

## RICHARD NIXON FOUNDATION

**PROJECT: ORAL HISTORY WITH GAVIN HERBERT, JR.**

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**INTERVIEWER: JIM BYRON, FRANK GANNON**

### **TRANSCRIPT:**

Gavin Herbert: I had met them during the political periods before they bought the house, but I didn't really know them. I've gotten to know them both right after they bought Casa Pacifica. And Bob Haldeman was a good friend of mine. And when they bought the property, I talked to Bob and I volunteered to help oversee the property because I knew it was a big project and they only had one full-time gardener. So, I think November of the year that they bought the house, '69 I believe, was the first time that I got a chance to meet them both down there.

I really didn't know that much about it, but when I learned about it and I knew how much care it would take since I had a Roger's Gardens and a landscape business and sort of horticultural hobby of mine. So I had some understanding. And my feeling was that, given all the tensions and problems that were going on in the country at that time, that it would be important for him to have a peaceful and nice experience at his home as a place to kind of keep sane, really, during all that stress. My motive was that it was a small way to help him in maintaining sanity, really.

Well, the house had been built in 1927 and the Cottons had been the only owner. And the woman that was living there was that elderly daughter. And she really, at that time, didn't have funds to take care of it. So it was kind of wildly overgrown. And so I first thought, however after the Nixons had purchased and had done quite a few changes, they'd put the pool in and they changed the entrance.

During the entire time that he was president, we got involved. Every time they came for a visit, we had a team from Roger's who would come down and make sure everything look good. And then I also created a volunteer gardening club of about 20 people. And we'd go down a couple times a month on a Saturday and pull weeds and drink beer and try and keep the place looking good.

There was certainly interesting, some of the key visits that occurred there. Certainly the most memorable was when Brezhnev arrived. They had been meeting at Camp David, and suddenly I got a call that they wanted to come out in two days and that Brezhnev wanted to see the property. So I rounded up my gardening club and we rounded up members of the Marine Corps band from Washington, and we must have had 30, 40 people in there scurrying around, getting the place ready. And he was scheduled to stay in the guesthouse, a little guesthouse. And suddenly the Secret Service and the KGB somehow discovered there was a skunk in the basement of the guesthouse. And there was a big, long discussion about how they were going get the skunk out without

him doing his thing and spraying. And they ultimately decided they couldn't. And so they moved him over to one of the bedrooms, I think Tricia's bedroom in the main house.

That was a fascinating meeting because they had arrived in the late afternoon, had an early dinner and went to bed. And then about 2:00 in the morning, there was a knocking on the President's door. And Brezhnev wanted to meet at 2:00 in the morning. And of course, he didn't know that was the time when Nixon typically was awake making notes and was very alert.

Frank Gannon: The yellow pads.

Gavin Herbert: The yellow pads and all. And so they went up in the office and were up there for several hours. And Brezhnev was really agitated, and the President did mention to me afterwards that he thought they came close to war, it was so bad. And then, suddenly he mellowed the next day and they ended up signing the SALT II agreement.

We just didn't. Outside we'd bring a lot of portable containers of pots and baskets and it was all the outside. At that time, we didn't have a florist at Roger's.

I didn't meet her, but there certainly were stories that Julie has told me about...Mrs. Eisenhower told me that her mother was coming out of her bedroom about 6:00 in the morning and walk by the bedroom door where Brezhnev had been staying and a 5-foot-10 blonde lady stepped out. And now, I don't know if she was a masseuse or taking stenography maybe. I think that was the excuse.

Frank Gannon: That was the cover, yes.

Gavin Herbert: However, it turned out, according to Jack Brennan, that was involved in finding her a place to stay. That previous night she stayed down in the gardener's shack and she was a seamstress and he needed to have his seamstress on the property. That was according to Jack Brennan.

Frank Gannon: She was very talented, multi-talented, she was capable of multi-tasking.

Gavin Herbert: I think she was actually an Aeroflot stewardess.

I had Anne Harvey working for me that used to work for Herb Kalmbach. And so Anne got a call about 24 hours before the resignation was announced, that he would be coming home. And so I put together a team, there had been no one in the house for a while that we got the house ready. We got some food in the house. And then when he arrived, I met him alone at the back door, and it was quite a shock. He was emotionally drained and the makeup was running off of his face. And so we spent just a brief period together, but after that, I spent some time with Mr. Cox to try and work on the

budget in cash flow and, you know, financially, he was not in good shape at that point. And there were real questions as to whether or not he was gonna be able to afford to keep the place.

