same ZIP code."



**REAGAN WAS AT HIS MOST RELAXED WHEN HE WAS RIDING AT RANCHO DEL CIELO**

1980

**DECISION MAKER**

Reagan once marveled at "how easily your thoughts can come together when you're on the back of a horse."



1981

**GIFT HORSE**

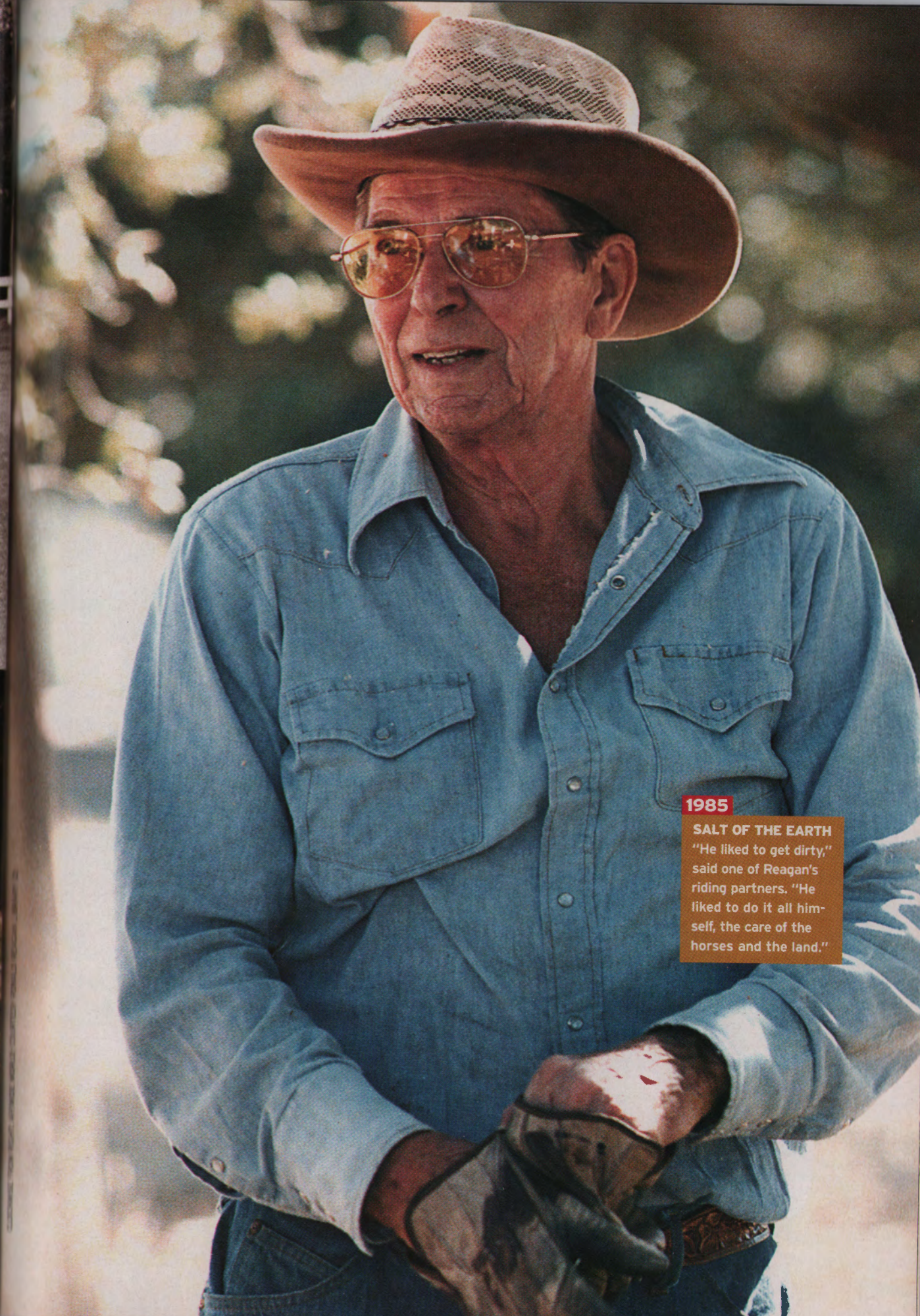
Reagan's favorite horse during his presidency was El Alamein, a spirited gift from Mexican president José López Portillo.



