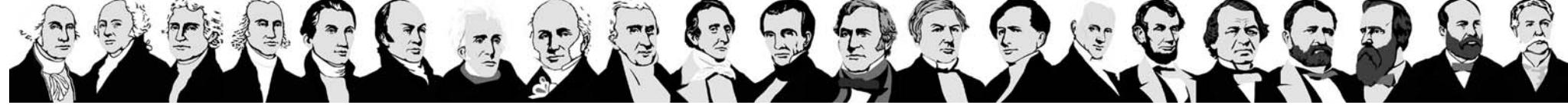


PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

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Richard Nixon

Born: January 9, 1913, Yorba Linda, California.

Occupation: Lawyer, public official.

Wife: Thelma "Pat" Ryan. Children: Two girls.

President: 1969-1974. Republican party.

Vice-Presidents: Spiro T. Agnew, Gerald R. Ford.

Died: April 22, 1994. Buried: Yorba Linda, California.



Richard Milhous Nixon was born on January 9, 1913, in Yorba Linda, California. He was the second of five sons of Francis and Hannah Milhous Nixon. His parents were serious, hardworking Quakers, who ran a small lemon farm. When Richard was 9, the farm failed and the family moved to Whittier, California, where his father operated a combination general store and gas station. A good student, he graduated second in his class in 1934 and received a scholarship to Duke University Law School. Nixon graduated from Duke with his law degree in 1937. But, unable to find the kind of work he wanted, he returned home and joined a Whittier law firm. At a community theater tryout in Whittier, Nixon met Thelma Catherine Ryan, known as Patricia, or Pat, who taught shorthand and typing at a local high school. They were married in 1940 and had two daughters, Patricia (Tricia) and Julie.

With the entry of the United States into World War II in 1941, Nixon went to work for the Office of Price Administration in Washington, D.C. In 1942 he joined the Navy and was commissioned a lieutenant (junior grade). After his discharge from the Navy in early 1946, Nixon ran as a Republican for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives from California. Although given little chance to win, he defeated a veteran Democratic congressman, Jerry Voorhis, by waging the kind of aggressive campaign that became a Nixon characteristic.

In 1950, Nixon ran for the U.S. Senate. In what was called one of the roughest, most bitter campaigns in political history, he accused his Democratic opponent, Helen Gahagan Douglas, of ignoring the threat of Communist subversion and defeated her by a wide margin. By 1952, Nixon had become a nationally known figure. He had attracted the attention not only of the voters but also of Dwight D. Eisenhower. When the Republicans for the presidency nominated Eisenhower that year, he asked that Nixon be made his vice-presidential running mate. In July 1952 Eisenhower won the presidential nomination. Thus, at the age of 39, with four years of service in the House and not quite two in the Senate, Richard Nixon was the running mate of one of the most popular figures in U.S. history.

With Eisenhower's second term coming to an end, Nixon was the overwhelming choice of his party for the presidency. His Democratic opponent was Senator John F. Kennedy. Campaigning at top speed for nine weeks, Nixon drove himself, his staff, and his wife, Pat, to the edge of exhaustion. The campaign was unique for the four television debates between Kennedy and Nixon, which played a crucial part in what proved to be one of the closest elections in U.S. history. Kennedy won 303 electoral votes to Nixon's 219, but Kennedy's margin of victory in the popular vote was only two-tenths of 1 percent.

Following his defeat, Nixon returned to California and practiced law in Los Angeles. Announcing his candidacy for the 1968 presidential nomination, Nixon proceeded to win most of the state primary elections he entered. He thus accumulated so much strength among the delegates at the Republican Convention that his nomination was a foregone conclusion. His Democratic opponents in the 1968 election were Lyndon Johnson's vice president, Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, who was running for president, and Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, for vice president. Nixon won 301 electoral votes to Humphrey's 191. Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama, running on the American Independent Party, won 46 electoral votes. The popular vote, again, was exceedingly close. The theme of his inaugural address was unity.

Arguing the need to protect the lives of American troops, Nixon in April 1970 approved a joint U.S.-Vietnamese attack on Communist sanctuaries in eastern Cambodia.

In February 1971, South Vietnamese troops invaded Laos in an effort to cut North Vietnamese supply trails. The United States gave air, artillery, and logistical support. In the spring of 1972, a North Vietnamese offensive threatened the Saigon government again. It also seemed to endanger the results of Nixon's historic trip to China, just completed. The North's drive also jeopardized Nixon's scheduled trip to the Soviet Union. To choke off lines of supplies for the Communist forces in the South, Nixon ordered the

Navy to mine the Haiphong harbor, and he increased the bombing of Hanoi. China tolerated the blockade of the harbor through which its aid to North Vietnam was unloaded, and Russia received Nixon on schedule.

