

Wadsworth Cove
Castine, Maine 04421

June 29, 1975

Mr. J. L. Pruett, Principal
Dept. of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

This is in reply to your letter of June 17, 1975 asking for observations on Lyndon Johnson at the time he received his honorary degree from Tufts University. I don't get the exact year (your records undoubtedly have it) but it was when he was Vice President of the United States. I was then Senior Vice President of Tufts and, as his "opposite number", I was dispatched to meet him at Boston Airport when his plane arrived on Sunday morning. Tufts had rented a large black Cadillac for the occasion and the car was one of about four or five which had been making test-runs under local FBI directions for several prior days between Boston Airport and the Tufts campus in Medford. I was not prepared for the events at the airport which looked like a mob-scene like Times Square on New Year's Eve! It seems that every Massachusetts politician (from the Governor and the Mayor on down) was there (in person, or his representative) when the plane rolled up to a private hangar on the far side of the field. Everyone wanted to "press the flesh" and get his ear for some personal project. Lyndon loved it, but the FBI had to get quite rough to keep things under control. For some time I couldn't penetrate from the outskirts of the crowd, yet here was "our man" arrived in Boston for a Tufts honorary degree, and everyone else in the mob couldn't have cared less. Finally with FBI help, I fought my way up to him and let him know that I was his official greeter for Tufts. He was most gracious and cooperated in breaking through the crowd out to the motor entourage. The ride to Medford ordinarily takes 30-40 minutes, but the police had cordoned off every cross-road so we made it in about 20 minutes. En route he asked about the history and general circumstances of Tufts and I briefed him on the up-coming ceremonies. Equally interesting to him was the fact that the shock-absorbers on the rented car seemed excessively wavy!

We had picked a locale on campus where he could quickly leave the car and walk briefly to the President's office. But the minute the car door opened Lyndon took off into the crowd (mainly parents and friends of the graduating classes). Again the well-laid FBI plans had gone awry. We finally got him into the President's office where he met President Nils Wessell. Then, by prior arrangement, we left him alone in the office for ten minutes of relaxation (with a bottle of his preferred bourbon). He then joined the platform group for the march out of the building, through the center aisle to the Commencement Platform. He had requested to appear early on the program, so he was introduced directly after the benediction. His speech was excellent, and anticipated many of the civil rights orators in the years to come. But after receiving warm applause, we were astonished that he then departed (rather than stay through the graduation exercises themselves). An aide came on stage, escorted him down the center aisle, and he was gone in about 20 seconds. None of us had a chance to even say "goodbye." It was a whirlwind performance!

Sincerely,

Leonard C. Mead

Leonard C. Mead

P.S. Please excuse my typing.

GEORGE F. GUY
P. O. Box 568
CHEYENNE, WYOMING
March 4, 1975

Mr. J. L. Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

RE: L. B. Johnson

Dear Mr. Pruett:

This is a belated reply to your letter of January 15. The letter was mislaid by me in my law office and just came to light again.

I met L. B. J. only once and that was while he was on the campaign swing and came to Cheyenne in 1960. One of my law partners, the late Walter B. Phelan was then Democratic State Chairman. I met both L. B. J. and Ladybird at that time. I think I was the only Republican at the breakfast given in their honor. In fact L. B. J. had forgotten some important papers on his airplane and Ladybird had to rush back to get them. She came back late for the breakfast and was sitting at the head table with no plate in front of her. I was the one who came to her rescue with a plate full of bacon and eggs.

All I knew about L. B. J. getting the Silver Star in the Southwest Pacific was what I read in the papers. He was serving in Congress at that time and went on some sort of a special mission under the orders of President Roosevelt. As I recall his plane was shot up by Japanese fighter planes and was very nearly shot down. There must be better sources of information on this matter than I am, and I am sure Ladybird could give you the full story on that. Officially the Archive Records in the Pentagon would certainly have the official record on the matter. I really don't know if it was General MacArthur or President Roosevelt that ordered the award of the Silver Star. I do know that L. B. J. was wearing it the day he was here in Cheyenne and that he wore it at all times - according to his friends.

You say, did I know "either of them in the Southwest Pacific?" I didn't

Page Two
J. L. Pruett
March 4, 1975

know L. B. J. there, but I had met General MacArthur when he was Chief of Staff of the Army in 1930 or 1931. He inspected Fort D. A. Russell (now Francis E. Warren Air Force Base) here at Cheyenne. As a National Guard Lieutenant I went through the receiving line and shook hands with him. In April or May of 1945 I happened to be in the same elevator with him in Manila for about thirty seconds. I was later with the Army of Occupation in Japan and saw him frequently but not personally.

As one of the defense counsel in the trial of the Japanese General Yamashita in Manila in the fall of 1945, I was one of the officers who was certainly at odds with General MacArthur's policy toward the defeated Japanese General.

Other than the above related I had no contact with L. B. J. or General MacArthur.

Trusting this may be of assistance to you, I am

Yours truly,

George F. Guy
GEORGE F. GUY

GFG:pm

ASSOCIATION OF

AMERICAN RAILROADS

AMERICAN RAILROADS BUILDING · WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

STEPHEN AILES

President and Chief Executive Officer

July 16, 1975

Mr. J. L. Pruett, Principal
The Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I have received your letter of July 10th and am happy to comment with respect to President Johnson.

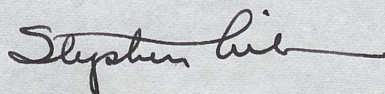
I was fascinated by him personally. He was a warm, earthy human being fired with a tremendous urge to do something for the United States of America. He was fully endowed with that form of patriotism embodied by his mentor, Sam Rayburn. He really loved the world of politics and government and thoroughly enjoyed the role he played.

As an anecdote, I can tell you that in January of 1964 he called me over to ask if I would stay in the Pentagon as Secretary of the Army instead of asking that he approve my resignation as Under Secretary which was on his desk. This happened because Cy Vance, then Secretary, had just been named Deputy Secretary of Defense. I agreed to do so.

That evening, the famous Panama riots occurred. Cy Vance and I spent the evening sitting in the Army War Room receiving messages from Panama where our troops were actually under fire. The next morning, we met Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, at 7:00 and were in the President's office at 7:30. When the President saw me, he said, "Steve, when I named you Secretary of the Army, I certainly never anticipated a reaction such as this."

He was a remarkable man and you Texans should be proud of him.

Sincerely,



AUSTIN BUREAU
Box 12097, Capitol Station
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711



The Dallas Morning News

TEXAS' LEADING NEWSPAPER

Communications Center, Dallas, Texas 75222

RADIO-TELEVISION STATIONS WFAA • TEXAS ALMANAC

8/20/75

Dear Principal Pruett:

Please forgive me for not having responded earlier to your letter, but I was on vacation until yesterday and am just now catching up with my mail.

My father and I compared notes on Lyndon Johnson last night and what follows is more like a joint effort than an individual view of the man, unless indicated by parenthesis. But since my father is now semi-retired and in the public relations business, he asks that none of this be attributed to him. I guess the same thing should be true in my case, unless you see something that you really want to hang on an individual's name--in which case, just ask me.

1. As to LBJ's early political career: I think there is a consensus that he wouldn't have been such a big shot ever, much less so soon, if he hadn't had kind of a quadripartite sponsorship--Congressman Kleberg, Speaker Rayburn, Vice President Garner and even Roosevelt himself. But of those, certainly Rayburn was the most important, if only because he was physically close to LBJ and had an arm on his shoulder most of the time. Garner later said, of course, that he never thought LBJ would end up being so liberal. Roosevelt said he never thought Johnson would be as conservative as Texas constituents demanded. Kleberg had died before his one-time secretary had hit the big time. But Rayburn, to his dying day, was never surprised at anything LBJ said or did--they were very much alike, viscera and all.

2. No question about it--Johnson loved those damned dogs. On one trip I made with him, an Air Force or Army plane was sent out to California with not much else aboard other than two beagles whom Johnson wanted with him during a 2-day vacation-type break. I have seen him play with and talk to dogs just like they were people and, of course, the dogs loved it. The only negative reaction I can recall was when the national news media made a big deal out of LBJ's having pulled the ears on the beagle named Him. But the only unusual thing about that situation, as I recall, was the dog's squeal; I'd seen Johnson do it before without the dog's making a whimper. (By the way, my own dog is a granddaughter to Him.)

3. The Johnson loyalty and temper were notorious. He was always giving presents to people who had worked long and hard for him (though he required that kind of labor as a condition of employment)--Jack Valentini and Marvin Watson were the most frequent beneficiaries of this largesse during the Presidential years, but they were not alone. And when an aide or hard-working functionary had personal or financial problems, LBJ was a soft touch for a loan or personal advice or help in finding a new job. The temper tantrums were legendary--likely to occur at any time, not just under stress, and likely to be directed at anyone from his own alcoholic brother to his own political appointees to his predecessors in office (particularly to any one or all of the Kennedy family). He also was known, from time to time, to blow up while taking a drink or two.

I hope this will help you in your project.

Regards,

OLDEST BUSINESS INSTITUTION IN TEXAS

DEMOCRATIC

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

1625 Massachusetts Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 797-5900

Dorothy V. Bush
Secretary

1409 Lake Shore Dr.
Columbus, Ohio 43204
March 25, 1975

Dear Mr. Pruett:

Thank you for writing me once again about your study of President Johnson. I am sorry not to have replied before this time and must confess it took your second "jogging" to bring your letter to the top of the pile of things demanding attention on my desk.

I cannot pinpoint my first meeting with Lyndon Johnson -- sometimes it seems I just always knew him. The first memories of the young Congressman come back to me as someone of enormous ambition and aggressiveness combined with a particular charm. My own closeness with the Texas delegation at that time was with Sam Rayburn. The respect, admiration and trust I had for the Speaker was huge. It was obvious he thought of Lyndon Johnson as something special and this colored my own feelings early.

