

MRS. RICHARD NIXON

Patricia Nixon, the wife of the 37th President of the United States, was born on March 16, 1912, in Ely, Nevada. Her mother, Kate Halberstadt Ryan, named her daughter Thelma Catherine Patricia. Her father, William Ryan, coming home past midnight from his work in the mines, learned of her birth and called her his "St. Patrick's babe in the morn." She was to be "Pat" to him always.

Mrs. Ryan, born in Essen County, near Frankfurt, Germany, had come to the United States as a child of ten to visit an uncle who had no family. She fell in love with America and never returned to Germany. Kate Halberstadt Bender was a widow with two children when she married William Ryan in 1909. Mrs. Nixon was the youngest of the three children born to them. Her brothers, William and Thomas Ryan, remain residents of California.

Before Mrs. Nixon was a year old, Kate Ryan, whose first husband had been killed in a mining accident, persuaded William Ryan to give up mining. The family then moved from Nevada to California, settling on a small farm in Artesia, 20 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Today, the site of this home in Cerritos is the Pat Nixon Park, which includes four acres of land and the house in which Mrs. Nixon lived from 1914 to 1930. The house is currently being converted into a museum and center where local youth groups will be able to meet.

The future First Lady of the United States had a childhood with no luxuries except that of a warm and loving family. But this was shattered when her mother died in 1925. At the age of 13, Mrs. Nixon took over the household duties for her father and her brothers. Two years later, when she was attending Excelsior High School, her father became seriously ill and she cared for him, as she had her mother, until his death in 1930. She was then 18, a high school graduate and completely on her own.

Her first ambition was a college education. She enrolled in the Fullerton (California) Junior College and earned her expenses by working part time in a local bank. She was able to fulfill her second ambition -- to travel -- in 1931, when elderly friends of her family asked her to drive them to the East Coast. She drove them to New York where she stayed for two years working in a hospital, first as a secretary, and later, after a Columbia University summer course in radiology, as an X-ray technician.

In 1934, she returned to California to enroll at the University of Southern California. During her college years, she worked as many as 40 hours a week, both on and off campus, while majoring in merchandising. In 1937,

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she was graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in merchandising and a certificate to teach at the high school level.

Her first job following graduation was teaching business education courses at Whittier Union High School for an annual salary of \$1,800. Whittier Union High School was located on the main street of the quiet Quaker community at the foot of La Puente Hills. There were 2,000 students. In addition to full time class-work, Miss Ryan was actively involved in extra curricular activities: faculty advisor for the "Pep Committee," helping with student rallies, attending all high school sports events and every PTA meeting, and serving as director for school plays. Her ability as a teacher and her compassion for her students were noted in Whittier at that time and many years later when a former student of hers sketched a verbal portrait of Pat Ryan as a teacher in the Summer 1971 issue of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST:

"Those of us who are lucky can remember someone in our school days who was more than just a teacher. She was a quiet inspiration, perhaps, to our secret hopes. Or perhaps she brought out abilities we had never dreamed were in us. Or maybe, as in the case of my high school typing teacher, there was something about her which made us want to be as much like her as possible."

"I was a ninth grader, about fourteen, but I have never forgotten her. There was something very special about that teacher of mine. The school was in Whittier, California. Her name then was Pat Ryan; today it is Mrs. Richard Nixon."

Her interest in drama began during her working days at USC when she earned \$25 for a walk-on part as an extra in the movie "Becky Sharp." In addition to direction of the high school plays, she joined the Whittier Little Theater group. It was then that she met Richard Nixon, a young lawyer recently graduated from Duke University Law School in Durham, North Carolina. They were given the leading roles in a mystery drama, "The Dark Tower," by George Kaufman and Alexander Wolcott.

They met in 1937, and were married on June 21, 1940, in a Quaker ceremony at the historic Mission Inn in Riverside, California. The couple left for a honeymoon in Mexico, driving to Laredo and then down the Pan American Highway to Mexico City. They returned to Whittier and settled in an apartment over a garage while Mrs. Nixon continued teaching and Dick Nixon was in private law practice.