That was a very memorable, an emotional time. But I think looking back, watching the recovery that occurred over the next several years was absolutely amazing. Because I think I saw him a couple of times at the depth of his kind of depression. And then, to watch him regain the stature and the energy and respect, it was absolutely amazing. I never ever seen anything like that.

I saw him every month or two from the time he came home, but then there was... I didn't see him for a couple of months before those incidents, but he did come close to death. In fact, I'm told he actually had blood pressure 60 over 0 for about 20 minutes. They had him all hooked up to machinery that kept him alive. And then a crazy incident happened while he was at the hospital. President Ford came to visit him and the door got locked and nobody could get in. He is in the hospital room alone. They literally had to break the door down to get to the scene.

I think a period perhaps a couple of months after he came home from that experience in the hospital, I was down checking on the gardens because they still decided to trying to help keep things in good shape. And one of the agents asked if I could come up and meet with him, which I did. I went up and he was up in the office sitting in his chair. And he looked at me and said, "Gavin, what am I gonna do with the rest of my life?" Well, needless to say, that was a shock to me. I mean, here's a person a year before was the most powerful person in the world now asking what he's gonna do with the rest of his life. Fortunately, there was a knock on the door right after that and a medical corpsman, who had been assigned to him to monitor his vitals. Dunn, I believe.

Frank Gannon: Bob Dunn, yes.

Gavin Herbert: Bob Dunn, yeah, who later worked for Allergan, actually. Bob spent five minutes checking his vitals. And at least I had a couple of minutes to think about what the heck to say. And so, I started out with some silly line. I said, "Well, Mr. President, you spent your whole career taking care of the American people and it's time for you to do some things that are fun for you." So I started down a list of different things to do. And the one that really was kind of funny was when I got to writing, he said, "I can't write." Well, of course what, 11 books later? He was a great writer. But it was amazing, again, to watch the recovery from that point on.

And he spent a lot of time alone down there, and then several of us, including George Argyros and myself, we kind of had developed a campaign to get him out and meeting people. And we set up a meeting with the board of directors of the Lincoln Club, I think was one of the first groups we had down. And I actually got a group of Allergan executives to come down. And he would do his around the world review, which was spectacular. He could spend an hour or two going through a dozen countries, one by one, and then at the end bring it all together.

Frank Gannon: And without notes.

Gavin Herbert: Without notes, with the big picture. And so I watched that. And I suppose I sat in on several of those different meetings. I know one time I got him to do that with the SmithKline board of directors in Philadelphia. And. just amazing.

It was kind of mysterious because on one hand he was a very shy person, and you wouldn't necessarily think that he would have that kind of strength. But he had an inner strength that was amazing. But he also had an amazing soft-quality in terms of caring about people and writing notes. I guess, I must have 20 or so notes that over a period of time he wrote about my father's death or some key event or some notes to Ninetta... He had a warm side that really very few people got to see. And that's too bad.

Organization structure was, one of the things that struck me, was how many people reported to him on a dotted line. And I think they said at one time they had 200 people reporting to him. I really think how Watergate happened was, well, as a CEO of a company, I had some experiences that I called my Allergan Watergate, where people would think that I wanted something, and might overhear me say, "Well, what about this or what about that?" And they would actually take action without my permission and they'd use my name, and said, "Gavin wants this." And I suspect they may have heard him say, "I wonder what's in this file," or something like that. And somebody decided to take action.

So the force, I guess, would be he really didn't ever have a background in business where he was involved in an organization, managing an organization. And of course, I think part of the problem is the structure of the office of the president itself. Actually, I tried to get him to write a book several times on the structure of the office of the president. I mean, you got this president, and then the vice president doesn't really do much, and cabinet guys is that they don't always pay much attention to, and 100 or 200 people with all this dotted line it's...I could see how a Watergate could happen in that environment. They certainly haven't improved it since then.

Well, it was amazing, he was always very shy. And the first five minutes of interfacing with him was a little tense, because he didn't really like small talk and he didn't have very many... Abplanalp and Rebozo where, I'm sure, his two closest friends.