Through the years I was actually closer to Lady Bird than to the President. I come back to two things I often heard her say about him; both ring true to me.

"Lyndon is a good man to have around in an emergency."

"He stretches you -- he expects so much more of you than you do of yourself that you find you are doing more than you believe you can."

The President looked back to his days with the NYA as being, as he referred to it, "yeasty times"; I believe he felt this because these were his first days of inventive leadership. The lessons he learned and the talents he put into play then were more finely honed through his terms in the Congress and as President.

Often I think what a forceful leader he would be for our country today. The economic problems, the energy problems -- these are the sorts of things he could focus his talents and his energies on. These are the sorts of things he understood and felt, by that I mean he could view the whole picture without losing sight of how the problem, and the solving of it, would touch each individual.



DEMOCRATIC

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

1625 Massachusetts Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 797-5900

Dorothy V. Bush
Secretary

He cared about Civil Rights, the principle; and he felt Civil Rights for the individual. The horror of Vietnam ate up so much of his life and his energy, but he felt the loss of every soldier.

You asked about Senator Yarborough. I did know him, but certainly not well, and do not feel I would have anything useful to add to your research of him.

All best wishes for the success of your ambitious project.

Sincerely,

Dorothy V. Bush

Dorothy V. Bush



August 18, 1975


Mr. J.L. Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

With reference to your letter of the 10th, I am sure you were interested, as I was, in the many pictures of LBJ and his dogs, at the White House, at the ranch, and elsewhere. I would not say, however, that they were necessarily an important factor in his daily life per se. He was a gregarious person, with a companionable understanding of everything alive, whether human or animal, and he was as much at home with his cattle and deer on the Pedernales as he was with "Him" and "Her" and "Yuki" on the Potomac. I recall many occasions when the dogs were among us, of course, and I enjoyed romping with them sometimes on the White House lawn, but I think he would have been just as happy to have had one of his prize heifers in his living room, if one could have been reasonably accommodated.

You asked if I had ever heard him comment on his having been described as the "last frontier President". I was familiar with that description, of course, but I don't recall his having commented on it in my presence. I feel certain, however, that he would have derived some satisfaction from it, since he was a rough-hewn product of his beloved Hill Country, which was indeed a frontier when he was born and reared there, and in some respects still is today. In any event, we'll not see his likes again.

Sincerely,



Dale Miller



Philip M. Klutznick

875 North Michigan Avenue · Suite 4044 · Chicago, Illinois 60611

April 3, 1975

Mr. Jakie Lee Pruett
Central Campus of the
Special Education Department
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

Obviously, the ability to answer your letter of March 21st with complete freedom is somewhat limited. Nevertheless, I shall try to answer each of the questions you ask.

1. I was born in Kansas City, Missouri and so I really met President Truman when I was a young man and long before he became politically active. When I went to Washington for sixty days during the defense period in October 1941 and stayed on for six years, I would see him from time to time. He was then a senator and I had some old friends from Kansas City who would come to Washington to visit. Occasionally, we would drop in on the Senator. After he was elevated to the Vice Presidency because of his chairmanship of the Truman Committee we were always invited to parties given in his honor or by him so we had occasion to see the Vice President and Mrs. Truman quite often. When he became President, I served as a junior cabinet member as Commissioner of the Federal Public Housing Authority and would see the President as I needed to. He was extraordinarily prompt in inviting a Presidential appointee to his office when an appointment was sought. He was one of the most considerate men in high office whom I have ever known. He was also one of the most decisive men. I believe history will record him as having been a truly great President. After he left the Presidency and I left Washington, I would see him occasionally with some old friends in Kansas City and seek his advice in public affairs in which I was involved. He is the finest example of what one would call a common American citizen who just like another Abraham Lincoln came from the Middle West and rose to great heights when the problems of high office were thrust upon him.

Mr. Jakie Lee Pruett
Page 2

April 3, 1975

I met Lyndon Johnson for the first time in the early 1940's. It was while he was still a young Congressman. During the period that I served in the Housing Agency and as Commissioner of the FPHA, one of my assistants who came from Tennessee, Jim Lee, knew him very well. He would bring Congressman Johnson and his problems to me when they involved housing. I left Washington at the end of the war in mid-1946. Up to that time the relationship between President Truman and Lyndon Johnson was essentially the relationship of two active Democratic political leaders. It was not any more close than that with many others who were in the Congress. Of course, they shared a common close friend in Senator Rayburn, which on occasions did bring them together.

2. The fact that LBJ would be found in the middle of a photograph was not unique. I recall speaking at an affair in his honor in late 1959 or early 1960 when he was considering running for the Presidency. I was one of those that he arranged in a picture in which he was involved. He was always forceful and able to maneuver into a position of prominence when pictures were taken. I do not say this as a criticism but as a fact of life. He would take charge wherever he could. My first appointment by a President was by FDR. I came from Nebraska before that appointment. One of the men who encouraged me to come to Washington was Congressman Edward Burke from Nebraska who later became Senator Burke. FDR designated Congressman Burke as his protege when he defined the New Deal in a way that pleased the President. Later they broke on the Supreme Court scheme. Johnson, who had worked in the National Youth Administration before he came to Washington, tried to get as close to FDR as possible. In many ways during his life he emulated the political philosophy of FDR. Much of his later thinking as Vice President and as President may well have arisen from his hero-worship of FDR. There were rumors around Washington that FDR looked upon Lyndon Johnson with approbation. But, FDR had a number of younger men that he was encouraging. This was one of his strengths.

Mr. Jakie Lee Pruett
Page 3

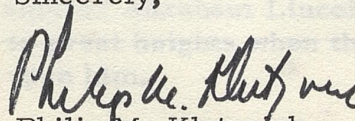
April 3, 1975

3. I do not know how I can best describe Lyndon Johnson. At various stages of his life he was different. He was a hard working, liberal Congressman from a state where it did not pay to be liberal all the time. He became a great Senate leader. His ability to cajole and wheedle people into seeing his way was unusual. Furthermore, he had the courage in a Republican administration to side with the President when he thought it was right and to oppose him when he thought it was wrong. I would say that the greatest moments in Lyndon Johnson's life was in his leadership of the Senate. As a Vice President he felt contained and restrained but behaved with absolute respect for the younger, charismatic President. As President he was one of the greatest until he was elected by an overwhelming majority. The period that he served out of the Kennedy term saw some of the most far-reaching legislation and activity on the part of a President since the Roosevelt days. He truly emulated the man whom he admired so much. He carried on in his capacity to convince the Congress from his post as President.

I believe the overwhelming election changed the man. He felt that he could do no wrong and he undertook missions out of a sense of strength that in earlier days he would have hesitated to undertake. Had Lyndon Johnson continued after his election in the same frame in which he operated prior to that election, no one would have been able to defeat him in 1968. But, he turned to a tough policy about East Asia and neglected the economic implications of the tremendous sums that were being spent in that area. It was not characteristic of Johnson to be as stubborn as he became during that period. If I were to describe him in any way in his best years he had a feel for politics which gave him the ability to compromise when necessary and to see both sides most of the time.

I did not know Dr. Garcia. It must have been long after my time. I hope this is some help to you.

Sincerely,


Philip M. Klutznick

PMK:mlk

Mr. J.L. Pruett
July 2, 1975
Page two

July 2, 1975

1215 East 52nd Street, #111
Austin, Texas 78723

Mr. J.L. Pruett
Principal
Department of Special Education
713 W. Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

It was a pleasure meeting you when you stopped by Ralph Yarborough's office the afternoon of July 2, 1975. In response to your request that I write down my story about Lyndon Johnson and his dogs, I shall attempt to recount it in as much detail as I can recall. The memory of that day is really quite clear, as it had a great influence on me.

Before beginning my narration, I will give some biographical data on myself by way of introduction, which may be helpful to you in determining my role as an average American citizen in the story.

I am 24 years old, being the oldest of six children from a rural family. I was born in Waco, Texas and lived there until I was 14, at which time my family moved to Killeen, Texas, where I graduated from high school. I attended The University of Texas at Austin, obtaining my B.S. Degree with a major of Social Sciences Composite in 1972. During my three years at The University and for one year after I graduated, I worked part-time and full-time in various secretarial capacities for attorneys in Austin and Dallas, and for the Internal Revenue Service, which is how I came to acquire secretarial experience to qualify me for my current position as Ralph Yarborough's executive legal secretary. I have always been interested in government and strongly supported Democratic candidates for public office, having been a member of the Young Democrats while attending The University of Texas, through which organization I campaigned for Senator Yarborough in 1970, although I did not have the privilege of meeting the man personally until I applied and was selected for my current position in January, 1975. I also taught American history and Texas history in junior high school in Port Arthur, Texas during the 1973-1974 school year, before returning to Austin to settle here.

Mr. J.L. Pruett
July 2, 1975
Page two

To give you some background to the Lyndon Johnson "dog story" that I have, the incident occurred in February of 1969, when I was a senior at Killeen High School in Killeen, Texas. The teachers in the government department planned a field trip for social studies students to Austin and Johnson City for the purpose of touring the State Capitol and Lyndon Johnson's Boyhood Home. Being very interested in history and government and proud of my Texas heritage, I was quite enthused about the trip, as although only living 60 miles away from Austin, I had never toured the State Capitol. Many classmates of mine said they had better things to do on Saturday than tour the Capitol. Needless-to-say they were singing a much different tune the week following the group's return.

A group of approximately 60 students and four teachers toured the State Capitol in Austin, then we drove to Johnson City where we toured the Boyhood Home of Lyndon Johnson. After making the latter stop, the teachers decided to drive by former President Johnson's ranch, since we were so close, just to see what it looked like from the road. It was an overcast, rainy, cold, February day, and there were few cars on the highways. We arrived at the Johnson Ranch about 3:30 p.m. Our two buses were stopped in front of the house, on the road. There were no other cars passing, and I recall thinking that the entire atmosphere was peaceful and one of seclusion that day, which most of the time would probably not be the case.