1987

**RIDING ENGLISH**

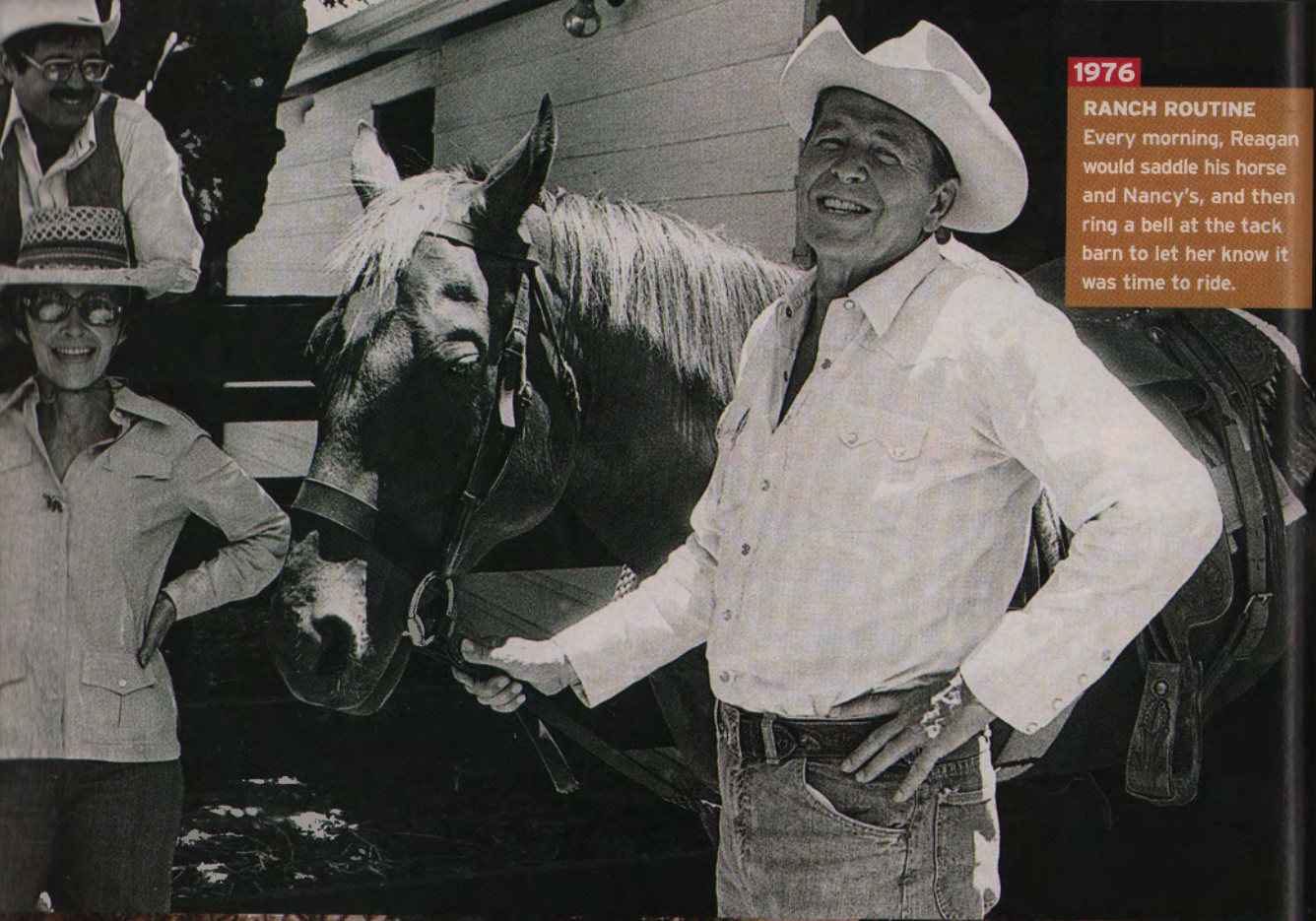
Although Reagan used the cowboy image when it suited him, he much preferred to ride English style and wear jodhpurs.



1985

**SALT OF THE EARTH**

"He liked to get dirty," said one of Reagan's riding partners. "He liked to do it all himself, the care of the horses and the land."