But then when he loosened up... I remember one time, we were in New York and had dinner with him at a fancy restaurant and we were seated in the middle, and Ninetta sat next to him, and of course, she was very nervous. And he set to put her at ease by commenting on the jewelry that the women were wearing as they came in the doors. He said, "I can tell what country they're from." And he would comment on one dress, "Oh, Pat would never wear that." So he did have a side when he wanted to be very disarming and charming.

During the presidency, I spent most of my meetings with Mrs. Nixon because she loved

the garden. And when she was there, she was out all day, every day pulling weeds and that was kind of funny because we didn't agree on much. She liked things kind of raggedy and rough, and we didn't agree on the colors. And our biggest disagreement came over, I was trying to lobby for a sprinkler system that was controlled automatically and she wanted a new kitchen. Of course, she got the kitchen. But I really enjoyed her, she was a wonderful woman. And we spent a lot of hours wandering around the gardens. It's nice to see the Pat Nixon Garden at the library.

She was very warm and easy to be with. The only habit that she had that wasn't good was she smoked too much. I think two packs a day. And in fact, after we bought the house, I think it took about a year to get the cigarette smell out of the bedroom. That I think contributed to her demise, really.

Well, with that stress, I mean, during the period I was...we're talking about, it would be hard to describe that as happy. She tolerated, probably better than most.

I was invited to a number of the dinners that he did when he began to meet with, I know one, Pete Peterson, and we had some key people from Japan. But Mrs. Nixon wasn't present at those dinners and I really didn't see her too much after they moved back. He visited the house in San Clemente after we bought it on two or three occasions, but he was alone. And so I really didn't see Pat Nixon much after she left.

Well, the first house in Saddle River was kind of a California style on two or three acres. Yeah, it was lovely. It reminded me...

Frank Gannon: Did she garden there as well, did you?

Gavin Herbert: I didn't get involved in the gardening, I walked around with Mrs. Nixon the first time we went there, but then when they moved... Of course, the first place they went to was in New York on 65th Street and I visited on that occasion. Of course, there was no garden there. It was about a 40-foot wide brownstone.

During Pat's funeral, my goodness, he really broke down and cried and was very sad moment for a lot of people.

Well, we had any number of events during the time that he was President that we got involved and the astronauts were there and the POW and a half a dozen heads of state.

There had been an original plan to do the library at San Clemente. And they had plans to also incorporate the home as part of the project. And then that all fell apart, of course, with Watergate. And they didn't revisit the library project for a few years. And I think, Maurice Stans contacted me, perhaps the first one to help with a small group to decide where it might be. And there were a number of options developed. I think we had five or six options of proposals, USC, Dr. Hubbard had a proposal, UCI was interested.

I was hoping it would be in San Clemente because we had a site in San Clemente that we actually developed the plans for the current library floor. It was on a very prominent bluff of several hundred acres. And we literally had a groundbreaking meeting with the President Nixon there and...

Frank Gannon: Was it groundbreaking?

Gavin Herbert: Well, we were out there with a shovel and photographs and news releases, and the plans were that were developed were the plans that literally exist for the current library.

Frank Gannon: What happened?

Gavin Herbert: Well, the city really wanted it. And they had agreed that the developer, the Lusk family were the owners of the property, the Lusk family were proposing to give us 10 acres of land, they would be given credit for as green space as part of the amount of park space that they had to put. And they identified a specific spot. But they were still working on the details of the other several hundred acres, and they kept battling back and forth as to exactly what they could build on it. And it dragged on for a couple three years. And finally, it came to a point where he said, "I'd like to see something happen during my lifetime." And the current site became available. It originally was not available because it was a school there that they later closed. And the only property that the library had was the birthplace on one-acre plot, more or less, that we had fenced off.

Well, I've met and been involved with all of them over the years. And Julie, I suppose, more than any of the other ones. And I've enjoyed a really interesting relationship. I was on the original board when the library was created. And so I had a lot of dealings relative to the structure and...

Frank Gannon: Who was on that original board or who were some of the players?

Gavin Herbert: Maurice Stans and...it was mostly family.

Frank Gannon: Was Ambassador Firestone involved?