We were all standing out in the misting rain just looking at the house when we saw a lady in a red dress come out on the front porch and stand there for about ten minutes. My classmates and I were speculating as to whether the woman could be Lady Bird when she went back inside the house. About five minutes later, we saw a car leaving the driveway by the house. The car drove to the end of the driveway, stopped, and LBJ got out with his two favorite dogs. He instructed the bus driver to "pull on in", and he would take us on a tour of his Birthplace located there on the ranch. Upon viewing our surprise at seeing his dogs bounding in and out of the car, LBJ smiled and said, "Oh, they are with me almost all of the time now." Shortly after this, two secret service agents arrived looking very stern and did not seem to be amused that former President Johnson had decided to drive down to meet us without alerting them as to his plans. The two men promptly took charge of the dogs. One classmate started to pet one of the animals, and the guard promptly

Mr. J.L. Pruett
July 2, 1975
Page three

removed the student's hand, and said, "Don't do that!" LBJ was very relaxed and kind, explaining that the agent was only doing his job. LBJ then opened the car doors of his car, brushed a few dog hairs off of the car seats, and he asked the four teachers to ride with him, while the rest of us returned to the bus to travel to the Birthplace Home.

We were told that the Birthplace was open to the public during the spring and summer months for tours, but since it was winter, everything was closed. LBJ opened the house up, went around opening a few windows for "fresh air", and then took us on a tour, telling personal stories about each room, giving my classmates and I an account of each item therein, from pictures on the walls to the quilt on his mother's bed. He showed us the old kitchen and the new kitchen, the latter being built, as he put it, "for my two daughters when they were in college, so they could have some privacy when they invited friends out to the ranch for a weekend, since they don't like to cook on the old stove." Then LBJ started talking about his family, mentioning his daughters, sons-in-law, and grandson. He told us about a telegram he and Lady Bird had received the day before from, as he stated it, "my son-in-law Major (I believe he said major, the title slips my mind as I write this letter) Robb, who is serving in the Army overseas in Vietnam", as if we were not acquainted with the fact that his daughter Lynda was married and that her husband was in the Army. It seems that Major Robb had been inside a building at the post where he was stationed. He left the building on an errand, and a few minutes later the building was bombed by the North Vietnamese, and all of the men in the building were killed. With a faraway look in his eyes, LBJ said, "This war has got to end."

After seeing the Birthplace, he took us walking down one of the roads on the ranch, and he pointed with pride to his Longhorn cattle and proceeded to discuss ranching with a few of my classmates. I was right at the front listening to every word.

At 7:00 p.m. we very reluctantly had to depart. Our group was already three hours overdue in returning to Killeen, and if our parents had not already been waiting for us at the high school, we would have stayed longer, as LBJ seemed disappointed that we could not stay longer and "have a bite to eat", since Lady Bird was "up at the house fixing everybody a little snack."

Mr. J.L. Pruett
July 2, 1975
Page four

July 2, 1975

I was touched with the personal interest he seemed to take in each of us. I had never had the privilege of meeting a famous personality, and at that time in my life, I regarded all such people as being difficult to talk to and unapproachable. That day had an influence on me, because I realized that such people are just people after all. The newspaper in Killeen quoted me as saying "He was just like one of us." He reminded me of a grandfather talking with his grandchildren.

I will always treasure the memory of that day. It was quite a thrill for a small group of high school students, who started out the day never dreaming they would have the privilege of spending a few hours visiting with a former President of the United States in such a personal and relaxed atmosphere.

Sincerely yours,

Donna J. Goode
Donna J. Goode

and his dogs. I shall attempt to recount it
as much detail as I can recall. The weather was
quite clear, and the day was a pleasant surprise.
I was beginning my first year of college at
the University of Texas at Austin, where I was
studying for a B.S. degree in Social Science
Composite in 1972. During my three years at
the university and for one year after I
graduated, I worked part-time and full-time in various
positions for attorneys in Austin and Dallas.
I have also worked for the Internal Revenue Service, which is how I came to
know the late President. I was a legal secretary.
I have also been involved in government and strongly
supported various candidates for public office, having
been a member of the Young Democrats while attending The
University of Texas, although which organization I campaigned
for was not through in 1970, although I did not have the
privilege of meeting the man personally until I applied and
was accepted for my current position in January, 1974. I
also taught American History and Texas History in junior
high school in Fort Worth, Texas during the 1973-1974 school
year, before returning to Austin to reside here.



State of Colorado
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
STATE CAPITOL ANNEX
1375 SHERMAN STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80203
Telephone (303) 892-3091

Richard D. Lamm
GOVERNOR

Joseph F. Dolan
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 14, 1975

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

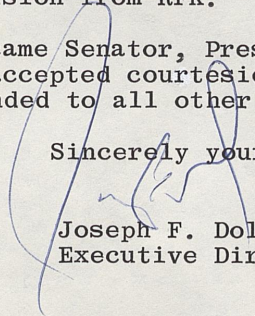
Senator John Kennedy, on several occasions between 1957 and 1961, said to me that Johnson was the best qualified to assume the Presidency, aside from himself. As Attorney General, Robert Kennedy found Vice President Johnson basically uncooperative in assisting the Administration's efforts to promote equal employment opportunities, especially for blacks, in private companies holding government contracts; and later, in Administration efforts to enlist the support of the business community in the racial crises in Mississippi and Alabama occasioned by the defiance of Court Orders by state and local officials in those states.

President John Kennedy went to Dallas November 22, 1963 because Vice President Johnson had allowed his personal animosities toward Senator Yarborough to foster a feud within the Texas Democratic Party which was seen as damaging Kennedy's chances for re-election in 1964. Johnson refused to stop feuding. Kennedy's visit was an effort to have his Presidency perceived as above that feud. That visit cost Kennedy his life. It is inconceivable to me that this fact did not significantly alter Robert Kennedy's view of Johnson.

As President Johnson saw Robert Kennedy as a rival for the 1964 nomination, and excluded from strategy meetings, etc., those Johnson felt loyal to RFK. Johnson immediately began going around his Attorney General and dealing directly with the FBI and its Director, J. Edgar Hoover, who eagerly embraced the opportunity to function with less supervision from RFK.

When Robert Kennedy became Senator, President Johnson failed to accord him the generally accepted courtesies extended to Senators, which Johnson extended to all other Senators.

Sincerely yours,


Joseph F. Dolan
Executive Director

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
ALVORD AND ALVORD

LAW OFFICES
JESS LARSON
WORLD CENTER BUILDING
918 SIXTEENTH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C.
20006

CABLE ADDRESS
"ALVORD"

TELEPHONE
AREA CODE 202
393-2266

August 27, 1975

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

This is in reply to your letter addressed to me regarding the late President Lyndon B. Johnson.

I was not particularly close to the late President, although I knew him as a result of my activities in the Democratic Party and as an officer in the Government under President Truman. First off, I would say any analogy of President Johnson to the late President Truman would be difficult to draw. While President Johnson no doubt did possess some "humanistic" qualities, he could not hold a light to President Truman insofar as human warmth and understanding is concerned. President Truman was a modest, simple, uncomplicated, dedicated man who did the very best he could every day of his life. President Johnson was an egomaniac who accomplished his goals by connivance, deceit and sheer physical drive.

I should hasten to say that I supported President Johnson in his quest for the Presidency in 1960 because I thought he was the most qualified democrat offering himself at that time and I did not feel the country would elect a Catholic President. Needless to say I was pushed in this direction by my dear and good friend, the late Sam Rayburn. Had Lyndon Johnson conducted an intelligent and vigorous campaign, he might well have gotten the nomination in 1960 instead of John Kennedy.

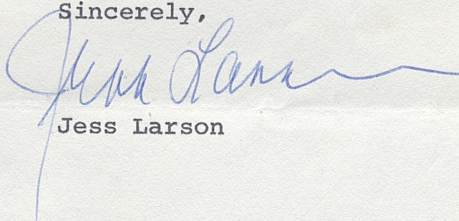
Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
Page Two
8/27/75

I supported him again in 1964 because I thought that he was launched on the right program at that time. He would indeed have made a great President had he been able to avoid the stigma of the Viet Nam War. It is amazing to me that he did not understand that once he pulled the country as deep into the conflict as it was by the beginning of his first Administration, that he did not bring all the military resources to bear to win the war instead of frittering away the national confidence with the so-called limited warfare approach.

My observations of President Johnson would lead me to conclude that he was loyal only to the extent that the people upon whom he placed his loyalty were able to help him in furthering his own goals. I agree with the people who describe him as cold and calculating. He was a phenomenon in American politics. He clawed his way to the top and certainly was not without ability in doing so. He no doubt had the love and affection of his family. He was a complicated man. Let history place him where he deserves. It certainly will not overlook some of his unnecessary pettiness.

I give you the above statement for the purposes which you stated in your letter and specify that under no circumstances is this letter to be published or is my name to be used as the author of these remarks. I am too old to court any animosities, but I am also too honest to not tell you the unvarnished truth as I see it.

Sincerely,



Jess Larson

TIME
THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

888 SIXTEENTH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

EDITORIAL OFFICES
202-293-4300

December 8, 1975

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I will try to answer briefly some of the questions you put to me. I hope it will be helpful to your project although, of course, I will not repeat material I know to be in print already about the late President Johnson and perhaps available to you in a public library. You may find particularly helpful the various cover stories which TIME did on LBJ down through the years (at least five in number.)