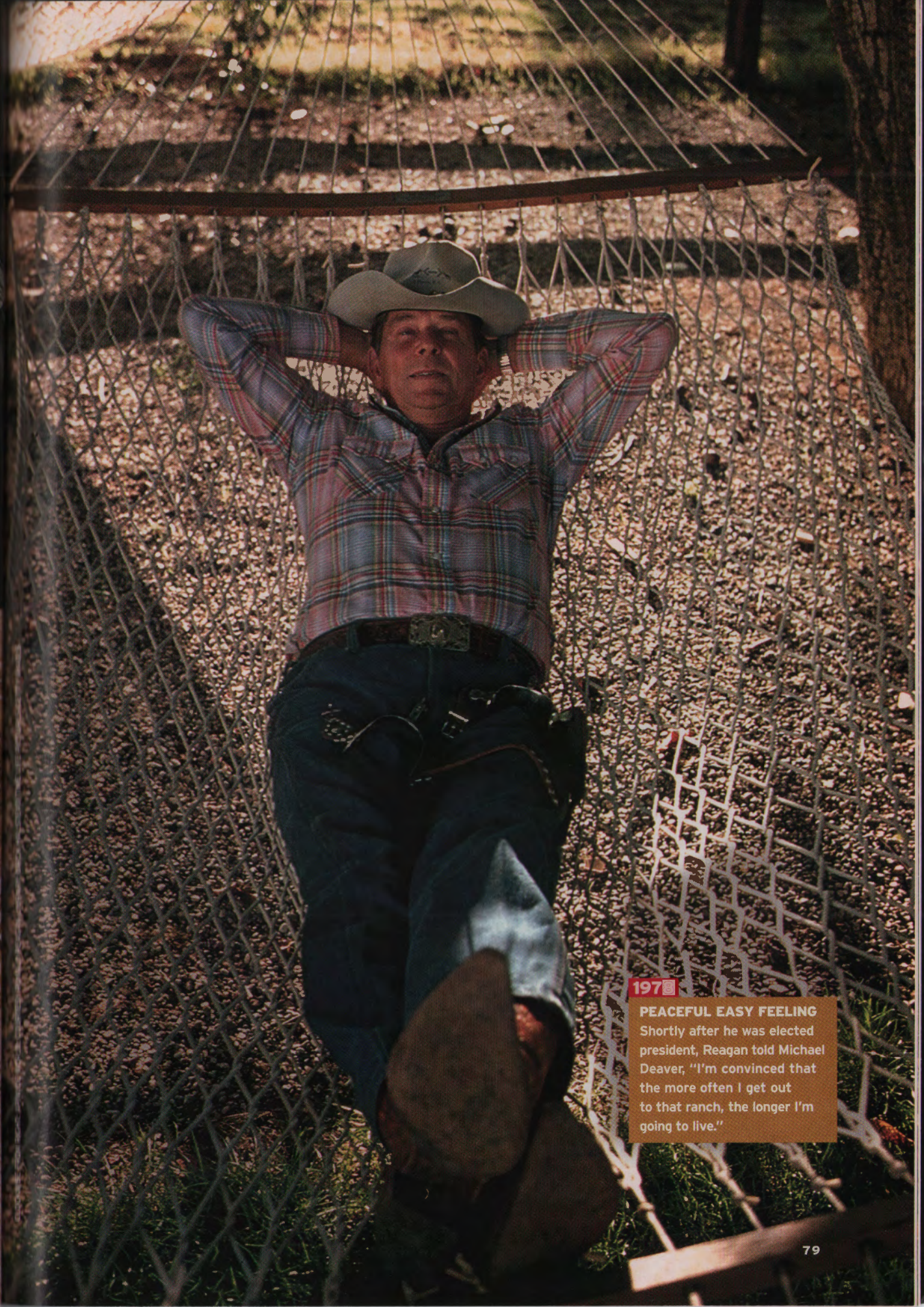
1976

**RANCH ROUTINE**  
Every morning, Reagan would saddle his horse and Nancy's, and then ring a bell at the tack barn to let her know it was time to ride.



1982

**NOT QUITE ALONE**  
On every ride, Secret Service agents followed the president and first lady, who went by the code names "Rawhide" and "Rainbow."



1978

**PEACEFUL EASY FEELING**  
Shortly after he was elected president, Reagan told Michael Deaver, "I'm convinced that the more often I get out to that ranch, the longer I'm going to live."

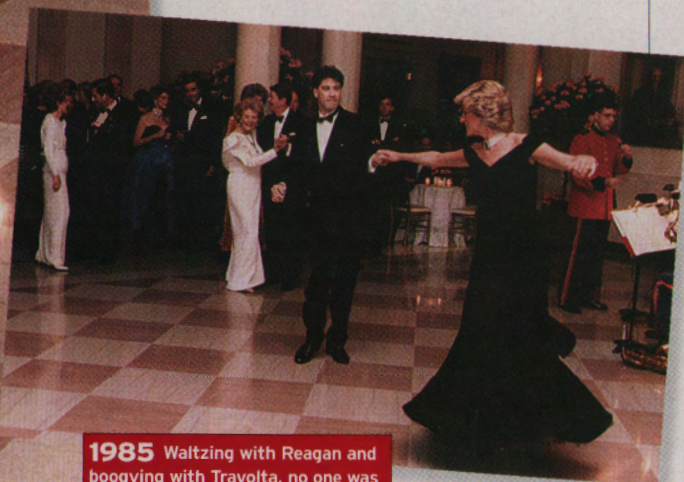
# STARSTRUCK

REAGAN MADE CELEBRITIES FEEL AT HOME WITH HIS LOYALTY AND WIT

## Royal Flush

The Reagans were entertainers in both senses of the word, and the Reagan White House was often illuminated with high-voltage star power. Never was this more true than on the evening of November 9, 1985, when the Reagans hosted a soiree for **PRINCE CHARLES** and **PRINCESS DIANA** on the occasion of Diana's first visit to the U.S. At dinner, she was seated between Reagan and ballet star-turned-actor **MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV**. Later, she danced with the president, **CLINT EASTWOOD**, **TOM SELLECK** and **NEIL DIAMOND**. A highlight of her evening clearly was her boogie with **JOHN TRAVOLTA** to a medley of songs from "Saturday Night Fever." Travolta has said that Nancy Reagan approached him and whispered in his ear. "I have a special request from Princess Diana. It was always her big dream, so would you dance with her?" How did the jet-lagged princess perform? "She's a great little mover," Travolta told London's *The Sun* after the event. **PETER USTINOV** also said, of Diana's reaction to the scene the Reagans had made for her, "She was very impressed with seeing people in the flesh that she had seen on screen. She seemed euphoric."

1985 Waltzing with Reagan and boogying with Travolta, no one was more starstruck than Diana herself.



INTERVIEWS BY DANNY SPIEGEL

1990 Beaming in the Bahamas



**Jaclyn Smith:** "I was invited to a state dinner, and it was the most extraordinary evening I've ever spent. But as formal as the evening was, there was this intimacy. And I was also taken with the Reagans' devotion to each other. Subtle little things, her concern for him that you would notice. I recall going through the line—he had a hearing aid at that time—and I don't think he heard something, but just second nature, she repeated it so he would hear. And she did it in such an unobtrusive way. She didn't want anybody to know. They had their special language."

1977 Ron's favorite Angel



**Touched by the Angels:** Smith told us, "I met him later at other events, but at the first one he was aware of my work... that he had watched and enjoyed." Indeed, Reagan told *TV GUIDE* in 1982 why he liked *Charlie's Angels*: "There is something about a detective story. You know the right people will win, no matter how tense it gets." Though he didn't mention the dark-haired angel by name, she must have been on his A-list.

## Merv Griffin

**The Candy Man** "Nancy had put him on a 'No chocolate' diet because she wanted him to be healthy. When we sat down [on my plane], I had chocolates on the other side of me. Nancy was reading a great big magazine. So I watched her and just passed him two chocolates, and he took them very secretly. He put them in his mouth, and we were very pleased with ourselves. And Nancy never looked up from the magazine. She said, 'I saw that! You passed him two chocolates, and he has both of them in his mouth right now.' And he said [*as if mouth is full*], 'M-m-m-Nancy, I m-m-do m-m-not!'"