One year later, they moved to Washington, D. C., where Mr. Nixon was an attorney in the Office of Emergency Management until he volunteered for naval service. He spent two months at Quonset, Rhode Island, and in

March, 1942, he was commissioned into the Navy as a lieutenant (junior grade) and received his first active duty assignment to Ottumwa, Iowa, as an aide to the officer in charge of setting up a Naval Air Base. Mrs. Nixon worked in a bank in Ottumwa and when her husband was assigned to duty in the South Pacific, she moved to San Francisco, California, where she worked as an economist for the Office of Price Administration. After 14 months in the South Pacific, Lt. Nixon returned and they moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where he handled contract terminations for the Navy.

It was in 1946 that Mr. Nixon entered political life as the Republican candidate for California's 12th Congressional District. Nine days after Mr. Nixon announced his candidacy, their first daughter, Patricia, called Tricia, was born in Whittier, on February 21, 1946. Richard Nixon was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives and was re-elected to the seat in 1948, the year in which their second daughter, Julie, was born, on July 5, in Washington, D. C.

Tricia became the 16th White House bride when she and Edward Finch Cox of New York were married on June 12, 1971. Tricia was the first of the eight Presidential daughters to be married in a Rose Garden ceremony. Mr. Cox is a recent Harvard Law School graduate.

Julie Nixon joined together two Presidential families when she and Dwight David Eisenhower II were married on December 22, 1968, in New York's Marble Collegiate Church while her father was President-elect. At present, David is serving his country as a Lieutenant (junior grade), assigned to the USS ALBANY.

In 1950, Mr. Nixon won the election as United States Senator from California. Two years later he was elected Vice President of the United States under Dwight D. Eisenhower. Both were re-elected in 1956. During all of his campaigns, Mrs. Nixon was at her husband's side while maintaining their home in Washington, D. C., and guiding their daughters with the help of her mother-in-law who made her home with them.

As the wife of the Vice President, she accompanied him to 53 countries around the world, visiting hospitals and schools by day and dining with heads of state by night. So effective a good will ambassador was she, that President Eisenhower always sent the Nixons as a team.

She was staunchly behind her husband during his political campaigns for the Presidency in 1960, and for the Governorship of California in 1962. Leaving political life after the 1962 elections, the former Vice President and his wife made their home in New York City, in an apartment overlooking Central Park.

Here, Mr. Nixon maintained a highly successful law practice and Mrs. Nixon enjoyed the city's cultural life. When her husband decided to re-enter politics in 1968, Patricia Nixon once again began the campaign life, fulfilling her role graciously and effectively.

In 1971, President Nixon was asked by a Washington reporter about his wife's part in campaigns. He replied: "I remember through all of our campaigns, whether it was a receiving line or whether it was going to a fence at the airport, she was the one that always insisted on shaking that last hand, not simply because she was thinking of that vote, but because she simply could not turn down that last child or that last person."

In her four years as First Lady, Mrs. Nixon has extended her hospitality to the millions who visit the White House annually through her careful and detailed attention to the authentic refurbishing of the State Rooms. She graciously serves as official First Lady of the United States when she extends her hands and hospitality to visiting dignitaries. And she offers her hands in warmth and empathy to the countless millions who write to her for strength, encouragement and advice. She has traveled across the United States, visiting volunteer groups and projects in an effort to promote the effectiveness of volunteer service within communities.

In June, 1970, Mrs. Nixon flew supplies gathered by volunteers to earthquake ruptured Peru. For this, the Peruvian Government gave Mrs. Nixon the highest decoration their country can bestow -- The Grand Cross of the Order of the Sun. This award is the oldest decoration in the Americas and Mrs. Nixon became the first North American woman to receive this award.

Mrs. Nixon is the most traveled First Lady in United States history. She has accompanied her husband to Europe and Southeast Asia. In 1972, President and Mrs. Nixon became the first President and First Lady to make official visits to The Peoples Republic of China and to the Soviet Union. Mrs. Nixon was also the first wife of a President of the United States to officially represent her husband in Africa -- a journey which won her the honorary title of "Madame Ambassador."

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