I first met Lyndon Johnson very shortly after World War II when I returned to Washington as an officer in the Naval Reserve and he was serving in the House. That was in the Georgetown home of Johnson's longtime Texas friend, William S. White, a reporter and columnist now retired and teaching part-time at the University of Texas in Austin. At that time, LBJ was a gangling, ambitious fellow who talked very much but also had the knack of listening almost at the same time. But that was a brief meeting, and it was not until Johnson came to the Senate, in 1949, that I began to get to know him. I am aware that Mrs. Johnson ran his House office, as you suggest, when LBJ was on naval reserve duty in the Pacific, though only from my reading. I know nothing about your question concerning Mrs. Kleberg nor have I seen a reference to it in print.

I have spent many thousands of words trying to "explain" LBJ, in the many cover stories, news articles, etc., which I did about him over the years. But, perhaps, as a thumbnail description, I would say this:

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
December 8, 1975
Page 2

Johnson's energy was almost superhuman. I never knew him in a moment of complete relaxation because even when he was relaxing, he was listening or talking; sometimes to learn from others, sometimes to impress them. He left nothing to chance, not a vote in the Senate, not an impression he made on anyone of interest to him, not in what he ate or in how he dressed. His interests were extraordinarily wide, and though not a bookish man, he was one of the brightest men I've known with a passion for absorbing knowledge--either orally or in memoranda form--on everything he judged of present or possible future interest. He was a proud man--and I say proud where others might say vain. He was a sensitive man. The combination of both qualities made him appear sometimes overpowering. He was used to getting his own way, and he usually did, through dint of persistence and argumentation. He was interested in people less fortunate or less able than himself; perhaps his best remembered accomplishments were his legislative efforts in passing in the Senate a civil rights bill and his Great Society program as President. He was keenly conscious of problems faced by minority groups, particularly by blacks and those of Latin American origin. He thought that education could be the great equalizer in life, and he fought always for equal opportunity to acquire an education.

Johnson, in reply to your specific inquiry, liked to tell stories about his youthful days in south-central Texas. Once asked why he brought one schoolmate home instead of another, he told his mother: "Jimmy's been no-where, the other boy has been two-where." He liked to talk about bringing young Mexican-American students home to his mother so she could help them with their lessons. He liked to talk about teaching at a Mexican-American school in Cotulla and he liked to talk about his own days at what was then called San Marcos Teachers College, where he started out picking up trash on the school property and ended up as an assistant to the President of the College. The influence of his mother was profound on LBJ; she persuaded him to return from a west coast trip to go to college. She was a wise and good woman, and even as an elderly woman, as she was when I met her, was beautiful of visage and bearing. LBJ liked to talk about his early accomplishments

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
December 8, 1975
Page 3

as head of the state National Youth Administration during the great depression, his sponsorship of a dam on the lower Colorado (which he sold to President Roosevelt by bringing pictures to the White House of the land it would help to irrigate.) Another impression which remains is that, to my knowledge, he never "hated" anyone, though he had controversies with many men. ("You can tell a man to 'go to hell,' but you can't make him go there," was something he often said, attributing it to Sam Rayburn.) He was great at bringing men of different views together, through compromises or appeals to larger interests. He loved children, not only his daughters but really all young people with whom he came in contact. He was a person warm in his affections, generous in his hospitality, broad in his interests. He was a "doer," an activist interested more in getting things done than in abstract ideas.

He liked people, whether it was "looking 'em in the eye and pressing the flesh," as he described his method of political campaigning, or in more normal social contacts. He invited Mrs. Steele and me to the White House several times, and his hospitality was warm. On one occasion he insisted on dancing a few steps with every woman present at a huge party for the then German Chancellor, Erhard. He loved the land; if you visited his ranch, you must inspect every piece of livestock, every foot of his beloved holding. He was, I believe, very true to those things in which he believed and dared to take chances to achieve them.

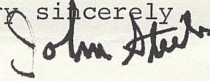
Johnson had his heartbreaking disappointments, most particularly, the failure of the enterprise in Viet Nam and the great divisions in the country which that venture brought. But I think he will be remembered as a great legislative leader and a President who, on the domestic front, was highly successful. He was a man of eternal hope and energy. When he was dreadfully ill after a major heart attack, I visited him in the Naval Hospital in Washington and found him simultaneously listening to a radio through a tiny ear piece, watching television and reading the newspapers. When it was quite uncertain whether he would live or die, he remembered that he had, a few days before the attack, ordered both a brown suit and a blue one. He told

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
December 8, 1975
Page 4

Mrs. Johnson to cancel the order for the brown one but not the blue suit because "we'll need that--either way."

I hope this will be some help and interest to your pupils.

Very sincerely



John L. Steele

JLS:sh

P. S. There was little or no close contact between Vandenberg and LBJ, mostly because Vandenberg died not long after Johnson came to the Senate and LBJ, at that time, was a very junior member more interested in matters of military affairs than of foreign policy.

P. P. S. Under separate cover, I am sending you an autographed book by my colleague, Hugh Sidey, which might be of interest to you.



JLS

1
2089

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Business

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS BUILDING

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA 47401

31 October 1975

TEL. NO. 812-337-5679

Mr. Jakie Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, TX 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

Your learning that I once knew Lyndon Johnson surprised me. Although it is true, I did not know him well, but I am happy to give you a few comments.

Lyndon and I were two of the three State Directors of NYA who were at the bottom of the age range. That was about all we had in common other than the fact that Indiana and Texas turned out to have highly successful programs, in contrast to difficulties that plagued so many of the states.

Among the things I remember best about Lyndon was the very effective way he used his free time when we had directors' meetings, especially those held in Washington. He saw or phoned more people, and more important people, than anyone else, although I doubt if many of his calls or visits had anything to do with NYA. Many of us thought at the time that Lyndon would soon be an important political figure.

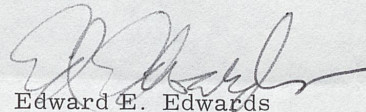
I suspect Lyndon also used his free time, his phone and his car to build a state-wide political base in Texas. At one Washington meeting, Aubrey Williams, the head of NYA, spent the first hour or so telling us we must cut down on telephone and telegraph and on travel. At the coffee break I asked Aubrey if he thought Indiana was guilty--I learned later that we were near the bottom on expenses--and he responded that the whole thing was for Lyndon's benefit. Lyndon, apparently, was relaying to appropriate people in Washington every suggestion or complaint he heard from every Democrat he talked with in Texas, and he talked with most of them.

Mr. Jakie Pruett
31 October 1975

Page 2

One thing I believe Lyndon may have had more than most of us, certainly more than I did, was a deep down desire to do something for those at or near the bottom of the ladder. He might not have been the person anyone would select first to ask for personal help, but he certainly believed that help should be forthcoming, if necessary and perhaps most importantly from government. He really wanted a good society.

Sincerely,



Edward E. Edwards
Fred T. Green Professor
Emeritus of Finance

EEE/rr

PURCELL, HANSEN & VALDEZ

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

CHARTERED

SUITE 230

1819 H STREET, N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

GRAHAM PURCELL
ORVAL HANSEN
ABELARDO L. VALDEZ

TELEPHONE
(202) 467-6460

November 11, 1975

Mr. J. L. Pruett
Principal
Department of Special Education
713 W. Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

This is in response to your letter of October 24, 1975, concerning what some of us who worked with President Johnson might know that has not been published.

So that you might know who I am, let me say that I served in the House of Representatives from the 13th District of Texas from January 1962 to January 1973. It was my privilege to know President Johnson and his entire family fairly intimately. However, I hasten to assure you that there are many others who have known the Johnson family longer and more intimately than I.


One interesting incident that comes to my mind occurred in the Fall of 1962. I had gotten to know Lucy Johnson Nugent who was then about fifteen years old. Mr. Johnson was then Vice President and believed in having both Lucy and Linda on a very meager allowance. I think they were allowed \$5.00 a week. I asked Lucy to baby-sit for my young son. We were going to be gone from early Saturday morning until late that night. Therefore, it was appropriate that Lucy come to the house on Friday night and stay with the little boy on Saturday. When we returned on Saturday night it was so late that she stayed over until Sunday morning. I had no idea what pay should be given to the daughter of the Vice President of the United States. On Sunday morning we discussed this and Lucy asked me what we paid the girls in the neighborhood for baby-sitting. I told her that we ordinarily paid \$.50 per hour. She was delighted about this and said that this was what her girl friends got paid. Although she had been at our home and with our son for over 36 hours, she would let me pay her only \$5.00.

Mr. J. L. Pruett
November 11, 1975
Page 2

The next Wednesday I happened to be in a luncheon with the Vice President. After the luncheon was over he said, "I don't want you to ruin that girl by paying her a lot of money she has not earned." I tried to explain to him that I did not feel that paying Lucy \$5.00 for all she had done would run much risk of ruining her and that I appreciated her interest and willingness to help me out.

After that Lucy stayed at our house on several other occasions. She baby-sat for us one or two times after Mr. Johnson became President. At that time I still paid her \$.50 an hour and had the benefit of her wit and wisdom as well as two secret service agents who were always with her. I feel like that was particularly good service for \$.50 an hour.

Sincerely,



Graham Purcell

GP:kms

**SALZBURG
SEMINAR
IN
AMERICAN
STUDIES**

ANTONIE T. KNOPPERS
Chairman of the Board

THOMAS H. ELIOT
President

ROGER LORT
Vice President
and Treasurer

ARTHUR C. GLOVER
Vice President and
Resident Director, Salzburg

FREDERIC WINTHROP
Secretary

17 DUNSTER STREET · CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS 02138 · (617) 547-7070

November 12, 1975

Mr. Jackie L. Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

Yes, I served in the 77th Congress (1941-43) with Lyndon Johnson. I was not close to him, but was, of course, acquainted with him, and, through our close friends, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Durr, with Mrs. Johnson also.