**Aliens, What Aliens?** "After the presidency, the three of us had dinner together up at the house. In the middle of the main course, I suddenly looked at him and said, 'Ronnie, when you were in the White House, did they ever tell you about those aliens landing in New Mexico?' And he looked at me without batting an eye and said, 'Isn't that funny, Merv? That's the one thing I forgot to ask about.' I dropped my fork and went, 'What...!' I looked at Nancy, and she raised her eyebrows and didn't say a word."

**When in Rome...** "In 1990, I took them down to my island in the Bahamas. On the first night he motioned me out onto the terrace. I said, 'How's it going?' He said, 'We really love it here. Now, uh, Merv? Um...are the girls...the girls are topless.' And I said, 'Oh, yeah. Well, it's August and it's Europeans and they tend to be topless on the beach.' 'Oh, really?' And I said, 'Now, if you're offended by that, tomorrow, just tell all the security people to tell them, 'No topless...' 'Now why would you ruin their vacation?' And I said, 'Their vacation or yours?' And he roared laughing."

1981 Sinatra never seemed to mind when the president cut in.



# Frank Sinatra

AS REMEMBERED BY DAUGHTER

**Nancy Sinatra:** "I think a letter from Nancy Reagan speaks to the friendship with my dad better than I could ever do it. It went back to when I was doing my first book about him and I asked her to tell me a story. She said if she had to pick out one that was typical of my dad, it was in 1981 when her husband was shot. My dad was playing Las Vegas or somewhere, and he never called to say, 'Do you want me to come?' He just came. He shut down his show and just came.



2004 Sinatra

If my dad was your friend, he was your friend for life. And he and the president were close from way back in the Screen Actors Guild days. You have to remember that some of these people befriended my dad when he was nobody, he was just coming up, and he always remembered that."

### The First Jester:

The late **BOB HOPE** forged a career out of making fun of presidents. Reagan was a dear friend and a favorite subject. In 1966, Hope quipped, "Reagan claims that if he's elected he'll give up acting—what a sneaky way of getting votes..." Reagan got even at a 1975 Dean Martin roast of Hope, "It gives me great pleasure to tell you that in honor of this occasion, the state legislature has unanimously passed a bill naming you California's foremost citizen. I vetoed it."

1987 Reagan and Hope entertain the troops.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY; ANYWHERE WORLD; COURTESY RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY; ORIGINAL PETERS COLLECTION

1973 The Gov crowns the Champ.



**Bo Derek:** "I only met him once, and that was up at his ranch. I live in the same area, and we share the same veterinarian for our horses. So I went up there one night as he was flying in. I think what impressed me the most was the sense of formality and high security. It was just awesome when the president lands in the big Marine helicopter. Everyone has to stand behind certain barriers and lines, and then just as the helicopter's landing, the dogs are let loose. And there must have been six dogs that ran right up into the helicopter, onto him and his beautiful suit. And they were just all over him. It was so sweet."



1979 Derek bounded into view.

**George Foreman:** "I'd beaten Joe Frazier in January 1973, and I came to Sacramento and there Reagan was. He presented the belt to me. That made it an extra special thing. He looked like he coulda been champion of the world right there. He got behind me and did the ol' presentation. He put it around the waist and looked at it, he looked at the belt. We both were amazed at the championship belt. I'll never forget that. Yeah, he was a class... I mean, this was the most class guy in the world."

**Tommy Lasorda:** "The first time I ever met him was at Frank Sinatra's house when Reagan was the governor of California. Not only were you meeting the governor but you were meeting a Hollywood idol. We talked baseball and whatever. And the next time I saw him was about seven, eight days before his first [presidential] election. I go back to the hotel, get off on the 25th floor and start down the hall, when all of a sudden a bunch of guys come out of a room and they start walking up the hall. So [Reagan] sees me and he comes over and gives me a big hug and [says], 'It's good to see you.' And we talked a little bit. I said, 'You know something? I got a good feeling that you're gonna win big.' He looked at me and he said, 'If I don't, you think you can get me a job as a sportscaster?'"



1988 Reagan gets his name on a Dodgers jersey.

**Standing By** At a White House barbecue in 1982, TAMMY WYNETTE serenaded the president with the famous lyrics that she wrote, but they could have come from Nancy's lips: "Stand by your man/And show the world you love him,/ Keep giving all the love you can,/Stand by your man."



1982 Wynette sang the words Nancy lives.

**Wayne Newton:** "In the early 1980s, I was being accused of Mafia ties and ridiculous stuff because I was in the throes of buying the Aladdin Hotel at the time. The president was coming to Las Vegas for a big fund-raiser, so the Republican National Committee was trying to figure out where to hold it. I got a call from a friend of mine and he said, 'The committee thinks that they should go somewhere else for this fund-raiser other than your ranch because of the controversy.' And I said, 'Please tell them that I absolutely understand.' Later, the same guy called and said, 'Boy, do you have a friend there. The committee went to the president and he said, 'Wait a minute. Wayne Newton is my friend, and there is nothing that he could do or has ever done that would make me ashamed of that friendship, and we're going to his place.'" Within a week, they were putting the red phone in my office in my home. And the next week, the president was standing here. And that said it all."

**Don Rickles:** "I did a few of the Dean Martin roasts and ripped the heck out of him, and he laughed like heck; he had a great sense of humor. And I remember, in particular, I have a beach place down in Malibu and he rented Norman Jewison's house right next to mine. When I went out on the



1978 Rickles at a roast

deck, he was standing in a bathing suit with a few guys, and I said, 'Mr. President, how are you?' And he said, 'You know, Don, I used to be a lifeguard.' This is the president of the United States telling me he was a lifeguard. He said, 'You know, I was a very good swimmer. The backstroke, the crawl.' I said, 'Really!' He said, 'Yeah.' Both Secret Service guys were trying to keep a straight face. He was an actor, so he was our kind of people. He was very down to earth, and I was taken by his warmth and his wonderful smile that he always had for you."

