

Vice Presidents of the United States Nelson A. Rockefeller (1974-1977)

Citation: Mark O. Hatfield, with the Senate Historical Office. *Vice Presidents of the United States, 1789-1993* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), pp. 505-512.

Introduction by Mark O. Hatfield.



U.S. Senate Collection

I've known all the Vice Presidents since Henry Wallace. They were all frustrated, and some were pretty bitter.
—Nelson Rockefeller

Television cameras that had been installed in the Senate chamber to cover the expected impeachment trial of President Richard M. Nixon were used instead to broadcast the swearing-in of Nelson A. Rockefeller as vice president on December 19, 1974. A year earlier, Gerald Ford had chosen to take his oath as vice president in the House chamber, where he had served as Republican floor leader. Rockefeller might have opted for a White House ceremony but decided to take the oath in the chamber where he would preside as president of the Senate. With President Gerald Ford attending and Chief Justice Warren Burger administering the oath, Rockefeller became the nation's second appointed vice president. After the brief ceremony, the cameras were switched off. Not until 1986 would Senate proceedings be televised on a regular basis.¹

A Family of Wealth and Power

Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller came to the vice-presidency boasting a remarkable pedigree. His maternal grandfather, Rhode Island Senator Nelson Aldrich, had been the Senate's most powerful member at the turn of the century. Aldrich chaired the Senate Finance Committee and played the key role in passage of tariffs that influenced every industry and agricultural product. In 1901, Aldrich's daughter Abby married John D. Rockefeller, Jr., son of the nation's wealthiest man, the founder of Standard Oil. Although they combined political power and corporate wealth, the reputations of Nelson Aldrich and John D. Rockefeller, Sr. were less than stellar. In a series of articles for *Cosmopolitan* magazine during 1906, muckraking journalist David Graham Phillips

portrayed Aldrich as a corrupt boss who contributed to the "Treason of the Senate." Similarly, writer Ida Tarbell exposed the senior Rockefeller as a ruthless robber baron, and President Theodore Roosevelt included him among the "malefactors of great wealth." At the time of Nelson Rockefeller's birth, on July 8, 1908, both of his grandfathers were afflicted by negative publicity. Senator Aldrich withdrew from politics in 1911, while John D. Rockefeller, Sr., hired one of the first public relations specialists to reshape his public image into that of a kindly old gentleman handing shiny dimes to children.²

Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller inherited both a vast family fortune and a family image that he had to live down in order to achieve his political ambitions—because even as a little boy he wanted to be president of the United States. "After all," he reasoned, "when you think of what I had, what else was there to aspire to?" The third of five brothers, Nelson was the energetic, outgoing leader within his own family. He and his brothers grew up in the family home on West 54th Street in New York, which was so filled with art that his parents bought the town house next door just to house their collection. Eventually the Rockefellers gave the property to the Museum of Modern Art. Nelson attended the progressive Lincoln School of Teachers College at Columbia University, but dyslexia hindered his schooling and prevented him from attending Princeton. With the help of tutors he graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Dartmouth in 1930. Shortly thereafter, he married Mary Todhunter Clark, known as Tod, whose calm reserve seemed to balance his boundless enthusiasms. After a round-the-world honeymoon, they settled in New York and Nelson went to work for the family business.³

Nelson Rockefeller proved so successful in renting out space in the newly constructed Rockefeller Center that his father made him president of the Center. He earned negative publicity after he ordered the removal from Rockefeller Center of murals painted by the noted Mexican artist Diego Rivera, which contained a heroic Lenin and a villainous-looking J.P. Morgan. Otherwise, Rockefeller won high praise for his executive abilities. He became a director of the Creole Petroleum Company, a Rockefeller subsidiary in Venezuela. He learned Spanish and began a lifelong interest in Latin-American affairs. Art was another of his passions, and during the depression he served as treasurer of the Museum of Modern Art. In 1939 he became the museum's president, encountering such intense infighting that he boasted, "I learned my politics at the Museum of Modern Art."⁴

In 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed the thirty-two-year-old Rockefeller to the new post of coordinator of the Office of Inter-American Affairs. It was a shrewd move on Roosevelt's part, designed to mute the Rockefeller family's support of Wendell Willkie for president that year. Although his brothers served in uniform, Nelson held civilian posts throughout World War II, becoming assistant secretary of state for American republics affairs in 1944. He played a key role in hemispheric policy at the United Nations Conference held in San Francisco, developing consensus for regional pacts (such as the Rio Pact and NATO) within the UN's framework. Although President Roosevelt tried to lure Rockefeller into the Democratic party, he remained loyal to his family's Republican ties. When Roosevelt died, his successor showed less appreciation for Rockefeller's talents. In August 1945 the failed haberdasher Harry Truman fired the multimillionaire Rockefeller, in order to settle a dispute within the State Department.⁵