I don't remember Lyndon as being "pushy." He never, or hardly ever, spoke in the House, and if he was doing political chores for Sam Rayburn, as he probably was at least to the extent of "passing the word" on particular bills to some of the Democratic representatives, I didn't observe him doing them.

He did seem to me decidedly self-centered, eager to talk at great length (and in boring detail) about his campaigns for the House and, in 1942, his losing campaign for the Senate. But I suppose that politicians, more even than most people, incline to being self-centered and like to talk about themselves. After all, in their business they have to advertise themselves.

I remember Lyndon's glow of great pride when I met him on the street in the summer of 1942 and he was wearing a naval officer's uniform. He did look handsome in it! In those days, as you know, he was very slender, almost willowy, and did not give the impression of overpowering size and force which he did when he was President.

No, I did not know Congressman Kleberg. I know John McCormack, but have no knowledge of the nature of his relationship with Sam Rayburn. I assume they worked well together. Mr. Sam was much the more forceful of the two.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas H. Eliot
Thomas H. Eliot
President

THE/dp

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

W. MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL
MARVIN BOWER
KINGMAN BREWSTER, JR.
HELEN HAMILTON BURGESS
JANE PERRY CLARK CAREY
NEIL W. CHAMBERLAIN
EDWARD T. CONE
JOHN J. CORSON
THOMAS H. ELIOT
CLARENCE CLYDE FERGUSON, JR.

GEORGE S. FRANKLIN, JR.
PAUL A. FREUND
BRENDAN GILL
HERBERT P. GLEASON
DOROTHY HEIGHT
PAUL M. HERZOG
ALBERT J. HETTINGER, JR.
STANLEY HOFFMANN
JOHN P. HUMES
JOHN JAY ISELIN

DAVID J. JONES
CARL KAYSER
DOUGLAS M. KNIGHT
ANTONIE T. KNOPPERS
KATHARINE CHESHIRE KNOTT
ERIC LARRABEE
JOHN W. MACY, JR.
ROBERT K. MUELLER
RAYMOND D. NASHER
DEXTER PERKINS

ROSWELL B. PERKINS
ERNEST F. STOCKWELL, JR.
MONTE C. THRODAHL
JOHN H. WATTS
HERBERT WECHSLER
FREDERIC WINTHROP
W. WILLARD WIRTZ
STANLEY WOODWARD
GISELA WARBURG WYZANSKI
BARBARA L. ZINSSER

THE ASIA SOCIETY



December 29, 1975

PHILLIPS TALBOT
PRESIDENT

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett-Principal
Department of Special Education
713 W. Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

Lyndon B. Johnson was one of the most robust men--physically, intellectually and socially--that I have ever known. His gargantuan energy set a pace for all of us who worked as Presidential Appointees in his Administration. I had first come into direct contact with him as Vice President, especially when he travelled as President Kennedy's representative in the part of the world with which the State Department Bureau that I headed was concerned, i. e. the Near East and South Asia. I won't forget how wrong he proved us to be in advising him about what to expect when he visited Turkey. We had forecast that unlike the people of some other countries he was visiting, the Turks would be rather quiet and reserved in receiving him. This, we had explained, was characteristic of the Turkish nature. Imagine our chagrin--but pleasure!--when Vice President Johnson took several hours to negotiate his way from the airport at Ankara into the capital city through a large and enthusiastic crowd of well wishers who repeatedly encouraged him to stop his car and get out to shake hands with people along the way. The fact that neither Turkish officials nor foreign visitors had previously had such an experience meant nothing to Mr. Johnson. In subsequent years when I reported directly to him he would sometimes remind me that State Department wisdom had not always proved to be accurate.

During his presidency Lyndon Johnson became increasingly involved in Vietnam, of course. Since I was not dealing with that part of the world I did not see him under the special pressures of that harsh problem. However, when crises arose in areas where I had responsibility he was accessible and vigorous in focusing on them and making judgments. During the Cyprus crisis of 1967, for example, he sent Cyrus Vance to the area for what must have been one of the most intensive diplomatic efforts of that period. Throughout those dangerous days we who were in the field (I was Ambassador to Greece then) felt that Mr. Vance and the rest of us were getting active support at every stage.

Mr. Pruett

-2-

December 29, 1975

There were many facets to Lyndon Johnson, and I have touched only one or two. I hope, however, that these observations may be of interest to you and your students.

Yours sincerely,

Phillip Talbot

PT/mt

HARRY C. SHRIVER
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE

8409 FOX RUN
POTOMAC, MD. 20854
(301) 299-4999

September 8, 1975

FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20426

Mr. Jackie L. Pruett
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

This is in reference to your letter of September 1, 1975 concerning the late President Lyndon B. Johnson the man. I am, of course, quite curious how it has come about that you should write to me for information. There are so many others who no doubt have better information and perhaps more exact information. I will try to comply at least in part. I would much prefer to be able to talk with you. When I write I am inclined to be brief and to summarize, *also to generalize.*

One of my friends Bernard Mayberry, Esquire of Lincoln, Illinois had some direct contact with Lyndon and with others when he was a secretary to a congressman in his earliest years in Washington. Lyndon at that time apparently resolved that he would someday come to Washington as a Congressman, himself. I think he entered the Georgetown Law School his first year or two in Washington. You can verify this. He didn't remain in law school. It is likely he didn't, in his own mind, have time. He wanted not so much to be a lawyer as to be a member of Congress.

There is a story, heard it more than once, that Lyndon remarked to some of the boys - other secretaries and law students that he was coming back here to Washington as a Congressman one of these days. The natural thing was a smile or two and a laugh at the time. After he returned in less than two or three years the boys remembered the story. I am sure Lyndon had very strong feelings of what he wanted to do in those early days.

After Lyndon returned to Congress he was quick in "learning the ropes". He had already observed considerable as a secretary. But there were then many able and intelligent Congressman serving in Washington from Texas. I am not from Texas ~~but~~ I remember from memory Eugene Black, Htton Summers, and Sam Rayburn. All were more than happy to share their experiences with a young man and to encourage him.

Lyndon Johnson was then unmarried. In these days I think he was not one to pass up any opportunity that presented itself for him to get ahead. As a member of Congress he had an opportunity

To meet Roosevelt's sons and of course FDR. FDR never missed an opportunity to encourage and to throw his influence to a young man if he use him for another vote or to carry through his program. As I recall FDR backed Lyndon against Morris Shepard (is the spelling right?). The older politicians and senators had their own views and did not always vote the way FDR wanted them to vote. Of course Lyndon was not the only Congressman that FDR backed for his own purposes. I am not condemning this. It is all a part of the game, at least up to a point in politics. Where there is no leadership there can be no program; and where there is no leadership there is chaos.

I once attended a New Year's party at the apartment of Lyndon's mother and of course his mother was in attendance, Becky his sister, and her other brother, but Lyndon was absent. The subtle but at the time was that it was too lowbrow for Lyndon. It is quite likely that Lyndon was then attending a party where the contacts would further his own ends more than one which was attended primarily by government clerks. I do not condemn Lyndon for this. This too is a part of the great game of politics. Lyndon was then a member of congress, young, and unmarried. He was ambitious. Some men can strike a happy balance readily, others cannot. If I had a chance to talk with you I think I could be more helpful as to all this but it is a little difficult to put it down on paper without being misunderstood.

As to the suggestion that he was arrogant and self centered while in Congress. In part this is true. Of course all Congressmen can become arrogant if they remain in Congress very long. When they are defeated within a few years they loose ~~the~~. Of course Lyndon was self centered in his early days in Congress. A certain amount of this was necessary, I think he felt. As the years went by and he reached the Senate he was less self centered, but demanding. He was extremely demanding and arrogant when he was the Majority leader. This is how he got things done, and he did provide leadership that other senators could not provide.

If Lyndon Johnson did not overcome his arrogance it was in part a source of strength.

I think there is no question that he could not have reached the pinnacle that he did without the help of strong backers, other leaders. This too is part of the game in politics. Another factor is luck. Everyone must have some luck if he ~~is~~ is to go far. The significant thing is to be ready, able, and prepared when the luck occurs.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful to you. Again I think I could be more helpful if I had a chance to talk with you. With all good luck in your under taking, I am

Sincerely,

Harry C. Shivers

The Boston Globe

617 288-8000 BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS 02107



October 23, 1975

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I met President Lyndon Johnson for the first time when he was vice president of the United States in October, 1963. This was approximately a month before he became president and he was in Boston at the Statler Hilton Hotel (I believe the exact date was Oct. 16, 1963 or Oct. 19, 1963). The vice president was to be the main speaker at the Associated Industries of Massachusetts annual dinner meeting in the city. I was political editor and columnist for the old Boston Herald at the time. I was serving as a moderator of a debate between the chairmen of the Democratic and Republican State Committees at the AIM day-long meetings. In the evening Sen. Edward M. Kennedy took me to Mr. Johnson and introduced me to him. He was sitting in a reception room and was most gracious and warm. He and Ted Kennedy appeared to be very friendly and this always buttressed my feeling that Ted and Johnson got along well after he became president and that the relationship between Ted and Johnson was superior to that between JFK and Johnson and, of course, RFK and Johnson. My conversation with Johnson lasted only a few minutes and it was the only time I ever met him. He couldn't have been nicer.

I believe Johnson was a great president who came along at a most difficult time and helped the nation cross the difficult chasms of racial problems in a most smooth and effective manner. He certainly was the man for the mid-sixties and I believe history will prove him right in his handling of the problems in Southeast Asia.

I have had many conversations with former Speaker John W. McCormack who was very high on LBJ. McCormack always likened LBJ to FDR and Harry S. Truman as the key presidents of the 20th century. I would suggest you contact him at the Post Office Building, Post Office Sq., Boston for his insight and comments about the late president. McCormack is a very kind individual and I am certain he will co-operate with you. He also had a very high regard for Sam Rayburn, as I am certain you are aware.