1984 Newton appreciated how Reagan always stood up for his friends.



1984 The once and future governor

## Arnold Schwarzenegger

**A Shining Star:** For Arnold Schwarzenegger, Reagan has been a constant source of inspiration. At TV GUIDE's request, the governor passed along his thoughts on the first actor to lead the state of California.

**Think Positive:** "In my inaugural address as governor, I referred to President Reagan's vision of America as a "Shining City on a Hill." The glorious spirit of optimism this represents is what best characterizes this great man for me. His dreams for America shaped his determination and fueled his strength, and his vigorous leadership steered our nation through challenging times."

**Follow the Leader:** "Ronald Reagan was unique among presidents. He not only possessed an innate sense of hope for his world and faith in his countrymen; he was also able to instill those qualities in millions of others. His enthusiasm brightened and invigorated the lives of countless people around the world—including my own."

**Cast From the Same Mold?** The governor's predecessor is always on his mind: "I keep in my office a bust of President Reagan by the noted sculptor Robert Berks. It inspires me as I face the demands of government and the rigors of leadership. Reagan's own shining example is timeless and alive for me and for a new generation of Americans." Schwarzenegger, in fact, commissioned two bronze busts of the former president; the first one was presented to the Reagan Presidential Library in 2002. Berks says he modeled the bust from footage of Reagan at the 1985 inauguration.



2002 Schwarzenegger and wife Maria Shriver admire Arnold's idol.

**Johnny Mathis:** "I met the president the first time in the mid-'80s. I was asked to sing in the East Room, and it just so happened that I was doing a concert tour with Henry Mancini, so we sang for the prime minister of Japan at the time. Nancy was a big fan of both of ours. By chance one time I sang 'Our Love Is Here to Stay,' and she said, 'Oh, that's Ronnie and my favorite song.' I said, 'Oh, great.' It's easy to sing, too!... The thing I liked about him is that he was very inclusive of everybody. He always remembered to thank everybody and he always said 'Nancy and I...' because they were inseparable. And I always remembered that because my mom and dad were that way. They were like one person; there was no dividing them."



1987 Mathis sang their favorite song.

Danny Spiegel is a contributing writer for TV GUIDE.





THE HASTY HEART 1949



# Silver SCREEN



## REAGAN'S FILM CAREER WAS PROLIFIC—AND UNDERRATED

**W**hen Reagan's old boss, studio mogul Jack Warner, learned of the actor's plans to run for governor of California in 1966, he reputedly said, "No, no, Jimmy Stewart for governor. Ronald Reagan for best friend." Indeed, for most of Reagan's movie career, he was underrated and sold short, invariably typecast as the unassuming sidekick. But his affable, easygoing personality was put to good use in scores of lightweight comedies, and when he was given a rare shot at playing strong dramatic roles, he usually delivered the goods—as in "Kings Row" (1942) and "The Hasty Heart" (1949).

After a stint as a radio sports announcer, he went to Hollywood in 1937 and was signed to a contract at Warner Bros., where he had parts in no fewer than 24 films from 1937 to 1940 (and got left on the cutting-room

floor in another), churning out an astonishing nine movies in 1938 alone. While most of these early films were double-feature fillers, the now-popular notion that he was strictly a B-movie actor is simply not true. He appeared in several prestige productions featuring some of the studio's top stars, including James Cagney, Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, Olivia de Havilland, Pat O'Brien and Errol Flynn. The pinnacle of his screen career was undoubtedly "Kings Row," a superbly mounted and powerful look at the seamy underside of life in a small town. The film features Reagan's most challenging role and an unforgettable scene that is widely considered to be his finest hour as an actor. Following an accident, Reagan's rich playboy revives from an operation to discover that his legs have been amputated and he screams in horror, "Where's the rest of me?" He became so closely associated with that line over the

BY MICHAEL SCHEINFELD

years that it served as the title for his first autobiography, written in 1965.

Some other highlights of Reagan's 15-year career at Warner Bros. include the Cagney-O'Brien screwball comedy "Boy Meets Girl" (1938); appearing with future wife Jane Wyman for the first time in "Brother Rat" (1938); the vintage Davis tearjerker "Dark Victory" (1939); and, of course, "Knut Rockne—All American," (1940), the football classic that bestowed upon him the nickname, "the Gipper," in his role as Notre Dame gridiron star George Gipp. "Desperate Journey" (1942) is a taut and suspenseful World War II adventure that teamed him with Flynn for the second time, while in the sociologically fascinating "Juke Girl" (1942), he had the role of a farmers's rights activist, which embodied his liberal leanings at the time.

Following the war, he got his first adult taste of politics when he was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild, serving from 1947 to 1952 and again from 1959 to 1960. In 1949, he appeared in an amusing cameo as himself in the very funny Hollywood satire "It's a Great Feeling," starring Wyman (with whom he was divorced from by the time the movie came out) and their young daughter Maureen. He traveled to England to film the poignant "The Hasty Heart" (1949) with Patricia Neal, scoring as an American soldier recuperating at a military hospital in Burma; costarred with Doris Day and Ginger Rogers in the rarely shown "Storm Warning" (1951), a hard-hitting story about the KKK that borrows large chunks of its plot from "A Streetcar Named Desire;" and starred with Day again in "The Winning Team" (1952), playing baseball legend Grover Cleveland Alexander in an entertaining biography. It was one of his favorite roles and proved to be the second to last of his 43 Warner Bros. films.