Gavin Herbert: No, I don't think so.

The family kind of saw it as part of a family structure, and they didn't originally view it, particularly Patricia and Ed, as a foundation or run with the rules that you need to run a fundraising organization. So there were some disagreements on structure. And ultimately the decision was made to modify it and run it like a public charity.

Most of the funding came from close friends and he had a lot of very close friends that still loved him and believed in him. And so, all the initial funding was from close friends.

One of the funny things that I remember is that during the entire post-presidency period, he refused to accept any fees for doing speeches or being on boards, and yet he was in a difficult financial situation. In fact, I remember one occasion where someone offered to give the library \$100,000 for a speech and he wouldn't do it, even though the money was going to create the library. And so I think very few people appreciate and understand that he never accepted any honorarium. The only thing he did do, there was a small group of, I think, eight or nine of us that he agreed that for a modest sum per year, that he would publish a series of monthly reviews of what was going on in the world and the economy from his perspective. And I think the total amount he received was in the neighborhood of yearly \$50,000 to \$100,000. I mean, it was really nothing.

Frank Gannon: Was that in East-West?

Gavin Herbert: East-West, yeah, that was East-West group. We still have some of those old issues, don't we?

I haven't had a chance to interface with them personally since that time. I remember one interesting visit, when Julie brought her kids to San Clemente and they were up in the upstairs office looking around and they said to Ninetta, I wasn't there, "Why did Grandpa sell this place anyway? We like it."

I should use it more. I have a couple of other offices, but it does have a special quality to it. And of course, that's where he had the really critical meeting with Brezhnev and I think that's where he... And writing his books, he spent a lot of time, and I imagine, you did too up there.

Frank Gannon: Yeah. The light would be on late into the night. It was a wonderful place for that because of the scale and the warmth of it.

Gavin Herbert: And you had bullet-proof windows.

Most of the money that was spent on San Clemente was for security. They had three levels of security systems around the perimeter. And there's a series of four or five pipes that are two inches that run all throughout the property with wires and concrete. And we run into digging into some of them. I think 95% of any money that was spent by the government at Casa Pacifica was related to security.

One of the controversial items that we actually had repaid the government for was the flagpole. I thought that that was rather ironic that it was a \$10,000 item for a flagpole given the number of important events that occurred under that flagpole that that should be a controversial item. And indeed, we did pay the government for that flagpole.

Well, originally the library was scheduled to be in San Clemente adjacent to the house. And the house was gonna become part of it. And they had developed some rather elaborate plans. But after Watergate, obviously, that all fell apart. And there wasn't any

discussion about a library for, I don't know, three or four years. And then finally, the decision was made by a group of close friends, including Maurice Stans and with the President's agreement, that we should move ahead with the library.

So, we began to talk to a variety of people around the country. And I was involved in the original committee to search out a site. And we were offered sites at USC and UCI, and Duke was interested.

They were seriously in the running, but there was unfortunately a professor that originally was at Irvine that raised a lot of flak about it. Ironically he'd moved to Duke. And it was the same professor that raised flak there.

So then we had another San Clemente site that was offered to us as part of a big real estate project down on the bluff by the Lusk family. They owned at that time, several hundred acres on the bluff. And they had arranged to make available to us 10 acres that would have been donated to the library. And it would have been considered park area. We thought that was a wonderful idea and moved ahead with plans, and actually had the working drawings developed. And unfortunately, the city still couldn't agree with the Lusks on all the details relative through to the balance of the property, and how much was gonna be park, and how many houses and how much retail. And that dragged on for a couple three years. And then the current property became available. There had been a grammar school, I believe, on that site. And the birthplace house was there on about an acre or so.

So, when that became available, President Nixon wanted to move ahead. And so we were able to actually adapt the plans from the San Clemente project to Yorba Linda.

Well, initially actually I was kind of disappointed in the collapse of the San Clemente project in moving, but in retrospect, I think it's better where it is because it has a reason to be because of that birthplace.

Frank Gannon: Other than the spectacular view. And connection, of course, is The Western White House or La Casa Pacifica?

Gavin Herbert: So I think the current location has turned out to be really ideal.