Sincerely,

David J. Farrell
David J. Farrell

The Texas State Historical Association

2/306 RICHARDSON HALL • UNIVERSITY STATION • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

January 7, 1975

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood - Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I have been an inexcusably long time in replying to your several letters and requests. My delay began innocently enough, because I was trying to think of the very best possible Lyndon B. Johnson anecdote for you. I became like the fable of the cat who knew a dozen ways of escape but was always getting caught because he couldn't decide which plan was best.

Certainly you have been on my conscience and on my desk, and I am just going to send along an anecdote that shows the humanity of the man. Perhaps we can get together one of these days and you can get me started talking, when I will be able to give you a couple of dozen ranging from the salacious to the inspirational.

Homer Thornberry succeeded Johnson as congressman from this tenth district. He is now a federal circuit court judge. Shortly after he became a congressman and had reported to Washington in 1949, he went with the new Senator Johnson on a trip to New York. They took a bus somewhere about the city, and to Thornberry's surprise, when the bus became crowded, Johnson got up and gave his seat to an elderly Negro lady.

When the two men were together again, Thornberry, who was reared in the southern tradition that put whites in one class and blacks in another, queried Johnson about this act. The senator told the young congressman, "I don't care whether she was black or any other color. I just knew that she was about my mother's age, and I hope that if my mother ever has to stand on a swaying bus, some man, whatever his color, will be polite enough to offer her a seat."

Although Thornberry had worked off and on for Johnson since the 1930's, it was his first glimpse into the Johnson feeling that human beings are human beings and that race plays no role in consideration and courtesy. Consequently, Thornberry says, he was not surprised as the years went by and Johnson showed a profound concern for civil rights. He thought he received an insight into Johnson's beliefs on this issue on that bus ride in New York.

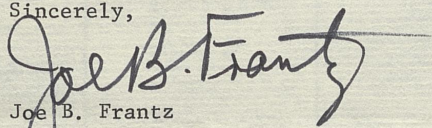
I am quite interested in what you are doing with regard to the late President. I agree that most books and articles emerge with a special slant

Mr. Jakie L. Pruett
page 2
January 7, 1975

and don't try to understand the man.

I am returning the stamped envelope with the likeness of Mr. Johnson, with the autograph you requested. I don't ask you to forgive my delay, but I do hope that you will continue to stay in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joe B. Frantz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Joe B. Frantz

JBF/rcm

TERRY SANFORD

**1508 PINECREST ROAD
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27705**

December 29, 1975

Dear Mr. Pruett,

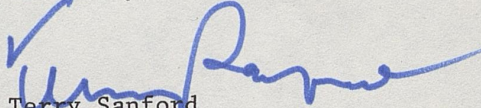
I hope the attached notes will be of some help to you and am sorry to be so long in getting around to you. I have, however, been working full time at my job and travelling when I could find time, and my personal correspondence is considerably behind.

I begin my leave of absence from the job this week and will be able to devote more time to the political effort. We will see what happens then.

I hope that I will merit your support.

With best wishes always,

Sincerely,



Terry Sanford

Mr. J. L. Purett, Principal
Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Notes on the Lyndon Johnson Years
From Terry Sanford
December 29, 1975

Having been involved in Democratic politics since my youth, I quite honestly do not remember the first time I met Lyndon Johnson. Our separate but continuing political endeavors over the years created many opportunities for us to be together.

He was pretty thoroughly irritated with me when I supported John Kennedy instead of him in Los Angeles, and made it clear, but I think my position was sound, and I stuck to it. We subsequently re-established our friendship. I stayed with him from coast to coast in the campaign on the LBJ Special, and truthfully, I was very fond of him. During his second term I had an opportunity to talk with him on several occasions, and he did not seem to be disturbed, even when I insisted that we should get out of Vietnam, stop the bombing, and start the negotiating.

I was at the White House the evening he made his speech declaring that he would not be a candidate. My reason for being there is another matter, but that was a dramatic occasion. It would have been dramatic that he was announcing the ending of the bombing of North Vietnam. His decision, last minute, I think, to withdraw as a candidate for re-election made it an even more significant day.

Several years later I was in Austin for the dedication of the LBJ Library, and he asked me to fly out to the ranch with him the day before the ceremony. On that visit I got one of the rides around the ranch in the open car, an exciting adventure simply in terms of the driving, and a rewarding experience by any standards. We talked of many things, and I assured him that History would remember kindly that he was the first United States President to make education the first business of the national government, that he was the President who got through the first adequate health care provisions, that he was the President who showed compassion and concern for people caught up in poverty. These will be the lasting contributions of the Johnson Administration, and the country is better off by having had the Administration of the Great Society.

President Johnson's "War on Poverty" created an interesting situation for me when I was Governor because he wanted to visit his people in the Appalachian region to observe the workings of the new program that had just begun. North Carolina, with the North Carolina Fund which we had established shortly before, was a bit ahead of the other states in these programs, and he wanted to come to North Carolina. He wanted to go where some programs were in action, and he wanted to visit a family caught up in rural poverty.

Whoever was in charge for the White House wanted to come to Rocky Mount. I explained that Rocky Mount was not the best place, for a number of valid reasons. The word came back from the help that the President personally said he wanted to come to Rocky Mount, that he was interested in the mountainous regions, and wanted to see the program in action. I explained again that this was not a mountainous region, that it was in the coastal plains of North Carolina, that it was neither rocky nor mountainous, although we did have one of the early poverty programs in existence there, but I strongly recommended several other places. Word came back that President Johnson had personally said he wanted to go to Rocky Mount and therefore that would not be changed, and that we had to accommodate the visit there. I didn't really care, although I knew perfectly well that President Johnson had made no such declaration, probably was not aware of what the itinerary would be, and would have preferred to leave the judgement to me. Such is the bureaucracy, and I quit worrying about it.

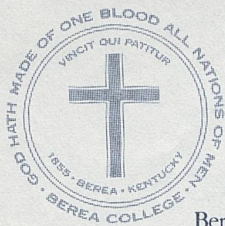
I was constantly amused and distressed at the activities of the people who prepare for such a Presidential visit. I don't know of any way to do away with them, and certainly security is a factor that has to be considered, but, among other things, they put up enough telephones in the edge of a field near the home to be visited to make it look like Belmont. With the help of our Farm Extension Service a family had been selected who indicated a willingness to have the President come see them. The lady of the house, being a woman of some humor, had told the Secret Service people on their preliminary visits that she didn't mind the President coming, as long as he didn't pull her dogs' ears. The Secret Service answer was to build a cage, at the cost of several thousand dollars, to put the dogs in while the President was there.

We walked up on the wooden porch and were greeted by the family: the lady, her husband, her grandmother, and two or three children. There was one chair inside, in which the grandmother sat. The lady sat on the windowsill, as I recall, and we carried on a conversation about generalities, then left. She later told the press that President Johnson was just an ordinary, nice man, that she had to ask him to sit on the bed, but he had been so nice about it all. Then she added, "But he was just another man. When that Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. came in, I got so excited that I called him Governor. I really loved his daddy." And with that, she was expressing an attitude that continues to prevail. So many people in rural areas, so many people in conditions of poverty, still appreciated and remembered Franklin Roosevelt and the concern he had for the one-third ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-nourished.

President Johnson was expressing the same kind of concern, only now instead of one-third, it was more nearly one-sixth. And the failure of that program to catch hold adequately will probably mean that a decade from now we will still have as many as a tenth of the population caught up in the cycle of poverty, unable to break out on their own.

Lyndon Johnson had the kind of compassion that moved people and programs in the New Deal days of economic recovery. He wanted to make the government responsive to the needs and aspirations of people that had been left out by the system. That he succeeded in pointing up the need and in cranking up the program will be a considerable mark to his credit in history. That the program failed to be properly executed, and that it failed to reach its objectives, will be remembered as a tragedy.

The circumstances of his coming and going tend to obscure the quality of the man just now, but history will rectify that.



BEREA COLLEGE

Berea, Kentucky 40403

Francis S. Hutchins
President Emeritus

September 2, 1975

Mr. J.L. Pruett, Principal,
Dept. of Special Education,
713 West Mahan St.,
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531.

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I have received your letter of August 30. I regret that I cannot help you very much in regard to President Johnson.

I did meet him at least twice. Once was when he was in Richmond, Kentucky at Eastern Kentucky University for Commencement. I was impressed on that occasion by his humanitarianism. He had just returned from Pakistan, I think. He spoke most warmly of his concern for human beings over the world. I was introduced to him on that occasion also.

On another occasion about 1967, in the spring, I was a member of the President's Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty. Our Commission was invited to meet the President and I was asked to be acting Chairman at that moment, as Chairman Edward Breathitt, Governor of Kentucky, had to be absent. President Johnson seemed quite burdened that day. However, he was particularly gracious in meeting us, and particularly in meeting Mr. Johnny Wooden Legs, an American Indian member of the Commission who was most anxious to speak with him.

I hope that you will have great success with your project.