The combination of military pressure and the likelihood of Nixon's reelection apparently persuaded North Vietnam to bargain more earnestly for a cessation of hostilities. A series of unannounced negotiating sessions between North Vietnamese diplomats and Nixon's special assistant for national security affairs, Henry Kissinger, uncovered a mutual willingness to make concessions. Further talks produced detailed terms for a cease-fire, and Kissinger announced on Oct. 26, 1972, that peace was "at hand." Nixon also achieved the release of nearly 600 U.S. prisoners of war. Their homecoming after up to 8½ years in captivity provided an emotional experience for the entire country. Nixon called the settlement of the war "peace with honor." But various Vietnamese groups continued to fight each other, with the South still getting U.S. financial aid.

Even as the Vietnam War continued, Nixon sought better relations with the People's Republic of China. He relaxed the trade embargo against that country, a move coinciding with the visit there, at China's invitation, of a U.S. table tennis team. In July 1971 Nixon announced that he would visit China. He made the trip in February 1972, was received by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, and conducted lengthy negotiations with Premier Chou En-lai. The talks opened new possibilities for trade and created semiformal channels of communication, short of diplomatic recognition and exchange of ambassadors, between the two countries. The new era in Chinese-American relations reduced tensions and acknowledged a profound alteration in world politics.



1972 visit in China

In 1969 the United States and the Soviet Union opened talks on the limitation of strategic arms. These talks were completed while Nixon visited Moscow in May 1972, and the negotiators carried terms of the interim pact from Helsinki, site of the talks, to Moscow to be signed by the heads of both governments. In 1973 Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev visited the United States. He and Nixon signed a nuclear non-aggression pact and several agreements in science, transportation, and culture. Although Nixon revisited Russia in 1974, he and Brezhnev failed to achieve a final agreement on limiting the proliferation of offensive nuclear weapons.

In confronting internal problems, Nixon sought to respond to grievances from disparate segments of the population and to fashion a coalition of voters that would constitute a Republican majority in future elections.



Thelma "Pat" Ryan

As the United States shifted toward a peacetime economy, it was beset by inflation and unemployment. In 1971 Nixon temporarily froze wages and prices, cut federal spending, and announced that the United States would no longer convert foreign-held dollars into gold. The subsequent decline in the value of the dollar in relation to other major currencies made American goods less expensive abroad. The battle against inflation was complicated by shortages of some products, including gasoline, and foods. Nixon blamed inflation on Congress, and he vetoed bills that exceeded his budgetary recommendations.

Policies adopted by Arab countries in 1973 and 1974 jeopardized the U.S.

economy. To dramatize their strategic position in world affairs, the Mideast oil-producing countries imposed a brief embargo on petroleum products and then sharply increased their prices. Inflationary pressures and the unemployment rate increased in the United States. Nixon advocated greater exploitation of U.S. energy reserves. He hoped the United States could end its use of foreign oil.

Despite his slender margin in 1968 and no improvement in Republican fortunes in the 1970 congressional elections, Nixon ran for reelection as an overwhelming favorite. Although he campaigned very little, the president swept to victory, polling 47 million votes to 29 million for McGovern.

Gradually, White House efforts aimed at opponents of the war blended into the campaign for Nixon's reelection. The "plumbers" were involved in the wiretapping of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. Agents employed by officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President (CRP) were arrested at the Watergate on June 17, 1972. This event, occurring four months before the election, prompted Nixon and his leading aides to cover up White House and CRP involvement in Watergate. On June 23, Nixon approved a plan to thwart an inquiry by the FBI. The cover-up included promises of clemency and the payment of hush money to the men arrested at the Watergate. But the cover-up collapsed. Persons found guilty of illegal acts - some unrelated to Watergate - included Nixon's chief of staff, his chief domestic adviser, two attorneys general, three White House counsels, his personal attorney, his campaign finance chairman, his deputy campaign manager, and his appointments secretary.

In 1974 a grand jury named Nixon an unindicted co-conspirator in the cover-up. The House Judiciary Committee recommended that he be impeached for covering up Watergate, abusing his powers, and refusing to honor committee subpoenas. His attorney, James St. Clair, insisted that he make public the taped conversation of June 23, 1972, which implicated Nixon in the cover-up. Realizing that he would be impeached and removed from office, Nixon announced his resignation on Aug. 8, 1974. Gerald Ford was sworn in as his successor.

Returning to California, Nixon went into seclusion at San Clemente and spent much of his time writing his memoirs. He died in New York City on April 22, 1994.

A prolific writer, Nixon authored *The Real War* (1980), *Leaders* (1982), *Real Peace* (1983), *No More Vietnams* (1985), *Nineteen Ninety-Nine* (1989), and *Beyond Peace* (1994).



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