This was the 10th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique. And we went three or four of us with him and actually stayed in the same hotels, in the same rooms, literally, and met a lot of the same people. And that was fascinating. It was my first trip to China. And it was really eye opening compared to what's going on today. I mean, Shanghai, at that time, was the same as 1939 and not anything had changed. Now when you look at that... But it was interesting, on that trip he spent a lot of time writing notes on everything, all the people that he met with and he kind of made some forecasts about what was likely to occur in the future. And he wrote a long report for President Reagan. And I believe the library has a copy of that, I hope. Did you ever find it?

Jim Byron: Yes.

Gavin Herbert: Good. I can't find mine. Could you get me a copy?

Jim Byron: Yeah, we'll send it over to you.

Gavin Herbert: But that was, I think about a 20-page written report.

Jim Byron: Yes, significant.

Gavin Herbert: But it was another example of... And he was really at that time interfacing with several of the presidents. They were anxious to get his advice and input.

In Hangzhou we stayed in Zhou Enlai's summer home. And he said that summer home is where they really worked out the last details on the Shanghai Communique. Oh, it's called the Shanghai Communique but really it was the Hangzhou Communique.

I think we flew commercial and met in Tokyo first, and met at the reception at the embassy. And then we went to Beijing, commercially. But then when we flew from Beijing to Hangzhou, we went on a Chinese military plane. And I thought it was really ironic to think about him getting on a Chinese military plane built by Russians. And it was really an awful plane and it had, in the galley, a freestanding ice box like you'd have in your kitchen, that was wobbling around. And we had a press group with us of a dozen or 15 that were with us the whole time.

And one of my recollections of that trip is, I think it may have been a point where his relations with the press changed for the better, because as we know, he did not have good press relations. In the first two or three days of this trip, he was not having good relations with this small team. However, the night before our trip by train to Shanghai, this group of reporters who were invited to one of the parties, one of the banquets and they all proceeded to have a lot of white lightning. And so the next day these guys pile onto the train and they're all hungover, obviously. And they're sitting down at one end of this private car. They were sitting at one end of the car and one of them had a banjo and they were just obviously hungover so that President Nixon observing their hangover condition went into the galley, got a bucket of ice, filled it with bottles of beer, came out with the bucket of beer and a white towel over his arm like a waiter, and went down and brought the beers to these guys. And he spent the rest of the trip down there chatting with them. And then things changed with the relationship the rest of the trip.

And then I had a chance to observe, on a few occasions, how it seemed as though his relationship with the press had changed. As an example, I got him to speak to the SmithKline board of directors in Philadelphia and he came up from New York and we were trying to keep this secret. It was a big secret deal bringing him into the SmithKline building. And well, somehow the secret got out over the police radio. And when we got to the SmithKline appointed place for meeting, there was a swarm of press, I don't

know, 15 or 20 guys. "He's not going to like this, this is gonna be a disaster." Well, contrary to being a disaster, he spent 45 minutes talking to these guys down in the lobby and he's supposed to be up talking to the board of directors. And they're waiting.

But I just saw a real change in his attitude towards the press. And he started...some of the dinners that he would do in New York included press people on them.

I think it was a small first class section, and we probably had taken up most of the first class section. And he was busy the whole time writing and...

That's really very interesting because I had cocktails on numerous occasions with him and I never ever saw him anywhere as close to that. He would have a drink, maybe sometimes two but that is I think rubbish.

Well, we were at the Great Hall and they had a wonderful dinner for him. One intriguing event was, we were in Shanghai and he decided he wanted to go down at the last minute to the Bund with an unplanned deal. So we went. And we had Secret Service with us at that time. And they were horrified. But we went down in a van and got out and all of a sudden, in a matter of minutes, there were thousands of people coming together and wanted to get close to him. And they were just curious, they weren't... But they have a tendency when they get...crowds kind of push each other. And so, we ended up getting him evacuated out of there in short order. But he'd love to go down and talk to the people. And he did that on a couple three occasions.

Well, East-West was simply a group of seven or eight friends in which she agreed to publish a monthly kind of newsletter of his opinions of what was going on in the state of the world and various political events. And then he would write several pages each month and that went on for, I think for four or five years. And it was his only source of income, really. And it was \$50,000 or \$100,000 a year total. It was unbelievable. The fact that he refused to accept any honorarium, when you think of some of our subsequent presidents that were getting a million bucks a pop for...including Reagan.