Sincerely,



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CITIZENS COUNCIL

ROOM 511, DISTRICT BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20004
NA 8-6000, EXT. 406

1961-67

TILFORD E. DUDLEY
CHAIRMAN
MRS. JEHU L. HUNTER
WILLIAM B. BRYANT
WILLIAM BLUM, JR.
VICE CHAIRMEN
GEOFFREY M. THORNETT
SECRETARY
FRANCIS L. TIMMONS, JR.
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Residence:

2942 Macomb St. N W
Washington, D C 20008
Sun, Oct. 19, 1975

Mr. J. L. Pruett
713 W. Mahan St.
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

MEMBERS

PETER CALOMIRIS
MRS. HARRIET E. CIPRIANI
MARSHALL B. COYNE
MRS. TODD DUNCAN
DR. DOROTHY B. FEREBEE
MR. ALFRED FRIENDLY
MRS. HENRY GICHNER
MRS. JACK J. GOTTSEGEN
MRS. WILLIE J. HARDY
GEORGE E. C. HAYES
REV. EVERETT A. HEWLETT
COL. CAMPBELL C. JOHNSON
W. LEDRU KOONTZ
DAVID L. KREEGER
LLOYD S. LUTHER
JOHN L. MONAGHAN
OLIVER T. PALMER
IRVING R. M. PANZER
DR. GLADYS T. PETERSON
WILLIAM L. PORTER
MRS. RICHARD C. SIMONSON

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I want to respond to your Sept. 23 letter as well as I can. You apparently seek some of the personal memories and incidents, not in the many histories that are being written. Incidentally, next to us (at 2944 Macomb St. N.W.) is a young man, Keith Mayes, who is writing his Ph.D. thesis on LBJ. He has done a great deal of reading and interviewing and is already an authority. His emphasis ~~is~~ is on LBJ and Congress. As you can see from my letterhead, my emphasis is largely on the local contacts here. In addition to the Council, I was active in the D.C. Democratic Party and was its Chairman for 1967-68.

Because of these positions, I was sometimes invited to White House functions. I remember one occasion which may interest you. The President was signing a bill, probably about the Dist of Col. I think it was an authorization for our subway which is now being constructed. The ceremony was outdoors, in the Rose Garden just east of the White House office. He sat at a small table on a raised place or step in the lawn. At least 2 dozen of us stood on the grass, in front of him. As you know, one of the great souvenirs from such a ceremony is one of the pens used in signing. As I watched him, I saw he had a real technique to produce or use as many pens as possible in the signing. He would take a pen, use it to stroke in a very small portion of his signature, then hand it to an aid who would give it to someone watching. I didn't count but believe he must have produced 15 pens in this manner.

At most top functions, the aids or administrative assistants, make all the arrangements for seating, etc. and the top official merely strides forward, does his thing (speech, signing, presenting a plaque, etc.) and then retires. Not so with Johnson. He manages the entire ceremony. I was often surprised at his interest and attention to details of who stood where, who came forward first, etc. and who sat where.

When Johnson was about $\frac{3}{4}$ through with his signing, he suddenly said to an aid as he gave him one of the signature pens: "Give one to that gentleman over there," motioning to a spot on the other side of the crowd from me. I looked. It was a man in a wheelchair. LBJ has noticed him and realized he would have trouble pushing himself forward to get a pen. Johnson was sensitive to his need for a little special attention. (They ran out of pens just before getting to me but I have survived that loss.)

Johnson had a reputation for being hard to get along with: barking

out his commands, ordering people around, insensitive to their feelings & conveniences, demanding strict loyalty. Well, there were two Johnsons. I became aware of this personally at the ceremony where he gave the oath of office to Walter Washington as mayor-commissioner of Wash. D.C. There had been some tension, some disappointments about the accompanying appointments, some ~~large~~ unfilled ambitions. But the "ruthless" had made his decisions. Again at the ceremony, there was careful seating of various dignitaries, with LBJ changing & directing some details. He then presided. I was impressed with his good humor, his relaxed air, his courtesy, his consideration of others. (So different from his calling V P Humphrey at 5 a.m. from Texas to Minn. for the hell of it - "just to see if my Vice Pres is up," he said.) And so I thot: "What a charming man. It would be a pleasure to associate with him." And I realized there were 2 men, or at least 2 sides to his personality.

his sense of humor joking

It was at this meeting that Pres. ^{Johnson} announced that Walter Washington would be henceforth called "The Mayor." This was a bit beyond the law. Legally, LBJ has reorganized the Dist of Col ~~govt~~ govt, re-assigning powers, but the title of the top official was still "Commissioner." We proceeded to call him Mayor but some conservatives in Congress protested. So informally we called him Mayor, but technically said: Mayor-Commissioner.

I did not agree with the war in Vietnam; neither did my wife. We considered it illegal, immoral & bankrupt in every way. Sometime in the fall of 1967, Pres. Johnson came to an off-the-record dinner of the Dem. Natl Committee and State Chairman. We were all delighted. Between courses, LBJ table-hopped, coming to each table to shake hands with his fellow Democrats. I was scared that my wife would refuse to rise to shake his hand. But she did. After the dinner, he spoke, of course. He gave a regular, good Dem. speech on the Dem issues: civil rights, housing, health, housing, etc. for about 20-30 minutes. Then he paused, reflected a moment and said: "I know Lady Bird wishes I would stop here, but I can't." He took a paper out of his pocket with statement he had made in the House on communism, and proceed to make another speech, on Vietnam.

The next day we had a reception at the White House. After the handshaking, we crowded around him informally. He tried to justify the Vietnam ^{war} as a defense against Chinese Communism. We all know it was much more difficult & intricate. He was trapped and didnt know how to escape. It was a personal tragedy for him. A real shame.

In the spring of 1978 as we looked toward the Dem. convention, I had to let my opposition to the war become known. LBJ was still a potential candidate. We had much talk in the Dist. about organizing a peace faction in the Dem Party, opposing Johnson's war. You ask about the NAACP & labor. My Dem Natl Committeeman, a black minister, and many other blacks said, over & over: "Lyndon has done more for civil rights, for the Negro, than any other Pres." That was true in terms of civil rights legislation. His ~~the~~ total was the greatest. But FDR and Eleanor did as much or more in breaking the ice of adamant hostility in the 1930s. All civil righters & minority people appreciated Pres. Johnson, altho blacks were the leaders in the peace faction that ultimately organized & won in the Dem primary.

You ask about Labor. The unions always supported LBJ, except for the AFL when Johnson 1st ran for the Senate. But Geo M^eany supported the war & still does. So they had no problem on that score.

*I hope this helps you
If you need anything more,
let me know.
Signed: Dudley*

175D

JENNINGS RANDOLPH, W. VA., CHAIRMAN
EDMUND S. MUSKIE, MAINE
JOSEPH M. MONTOYA, N. MEX.
MIKE GRAVEL, ALASKA
LLOYD BENTSEN, TEX.
QUENTIN N. BURDICK, N. DAK.
JOHN C. CULVER, IOWA
ROBERT MORGAN, N.C.
GARY HART, COLO.

M. BARRY MEYER, CHIEF COUNSEL AND CHIEF CLERK
BAILEY GUARD, MINORITY CLERK

HOWARD H. BAKER, JR., TENN.
JAMES L. BUCKLEY, N.Y.
ROBERT T. STAFFORD, VT.
JAMES A. MC CLURE, IDAHO
PETE V. DOMENICI, N. MEX.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 24, 1975

Mr. J. L. Pruett, Principal
Dept. of Special Education
713 W. Mahan St.
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

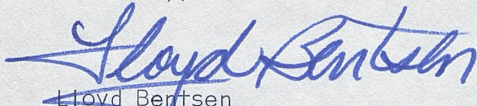
Thank you for your recent letter and kind words of support.

I am pleased to give you my opinion of Lyndon Johnson for your classroom studies. I believe his humanity will be his greatest legacy. His humanity encompassed all men and it included the flaws that we all share. But it was a humanity that carried him through a life of political power without allowing him to forget those who had no power. It was a humanity that enabled him to enjoy the ultimate ambition of American political life while remembering those who never shared in the abundance and success that we know as Americans.

The man's legislative accomplishments were legion. Ideals and social programs that had languished in the Congress for years were placed on the books during these 5 crowded years in office. I know of no President who worked harder for his country.

I appreciate the interest of your class.

Sincerely,


Lloyd Bentsen

102 Jamieson Drive, Hollybush II
Pennington, New Jersey 08534
December 13, 1975

Mr. Jackie Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

Yes, I've several fond memories of President Lyndon Johnson. Because I've retired and living in another part of New Jersey your previous letters, if any, never reached me.

My memories:

1. His precipateness of action. His arrangement to meet Mr. Kosygin, then in N.Y. at United Nations, was very suddenly consummated with our Gov. Hughes. I first heard that the meeting would be at our home, Hollybush, at 6:35 P.M. by radio commentator, and we were pressed greatly to prepare our home and campus for the 11:00 A.M. meeting the next day.

2. His worriment before an important event. Standing on our front veranda, awaiting Mr. Kosygin whom he had never seen, he remained aloof, with hands on chin. Suddenly he heard the clamor of thousands of voices in the street below our raised campus. He sprang off the porch to the edge, heard the cheers for him, and I heard him say, softly to himself, "Thank you. Thank you." I realized that even the most powerful individuals need the bolstering strength of popular support.

3. His sense of history. Because he felt the conference would be important in history, he asked to retain a rocking chair, a Robinson-family heirloom possession, in which he sat during his long conferences with Mr. Kosygin.

4. His reliance on goodwill. He opened the Kosygin conference by expressing the hope that he and Mr. Kosygin could make the world safe for their grandchildren. (Lucy had her first child a few days earlier.) Goodwill, however, proved not enough for permanent change of activities. Mr. Nixon, learning from this episode, based his approach on quid pro quo negotiations, with China, Japan, and Western Europe relationships emphasized.

5. His reticence regarding pre-publicity of an event. In October he tentatively agreed that he might possibly be our commencement speaker in June, 1968. But he would never, perhaps for safety's sake, utter a firm "yes". Even two days before the event, a Philadelphia paper carried an article stating he would appear. Later that day a Presidential Office call, that if his attendance was affirmed by us, he probably would not appear. Our investigation showed that the story had originated from a reporter attached to his office. We so reported.