Beginning in 1950, Reagan freelanced at other studios making low-budget action flicks, Westerns and fluffy farces like the notoriously titled "Bedtime for Bonzo" (1951), which isn't nearly as bad as its reputation. And just as his movie career was fading, he moved into TV as the host of *General Electric Theater* and *Death Valley Days*, and guest-starred on dozens of shows, before going into politics for good and, eventually, American history. Not bad for a "best friend."

Michael Scheinfeld writes the Classic Movies column for TV GUIDE and is also a contributing editor of *Leonard Maltin's Movie & Video Guide*.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JOHN SPRINGER COLLECTION/CORBIS; AP/WIDE WORLD (2); PHOTOFEST



BROTHER RAT AND A BABY 1940

**Filmography** Reagan made 56 movies for six studios in 27 years. He was the leading man in 30 of them, and in one he wound up on the cutting-room floor.

1937	Love Is on the Air <b>L</b>	1943	This Is the Army
	Hollywood Hotel <b>xv</b>	1947	Stallion Road <b>L</b>
	Submarine D-1 <b>kx</b>		That Hagen Girl <b>L</b>
1938	Swing Your Lady		The Voice of the Turtle <b>L</b>
	Sergeant Murphy <b>L</b>	1949	John Loves Mary <b>L</b>
	Accidents Will Happen <b>L</b>		Night Unto Night <b>L</b>
	Cowboy From Brooklyn		The Girl From Jones Beach <b>L</b>
	The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse <b>xv</b>		It's a Great Feeling <b>cx</b>
	Boy Meets Girl		The Hasty Heart <b>L</b>
	Girls on Probation <b>L</b>	1950	Louisa <b>L</b>
	Brother Rat <b>J</b>	1951	Storm Warning <b>L</b>
	Going Places		The Last Outpost <b>L</b>
1939	Secret Service of the Air <b>L</b>		Bedtime for Bonzo <b>L</b>
	Dark Victory	1952	Hong Kong <b>L</b>
	Naughty But Nice		The Winning Team <b>L</b>
	Hell's Kitchen		Code of the Secret Service <b>L</b>
	The Angels Wash Their Faces	1953	Through College <b>L</b>
	Smashing the Money Ring <b>L</b>		Law and Order <b>L</b>
	Code of the Secret Service <b>L</b>		Tropic Zone <b>L</b>
1940	Brother Rat and a Baby <b>J</b>	1954	Prisoner of War <b>L</b>
	An Angel From Texas <b>J</b>		Cattle Queen of Montana <b>L</b>
	Murder in the Air <b>L</b>	1955	Tennessee's Partner
	Knut Rockne—All American	1957	Hellicats of the Navy <b>LN</b>
	Tugboat Annie Sails Again <b>J</b>	1961	The Young Doctors <b>v</b>
	Santa Fe Trail	1964	The Killers
1941	The Bad Man		
	Million Dollar Baby		
	International Squadron <b>L</b>		
	Nine Lives Are Not Enough <b>L</b>		
1942	Kings Row		
	Juke Girl <b>L</b>		
	Desperate Journey		

KEY: **L** Ronald Reagan as male lead **J** With Jane Wyman  
**N** With Nancy Davis **k** RR's part cut **x** Reagan not credited  
**c** Cameo appearance **v** Voice only



BEDTIME FOR BONZO 1951

# Into the

# SUNSET



1989

#### GRACEFUL EXIT

The Reagans boarded the presidential helicopter, which circled the Capitol and then the White House before taking them to the plane formerly known as Air Force One.

LEFT: COURTESY RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY; RIGHT: ADVANCE WORLD



1994

#### "I FEEL JUST FINE"

Two weeks after he shared his Alzheimer's diagnosis with the nation, Reagan made his first public appearance, with Nancy, touring the "Christmas Around the World" exhibit at the Reagan Library.

**ALZHEIMER'S BROUGHT THE REAGAN FAMILY TOGETHER EVEN AS IT STOLE AWAY THE CHARISMATIC MAN THEY LOVED**

One place Reagan was always at his best—most at ease, most charming, most stirring—was in front of a microphone. By the time he stepped to the mike that day in 1993, in Simi Valley, California, the Great Communicator had been making speeches, seamlessly extemporizing if necessary, for 65 years, going back to his freshman year at Eureka College in 1928.

So a shock of recognition rippled through the crowd, which had gathered to celebrate Reagan's 82nd birthday, when the ex-president lost his place as he read his speech. "He looked up and seemed confused," an actor named Paul Keeley, who was moonlighting as a waiter, told *People*. "Then he went back to the beginning and started reading from the top and didn't realize he'd done it."

The distinguished guests included actor Jimmy Stewart and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. "He went on to ad-lib some jokes," Keeley added. "People were very polite, but everyone was very aware of what was going on."

This may not have been the first sign that some kind of curtain was beginning to descend on this man who once strode the world's stage with such self-assurance and optimism. Alzheimer's disease makes itself known by stealth, in stages that often can be recognized only in retrospect. Extremely disconcerting for the person afflicted with the disease is the relatively early stage in which one knows that one's mental capacities are slipping away. Reagan faced this crisis with grace and candor, as he had his earlier bouts with skin and colon cancer.

In the summer of 1994, he went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for his annual physical. Nancy did not think he was showing symptoms at the time, but the doctors conducted a number of tests, which they said showed Reagan to be in the early stages of the disease.

The family kept the news to themselves at first. Nancy read the book *The 36-Hour Day* (1982, JOHNS HOPKINS), for caregivers, and circulated a copy among the four children. But by early November, Reagan decided to address himself openly to "My Fellow Americans" while he could, as only he could.

He sat at a table in the library of their home and composed the letter as he always did, in longhand. Then he gave it to Nancy to read. "I was surprised when people later asked who had drafted the letter," she wrote in *I Love You, Ronnie*, "because it seemed so

clear to me that they were his words, that it was his natural way of writing."