No, it was adjacent to a school grant. We actually own an acre or so. And one of the things we did right around the times of riots and resignation is put a fence around it to keep vandals. We were worried that someone was gonna light a torch to it and so we kind of protected it, just sat there in kind of dilapidated fashion. We were certain would have to be a really important reason for the library to be there.

Oh, the school district agreed to, I believe we bought it from the school district. I don't think they gave it to us. And then, we've added one or two parcels adjacent to it over the years.

Frank Gannon: So it wasn't houses, the things that had to be moved, it was public.

Gavin Herbert: Yeah, the school was public. And I think we had one old house maybe

we bought and tore down.

Well, he specifically, when we were talking about the plans for the library, he specifically wanted to make sure we emphasize the War on Cancer as a key area of interest. And of course, he had several other critical things that happened during his administration. The Environmental Protection Agency certainly being one. But I don't necessarily think we thought of it as an information center on the War on Cancer at the library, it was just that that was such an important sea change for the government to address a medical condition like that.

Well, I used to ask his opinion on a lot of key subjects. In fact, when we decided to merge with SmithKline, I had a long talk with him in asking his advice. And my father had passed away by then. And in a way, he was kind of a father figure to me.

I did not follow as a pharmacy... I flunked out of pharmacy school.

Frank Gannon: Well, we can edit that out. Stay on the flunked...

Gavin Herbert: I got drafted because my grades were bad. But I ended up as a Navy corpsman though.

Frank Gannon: Like Bob?

Gavin Herbert: Yeah.

Probably one of the best decisions I made was when I decided to take this little fledgling Allergan company that was doing a \$100,000 a year and focus on it. Because I realized I didn't know a thing about the pharmaceutical industry and that I'd better find some smart people that knew the different segments. So I went out and found on a consultant basis, half a dozen different people. And I always had a goal to hire people smarter than me. And that was easy.

Frank Gannon: Did you do so?

Gavin Herbert: Yeah, I think I seem to either have a good nose or lucky in recruiting good people like Jim Cavanaugh. Over the years, I think something like 40 Allergan people have become CEOs or presidents of companies.

That's right. He actually...

Frank Gannon: [crosstalk 00:46:33] welfare.

Gavin Herbert: Right. He was involved in drafting the original Medicare bill. And as I understand it, when the President realized Haldeman and Ehrlichman were Christian scientists, they needed to find somebody and Jim was the one to act as a health care guru.

And so when I got a call from Jack Brennan, who when Jim had finished in the Ford administration, and suggested that I needed to interview Jim Cavanaugh as a candidate of Allergan. And I didn't really have a job opening but I interviewed him and we made a job. We brought him in, and he started a strategic planning effort for us, so.

That's absolutely amazing, that John is a bishop now and he...

Frank Gannon: Bishop in Los Angeles.

Gavin Herbert: Well, importantly, I'm an Episcopalian and we had a big battle with an Episcopal church here in Newport. As you know, there's a split in the Episcopal Church and conservative, liberals. And this church split off us on the conservative side and the church took the building away from it and tried to sell it. And it was closed for two years until recently. Anyway, they just reopened it. And one of the people that showed up there was Bishop Taylor. And frankly, I always had a good relationship with John. And I was very disappointed to see the way that that ended up. I, frankly, totally don't understand it. I reached out to him a couple of times but he didn't want to talk about it, so.

On Watergate, the only time I ever talked to him about Watergate was he was telling me that he was focusing his entire attention at a key point on mining the harbors in Vietnam. And he was worried that he was gonna start World War III. And he said, "And somebody handed me this piece of paper with about six words on it and I made the wrong decision." He imagined the focus was all on that and he had no idea in the world about how that started. His guilt was protecting his staff. And I think the note had to do with coming up with money for...on the staff side. I'm pretty sure that was what he was referring to.

I never met John Dean. Of course, Higby is my next door neighbor.

Frank Gannon: But did you know him then?

Gavin Herbert: Well, I interfaced with him actually because he worked for Haldeman. And sometimes, I had to go through to get clearance to do stuff. And I had interfaced with Higby, which is really funny. He was 21 years old.