6. Yet a penchant for publicity. At 3:00 P.M. of the day before his Commencement appearance, a White House call asked what arrangements had been made for children to greet him as he descended from his helicopter on our campus. No arrangements had been made, of course, because of the request for secrecy. At that time, however, the desire was expressed for welcoming school children with signs of greeting. Despite the time element, we managed to have the field flooded with public and parochial school children carrying signs, prepared in the long evening hours, saying "We love President Johnson," "Greetings, President Johnson," "Welcome back, President Johnson," and "Joined in History, Glassboro and President Johnson."

7. A keen sense of danger. His desire to underplay his physical appearances was undoubtedly justified. On the evening of the day he spoke at our Commencement, in June, Robert Kennedy was assassinated in California.

8. The graciousness of Mrs. Johnson. When the Johnson Library was to be dedicated in Texas, Mrs. Johnson called our home twice, having learned that I intended to attend, offering a special arrangement for lodging, hospitality, and room gifts.

One could talk at much greater length, but this is enough. However, Dean Robert D. Bole, of Glassboro State College, Glassboro, N.J. 08028, has written a full-length book on the Hollybush Summit. It can be obtained by writing directly to him. You will find it a worthwhile compendium of the entire visit.

President Johnson was a memorable character. He enriched our lives tremendously.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas E. Robinson



1791

THE OBSERVER

The Observer Limited Registered number 146482 England
Registered office 160 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4DA Telephone 01-236 0202
Telegrams Observer London EC4 Telex 888963

10 February 1975

Dear Mr Pruett,

Thank you for your letter of 28 January.

I think Johnson's outstanding trait, as a politician, was his ~~knowledge~~ ^{understanding} of other people's motives;

or perhaps I should say, of other Americans' motives (he showed less than adequate understanding of Ho Chi Minh's).

My most vivid memory of him : that huge, slow-moving hulk, watchful and a shade wary, putting out that outside fist to shake hands. Even if you hadn't known he was President, you would certainly have known he was a formidable man. Contrast President Nixon.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Davie

Michael Davie

December 23, 1975

Jakie L. Pruett, Principal
Department of Special Education
713 West Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

In response to your letter of November 27th concerning Lyndon Johnson, let me first say that I doubt I can add much to the many descriptions that have already been written, of this colorful, highly human man.

I would describe him as a man of powerful and distinctive personality, strong-willed, intelligent, and possessed of remarkable human energy and initiative; deeply attuned to the needs of the common man in the old populist tradition, and devoted to his well-being in terms of such practical things as education, health, housing, and food; tremendously skilled in the political -- especially legislative -- arts; a keen judge of people and motives, highly patriotic, strongly gripped by the desire for political ~~power~~ ^{power} and eminence; proud of his achievements -- the high positions he had attained, the laws and programs ^{he} he had put through, the place in history that he had earned, and the ranch, homesite and library that bore his name in Texas.

The anecdote that comes to mind concerns a meeting he had, as President, in about April of 1968, with the negotiating team -- Averell Harriman, Cyrus Vance, myself, Philip Habeeb and William Jordan -- that was to go to Paris and open negotiations with the North Vietnamese to try to bring an end to the Vietnamese war. After a full and thorough discussion of our instructions had been completed, just as the meeting was ^{about} to end, he told us there was one more thing he had to say. Referring to something he had learned a long time ago in Texas, he said "Now I don't want you to go over there and negotiate their (the North Vietnamese) program; I want you to go over there and negotiate our program." One of our team thought the U.S. should slack off its operations in South Vietnam to show "good will" to the North Vietnamese, but I took the stand

.../...

that our forces should be free to continue to ~~exert~~ "maximum sustained pressure" on the North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam. The President agreed with me, but one or two of the others on the delegation returned several more times to the topic, suggesting that we should not launch any "all-out" attacks while the negotiations were in progress. I reiterated my view that the negotiations should not be allowed to interfere with the use of military tactics in South Vietnam by which the commander could accomplish with least cost and best results the mission for which our troops were fighting, and dying. At that point, the President turned to me and winked, hiding his eyes from the others with his hand, and said "I think General Goodpaster understands what I want to do." There was no doubt what he had in mind.

The first time I saw President Johnson after President Kennedy's death was during a meeting (or a reception, I am not certain which) at the White House. When I introduced myself he immediately stepped up close to me and said that President Eisenhower, "a man," he said, "for whom I have an extremely high regard," had spoken to him about me in high terms regarding such matters as *ability*, loyalty and commitment to our country. He said President Eisenhower had told him that if he ever needed assistance, he could depend on my help.

I told him I appreciated hearing this, especially coming from President Eisenhower, for whom I on my own part had the highest regard. I then assured him that he could indeed count on my help, if ever needed.

I then went on to recall to him something President Eisenhower had once told me about a conversation he had had with the then Senator Lyndon Johnson, Senate Majority Leader. An issue had come up in which some in the Senate were wanting to take an action that would tie the hands of the President on some matter before them. I have forgotten just what the specific problem was. President Eisenhower told me he had warned Senator Johnson, "Don't do it. It will weaken the presidency, and some day you yourself may be sitting in this chair and may need those powers to do your job." I told him that President Eisenhower always seemed to think it was likely that he (Lyndon Johnson) would somehow one day be President. President Johnson, after hearing this, looked me right in the eye and said, "Yes, I think he did."

.../...

I hope these reminiscences may be of some interest in connection with the project on which you are working.

Finally, it is a pleasure to autograph the attached card for your son.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,


Andrew A. Goodpaster

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01610

PRESIDENT JOHNSON AT HOLY CROSS - 1975

On June 10, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson received an honorary degree from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. Formal details are to be found in the public press reports and publications of the College Public Relations Office. The following side-lights, very limited in scope, represent some of the recollections of the President and Dean of the College at the time of the granting of the degree.

President Johnson had succeeded President Kennedy in November of 1963. Boston College, like Holy Cross a New England, Catholic, Jesuit institution of higher learning, had awarded JFK an honorary degree in June, 1963.

1964 was an election year. LBJ's political advisors were seeking exposure for the President in New England. Kenneth O'Donnell, a member of Mr. Johnson's staff and son of a former Holy Cross football coach, had been brought up in Worcester. He reasoned that the awarding of an honorary degree to the President of the United States by a Worcester college would serve the political purpose and honor the city as well. An approach was made to the President of Holy Cross, Rev. Raymond J. Swords, S.J.: would Holy Cross be interested in conferring an honorary degree upon President Johnson at its 1964 Commencement? The answer, of course, was affirmative.

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01610

The College determined that the bestowal of the honorary degree upon the President should not eclipse the graduation of the College seniors for Commencement was primarily "their" day. Furthermore, other honorary degrees would be awarded when LBJ received his; intended recipients had already been invited to accept them by the time the presidential possibility arose. Incidentally, Rev. Edward B. Bunn, S.J., President of Georgetown University, was to be one of the degree recipients; President Johnson kindly included Father Bunn in the presidential party for the flight to Worcester and back to Washington.

At Holy Cross graduating seniors walk across Commencement stage to receive their diplomas individually from the President of the College. As Father Swords accompanied LBJ in the academic procession to the stage on Fitton Field, he notified the President that this procedure would be followed. Somewhat taken aback, Mr. Johnson did not object, and after the ceremonies paid a courteous compliment on the exercises to Father Swords.

The President's advance men had stipulated that there should be no speeches other than Mr. Johnson's (the Valedictorian's excepted). Democratic Governor Endicott Peabody expressed a desire to welcome the President to Massachusetts. His words were gracious but more numerous than LBJ liked. That crisis passed to be succeeded by another very minor problem. A very tall man, Mr. Johnson had a

881

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01610

special presidential reading lectern (reputedly bullet proof) for his public appearances. It was so high that others using it during the exercises had to stand on a removable platform. While LBJ was donning the academic hood after the reading of the degree citation the Dean noticed that the removable platform was still in place. He hurriedly pushed the platform aside just in time for the President to take his stance at the lectern for his address. It was a near thing.

The speech, serious in tone, was respectfully received, but Mr. Johnson seemed not really to lock into his audience. The Kennedy assassination lingered in everyone's mind; very elaborate security provisions over much of the campus had created a trace of uneasiness; people were almost desperately hoping that the President's visit would be free of any threat to his safety. A guest seated almost directly behind LBJ confessed later that he had been uncomfortably conscious of being in a possible line of fire. A College administrator in charge of Commencement arrangements had gone to the graduation area at 7:00 o'clock in the morning. He saw an empty car nearby, glanced in and on impulse pushed aside a coat lying on one of the seats. His shock at uncovering a gun can be imagined. An immediate check revealed that it belonged to a security guard. Departure of the presidential party from the campus brought a distinct sense of relief. In contrast, LBJ manifested a reserved calm and a remarkable ability to relax during those moments when he was not the center of

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01610

immediate attention--a very impressive man.

People with the President commented very favorably on the security arrangements of the Worcester Police Department along the route between the College and the Worcester Airport. The Worcester Fire Department had re-arranged its coverage of the city so that no engine responding to an alarm would have to cross the route of the President's cavalcade at any point.

While Mr. Johnson was removing his academic robes after the ceremonies, one of his aides held before him a list of the votes on the cloture motion in the Senate. LBJ commented on the way certain members had voted. Offstage for a moment, he still had his finger on the pulse of the country.

Ceremonies for President Theodore Roosevelt's visit to Holy Cross for Commencement in 1905 were marred by inclement weather. For President Johnson the weather was June perfect.

As often happens when a number of dignitaries assemble and publicity lies in the offing, a certain amount of jockeying for position developed as the academic procession was forming. Some unknown hero managed to strong-arm people into order and point the line toward the stage. Meanwhile the band ran through three renditions of "Hail to the Chief!" But, as someone remarked, "It's a good piece."

August 22, 1975
Maurice F. Ready S.J.
(Prof - History)
(Dean, 1962-1966)