The letter represents one of Reagan's finest hours—except that, still possessed of his clarity and directness, it took him only 15 minutes to write. "I have recently been told that I am one of the millions of Americans who will be afflicted with Alzheimer's disease," he began. He explained that he and Nancy had decided to go public, as they had with their respective cancers, in the hope it would promote greater awareness of this condition. "Perhaps it will encourage a clearer understanding of the individuals and families who are affected by it.

"At the moment I feel just fine. I intend to live the remainder of the years God gives me on this earth doing the things I have always done. I will continue to share life's journey with my beloved Nancy and my family... Unfortunately, as Alzheimer's disease progresses, the family often bears a heavy burden. I only wish there was some way I could spare Nancy from this painful experience. When the time comes I am confident that with your help she will face it with faith and courage."

He concluded by thanking his countrymen "for giving me the great honor of allowing me to serve as your president... I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life. I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead."

The impact of that letter is hard to measure. But federal spending on Alzheimer's research grew from \$298 million in 1994 to \$661 million in 2004. In 1995, the Reagans joined forces with the Alzheimer's Association to establish the Ronald and Nancy Reagan Research Institute. Nancy became a prominent advocate of embryonic stem cell research, which could lead to the discovery of a cure for Alzheimer's. None exists at present. Nancy, who vigorously cam-

paigned against drug abuse with her "Just Say No" program in the '80s, has lobbied members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. In 2001, she wrote an impassioned, though unsuccessful, plea to President George W. Bush to reconsider his opposition to stem cell research.

One positive effect of the diagnosis was to facilitate the mending of long-standing cracks in the Reagan family. When they heard the diagnosis, Ron Reagan Jr. and Patti Davis, the ex-president's two children with Nancy, made a beeline for their parents' house. Ron was living in Seattle, Patti near New York City. Their relationship with their parents was superficially smooth but distant.

**1994** At an honorary dinner before Reagan was diagnosed, Margaret Thatcher congratulated him on "the 44th anniversary of your 39th birthday."

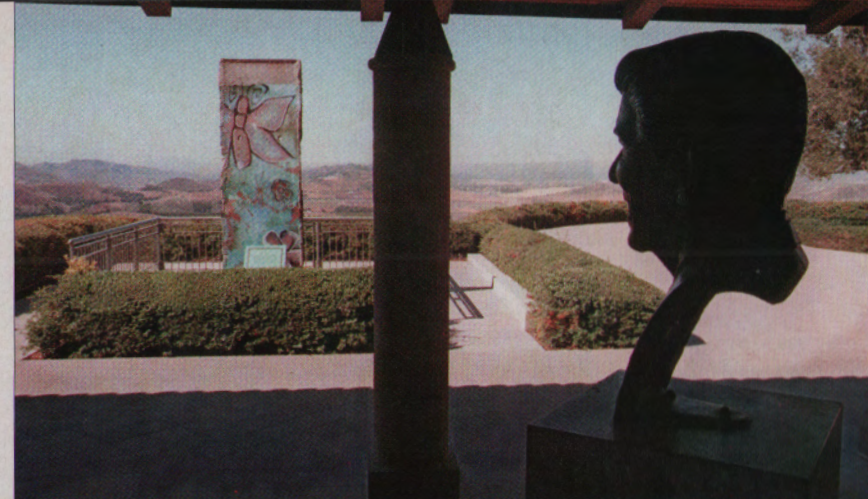


## The Long Goodbye

"I intend to live the remainder of the years God gives me on this earth doing the things I have always done. I will continue to share life's journey with my beloved Nancy and my family."

(Letter to the American people, 1994)

BY ERIC LEVIN



**SIMI VALLEY** The Reagan Library's collections include the president's public papers and audio, video and photo archives, as well as many sculptures and a 3.5-foot-by-10-foot section of the Berlin Wall.



**ARLINGTON** Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport



**DIXON** A flag flies in front of the Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home.



**AT SEA** Nancy Reagan christens the USS *Ronald Reagan*.



**EUREKA** Maureen Reagan presided over the opening of the Ronald Reagan Peace Garden in 2000.

## THE REAGAN TRAIL

Some of the things and places named in honor of Ronald Reagan

### CALIFORNIA

- Ronald Reagan State Office Building, Los Angeles
- Ronald Reagan Suite, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles
- Ronald Reagan Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse, Santa Ana
- The Reagan Ranch Program, Rancho del Cielo, Santa Barbara
- The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Simi Valley
- Ronald Reagan Freeway, State Route 118

### WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

- Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
- The Ronald Reagan Institute of Emergency Medicine at the George Washington University Medical Center
- Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Arlington County

### FLORIDA

- Ronald Reagan Avenue, Miami
- Ronald Reagan Turnpike

### ILLINOIS

- Ronald and Nancy Reagan Research Institute, Alzheimer's Association, Chicago
- Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home, Dixon
- Ronald Reagan Middle School, Dixon
- Reagan Drive, Eureka
- Ronald Reagan Peace Garden, Eureka College, Eureka
- The Reagan Exhibit, Eureka College, Eureka
- Ronald Reagan Birthplace and Museum, Tampico
- Reagan Park, Tampico
- Ronald Reagan Highway, U.S. Highway 14
- The Ronald Reagan Trail

### TEXAS

- Ronald Reagan High School, San Antonio

### AT SEA

- USS *Ronald Reagan*, nuclear aircraft carrier (CVN 76)

With Patti the estrangement ran deeper. She had distressed and embarrassed her parents with a risqué novel, called *Bondage*, and with an angry 1992 autobiography. But after reconciling with Nancy, Patti wrote an affectionate tribute to her father, *Angels Don't Die*.