I interfaced with Bob Haldeman a few times. I think I loaned him a little motorboat for a summer and Bob would just always say, "Well, when the truth comes out, there's not going to be," or he just certainly convinced me that the President didn't know anything about it and then it was all going to work out all right. And I said, "Well..." Obviously, it didn't but I took solace in Bob's reassurance. And I had known him from college days when he was at UCLA and abated there and his brother Tom was my roommate in college. So, that's how we were all...so that's how I knew Bob.

Well, I guess we both believed in the free enterprise system and I just felt that he was

the most intelligent person that we had in the presidency in many years. Was really impressed with his staff. I knew someone knew Bob Finch pretty well. Bob had, when he was in California as Lieutenant Governor, participated in some Allergan events. And I think the people that he had surrounded him, I mean, the government, it's like a company, it's only as good as the people you've got. And I remember being extremely impressed with the team and the social values certainly were the same.

I think we've all hoped and believed that over time that the Nixon legacy would be more balanced. It's taking a lot longer than I thought. And unfortunately, most people don't have a real clue about the facts of the case. I'm not as optimistic as I used to be that we can remold his image.

Well, I think we need to look at all the different things that he accomplished on the positive side. And also, put it into perspective this negative image relative to the taping. I mean, first of all, almost every president did tape. Franklin Roosevelt had his system, which I've seen in the Roosevelt Library, a wire recording system. And I do believe he was principally doing that because of his concern about accurately reporting history as he was really amazing about wanting to accurately record events.

I remember one day he sat down with me and with his yellow pad, and described what his typical routine was for recording events of the day before. And he would say that, and he used as an example, his first meeting with Lyndon Johnson after Nixon became president. And so, after that meeting...he didn't take any notes during the meeting, but right after the meeting he jotted down some key points and then that night, at 2:00 in the morning he expanded those key points to about 4 pages of handwritten notes that included what he wore and that he was... I know you guys obviously have copies of tons of this stuff, where he would try to accurately record for historical reasons what happened.

I didn't really, I mean, I was there, but I didn't. As I recall, after the formal deal, they had a special small group. I wasn't involved in that.

Frank Gannon: And what about the actual groundbreaking?

Gavin Herbert: Yeah, I'm not sure I was there for the groundbreaking. I recall the groundbreaking at San Clemente, but I don't recall if I was at the current library.

We had great support from who was our leader at that time. He'd really ran the project and passed away.

Frank Gannon: Don Bendetti.

Gavin Herbert: Don Bendetti, yeah, Don spent 100% of his life for quite a period of time, a couple of years, I guess, on that project, that was really impressive.

Frank Gannon: Yeah, well, we owe a great deal to him because of the integrity of the

design and of the construction, which has lasted, which has served.

Gavin Herbert: Yes. Well, Ernie Wilson designed it. Ernie was a good friend of mine from sailing days in the Newport Yacht Club.

I remember sitting in front of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We all got there early. And we were sitting right in the row in front of them and they spent that hour telling stories about the current President Clinton, who they obviously didn't like. That was certainly one surprising memory.

Frank Gannon: And that current president was there and gave a very memorable and balanced eulogy.

Gavin Herbert: Oh, he did. Well, as I recall, there's some recorded thing where he talks about Nixon as a father figure.

Oh, I was involved in several of his campaigns and one funny event was, we were doing a fundraiser at Casa Pacifica with the Nixons on the property. But Argyros and I were the fundraisers. So we did an event. And Reagan was the guest of honor. So I sat next to him at dinner. And we had a couple of things in common. Number one, we both had sons the same nickname, Skip, that were in the same school together currently, in the same private school together. And I had been involved with him a lot. So anyway, we had a fun evening. But he was in his last year or so being governor. And the subject that he talked about the most was retiring from politics, riding his horse off yonder in the hills, never to be involved in politics again. So, when the rumors started that he was going to run for president, I assured everybody that was totally wrong because he told me he was going to ride his horse. That was funny. I got great photos of us sitting together, we did it a Tahitian luau at the Casa Pacifica. I brought a couple Tahitian people over. And I've got some good photographs of us with Reagan at that point.

Well, he was there on two occasions. And his son, Jimmy Roosevelt, who ended up a good friend of the Nixons worked for his dad for about 3 years during the '37, '38, '39 period. And he was kind of physical chief of staff. Part of his job was to literally carry his dad around, because as we know, he was crippled but nobody else...very few people knew it. And they staged him and propped him up with his lecturing. But anyway, yeah, Jimmy told the stories about his dad playing hot poker games down in gazebo. And that if one was to remain in the cabinet, one didn't beat the father at poker. Nixon referred a few times in different speeches to Roosevelt's poker playing.

There have been six. So, surprisingly, Lyndon Johnson was there, surprisingly. Were you there when he was there?

Frank Gannon: No, but I've seen the whole family, Lady Bird Johnson and the daughters, I think, were there.

Gavin Herbert: Yeah, the only reason I found that, I think it's a photo you sent me from

the library. I didn't have no idea it was there.

Well, Reagan was there a few times. And let's see...

Frank Gannon: Fords were there on the...

Gavin Herbert: Ford was there. Yeah, I got a photo of Ford in the living room as Vice President. And then...

Frank Gannon: Any Bushes?

Gavin Herbert: Senior was there, after he was president but he was there.

Frank Gannon: It's pretty impressive pedigree. Well, and the Clinton, all the...and Carter, for that matter, were at the...

Gavin Herbert: The library, but yeah, they weren't at the...

I mean, I just hope that they come to understand what an intelligent, dedicated person he was and that he did a lot of great things, and the Watergate thing is just totally blown out of proportion to put it into perspective. And we count on people like you to help us all remember the...

Frank Gannon: Then he's in real trouble.

Gavin Herbert: Well, he must have had a photographic memory. Yeah. He did describe to me one time when he would write out of a speech in longhand and then tear up the paper and deliver it without a note.

Frank Gannon: Knowledge of ....

Gavin Herbert: Oh, yeah. I mean, he knew scores and numbers and names, it was... Yeah, I think George, probably, Argyros probably had more conversations with him, in particular on baseball.

Frank Gannon: Can you talk about that Orange County matrix of you, George Argyros? Talk about George, Ambassador Argyros.

Gavin Herbert: Well, George has been a close friend for almost 50 years. He started as a box-boy in a grocery store and built up a really great business empire. And he's been incredibly generous in funding all kinds of different organizations, particularly Chapman. But sadly, in his current situation, George has Alzheimer's and he's at the late stages of it now after a wonderful career. And we all love him and feel very sad about the current situation, but there needs to be a war on Alzheimer's.

We had a handful of dinners. I remember one dinner with Cole, Don Cole and George

and the Nixons in my house. George used to have fun with him on a motorhome, and went to the famous media that was north of...

Frank Gannon: You mean Bohemian Grove?

Gavin Herbert: Bohemian Grove where they took him to go to Bohemian Grove and he insisted on wearing a tie.

Frank Gannon: Were you there for that?

Gavin Herbert: No, I wasn't.

Well, he did motorhome tours with him. Rebozo and Abplanalp and Nixon on a couple of occasions escaped the Secret Service and went off on long car tours around Southern California.

I didn't know Bebe well. I was with him at the very end. He was on the telephone with Ambassador Annenberg in London and Annenberg was deciding whether or not to resign. And I don't know how I got into that conversation but I was.

Well, I knew the Annenbergs reasonably well through USC connections, because they were great donors to USC and I've been on that board for about 40 years. He was in a tough spot. When the final days, I think he stuck it out, I think he was thinking about resigning and he didn't.

This is a painting of Casa Pacifica [**Cut to Painting**] by an artist named John Cosby, who we've worked with here Roger's Gardens and does wonderful art. Anyway, a couple of years ago, we had John down at Casa Pacifica doing some paintings. And I had no idea that he had background there. So when he was painting this, I came by and he said, "Well, this brings back great memories." And I said, "Well, what are those memories?" He said, "I spent a year here. Right after the President retired, I was in the service and with the communications corps," and he said, "One of my duties was to show movies to him at night." And he said, "His favorite movie was 'Patton.'" And there was a point in the movie in 'Patton,' and he saw it about 15 times, that he would stand up and cheer every time at this particular point in Patton. But John also said that one of his side jobs in the past had been to carry the nuclear box for the president.

Frank Gannon: Football?

Gavin Herbert: Football, yeah. So I thought that was pretty ironic that I had no idea he had any background.

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