"Having her daughter back was a wonderful, wonderful gift to Nancy," author Dominick Dunne told the *Los Angeles Times*.

But the coolness between Patti and Nancy wasn't entirely overcome until half-sister Maureen died of melanoma, in August, 2001. "Fortunately, Nancy had Patti, who saw the void," Maureen's widower, Dennis Revell, told *People*.

One of the saddest ironies of what Nancy has termed "the long goodbye" occurred in January of 2001. While Maureen lay in St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California, receiving chemotherapy, her 89-year-old father was wheeled in with a broken hip, suffered in a fall at home. All the children—Patti, Ron Jr. and Michael—gathered at the hospital, and shuttled between rooms. After Ronnie's surgery, Nancy tried to explain to her husband that his daughter was lying in another room nearby. Did he understand? "I'll never know," Nancy told Michael Deaver. Seven months later, she had to tell him that Maureen had died, and this, too, she couldn't tell if he comprehended.

Reagan's world constricted slowly. At first, he maintained a fairly normal schedule, going daily to his office in Century City, walking on the beach with Nancy, playing golf at Los Angeles Country Club. As late as 1997, he was still doing calisthenics, lifting weights and spending three to four hours a day in the office. In November of that year, outside his Bel Air home, he even hailed a busload of passing tourists, chatting with them and posing for photographs.

But around that time, the pace of his decline accelerated and, as it did, Nancy drew an ever tighter cordon around him. She informed old friends that she was soon going to restrict access to Reagan to immediate family. Michael Deaver, with apprehension, scheduled what he knew would be his last visit with the man with whom he had been associated for 30 years. When Deaver walked into Reagan's office in Century City in 1997, he was momentarily relieved—the former president, dressed in a blue suit with French cuffs, looked impeccable as ever. But Reagan, sitting at his desk, had his nose buried in a book and barely noticed Deaver, nor recognized him when the faithful aide said hello.

With a heavy heart, Deaver realized that Nancy's decision to limit access was in fact a merciful one for old friends like himself who found Reagan's decline almost

2000

"JUST LOVE"

The Reagans celebrated Ronald's 89th birthday and released this picture, less than a month later, on their 48th wedding anniversary. Two years later, Nancy told Mike Wallace of *60 Minutes*, "They were very short, the golden years.... There's nobody to exchange memories with."



2000 This memorial on the grounds of the Reagan Library was erected to be the final resting place of President Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan.

Eternal Optimist

"I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life. I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead."

(Letter to the American people, 1994)

too painful to witness. Another old friend, TV GUIDE founder and former British ambassador Walter Annenberg, played golf with Reagan for what proved to be the last time, in 1997. He later told the *New York Times*, "I prefer to remember him as a vigorous fellow."

At home after his hip surgery, Reagan required a hospital bed with side bars. It was the first time in the Reagans' nearly half a century of marriage that they had separate beds. The light continued to dim. By late 2003, Reagan could no longer speak or feed himself. Heartrendingly—almost unimaginably, given the intensity of their devotion to each other—he could recognize no one, not even Nancy.

Yet her devotion to him and his legacy never wavered.

Her social life, once so important to her, withered to occasional lunches with old friends. She did not grant interviews. She did not ask for pity or sympathy. Still, in her 2000 book, *I Love You, Ronnie*, she did offer a glimpse of the toll Ronnie's Alzheimer's had taken on her.

"We've had an extraordinary life, and I've been blessed to have been married almost fifty years to a man I deeply love—but the other side of the coin is that it makes it harder," she wrote. "There are so many memories that I can no longer share, which makes it very difficult. When it comes right down to it, you're in it alone. Each day is different, and you get up, put one foot in front of the other, and go—and love; just love."

FROM LEFT: ANDREW SHAW/ONLINE USA, INC./

1980 Reagan called the land around Rancho del Cielo "an open cathedral."



## Happy Trails

Ron and Nancy ride off into the sunset...



**1957 GENERAL ELECTRIC THEATER**  
"NO SKIN OFF ME"



**1964 SPEECH FOR BARRY GOLDWATER**  
"A TIME FOR CHOOSING"



**1965 DEATH VALLEY DAYS**  
"NO GUN BEHIND HIS BADGE"



**1980 DEBATE WITH GEORGE BUSH**  
"I PAID FOR THIS MICROPHONE"



**1980 REPUBLICAN NOMINATION**  
"TO RENEW THE AMERICAN SPIRIT"



**1980 DEBATE WITH JIMMY CARTER**  
"THERE YOU GO AGAIN"



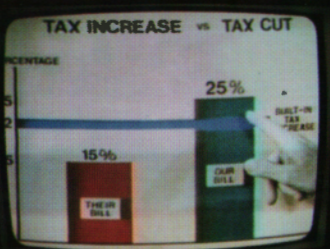
**1981 FIRST PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL**  
"TO DREAM HEROIC DREAMS"

"The image  
was the  
reality"

—Reagan adviser Michael Deaver



**1981 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT**  
"HONEY, I FORGOT TO DUCK"



**1981 ADDRESS ON THE ECONOMY**  
"WE'RE OUT OF TIME"



**1984 D-DAY ANNIVERSARY**  
"THESE ARE THE BOYS OF POINTE DU HOC"



**1984 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION**  
"IT'S MORNING AGAIN IN AMERICA"



**1984 DEBATE WITH WALTER MONDALE**  
"MY OPPONENT'S YOUTH AND INEXPERIENCE"



**1987 AT THE BRANDENBURG GATE**  
"MR. GORBACHEV, TEAR DOWN THIS WALL"



**1989 FAREWELL ADDRESS**  
"INSTEAD, WE CHANGED A WORLD"