Reputation as a Spender

Rockefeller returned to government during Dwight Eisenhower's administration, where he chaired a committee on government organization, became under secretary of the new Department of Health, Education and Welfare, served as special assistant to the president for cold war strategy, and headed the secret "Forty Committee," a group of high government officials who were charged with overseeing the CIA's clandestine operations. He was slated for a high-level post in the Department of Defense until fiscally conservative Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey vetoed Rockefeller as a "spender."⁶

Rockefeller returned to New York determined to establish his own political career. In 1958 he challenged the popular and prestigious governor Averell Harriman, in what the press dubbed the "battle of the millionaires." Rockefeller campaigned as a man of the people, appearing in shirtsleeves and eating his way through the ethnic foods of New York neighborhoods. His victory in a year when Republicans lost badly elsewhere made him an overnight contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 1960. Republicans who distrusted Vice President Richard Nixon rallied to Rockefeller, and Democrats like Senator John F. Kennedy considered him the most formidable candidate that the Republicans might nominate. Because Rockefeller's advisers were reluctant to have him enter the party primaries, however, he was never able to demonstrate his popular appeal or overcome Nixon's lead among party loyalists. Instead, Rockefeller used his clout to summon Nixon to his Fifth Avenue apartment and dictate terms for a more liberal party platform. Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater denounced this event as "the Munich of the Republican Party," the beginning of a long estrangement between Rockefeller and the Republican right.⁷

Nixon's defeat in 1960 made Rockefeller the frontrunner for the Republican nomination in 1964. But between the two elections he stunned the nation by divorcing his wife of thirty-two years and marrying a younger woman, Margaretta Fidler Murphy, better known as "Happy." She was the recently divorced wife of an executive in the Rockefeller Medical Institute. The birth of their son, Nelson, Jr., on the eve of the Republican primary in California reminded voters of the remarriage and contributed to Rockefeller's loss to Goldwater. At the party's convention in San Francisco, Goldwater's delegates loudly booed Rockefeller when he tried to speak. To them, he embodied the hated "Eastern liberal establishment." Rockefeller sat out the election, an act that further branded him as a spoiler.⁸

An Impressive Record as Governor

Unsuccessful in his presidential bids, Rockefeller achieved a more impressive record as governor. He was a master builder, overseeing highway construction, the expansion of the state university system, and the erection of a vast new complex of state office buildings in Albany. Although New Yorkers joked about their governor's "edifice complex," they elected him to four terms. To pay for his many projects without raising taxes excessively, Rockefeller consulted the prominent municipal bond specialist John Mitchell (later attorney general under Richard Nixon) who advised the creation of quasi-independent agencies that could issue bonds. The State University Construction Fund would repay its bonds through tuition and fees, while other

agencies would build roads, public housing, and hospitals. As a result, control of a large part of the budget and of state operations shifted from the legislature to the governor. It was later revealed during Rockefeller's vice-presidential confirmation hearings that he had also made personal financial contributions to the chairmen of these independent agencies, thereby reinforcing their loyalty to the governor.⁹

In perpetual motion, Governor Rockefeller tackled one project after another. He waded into campaigning with similar gusto, shaking hands and giving his famous greeting: "Hiya, fella!" He laced his speeches with superlatives and platitudes and so often repeated the phrase, "the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God," that reporters shortened it to create the acronym BOMFOG. Although he campaigned as a man of the people, he lived in a different world. When aides proposed a plan for the state to take over state employee contributions to Social Security, in order to increase their take-home pay, Rockefeller asked, "What is take-home pay?"¹⁰

A staunch anticommunist, Rockefeller never opposed the war in Vietnam, explaining that he did not want to offend President Lyndon Johnson and risk cuts in federal aid to New York. In 1968 Johnson tried to convince Rockefeller to run for president. "He told me he could not sleep at night if Nixon was president, and he wasn't all that sure about Hubert [Humphrey] either," Rockefeller later revealed. The governor responded that he had promised his wife not to run again, but Johnson insisted, "Let me talk to Happy," and took her off in the White House to apply some of his famed personal persuasion. "They came back a half hour later," Rockefeller recalled, "and Lyndon said, 'I've talked her into letting you run.'" Rockefeller announced his candidacy, but Nixon's powerful campaign apparatus rolled over him. When Humphrey became the Democratic nominee, he invited Rockefeller to run as his vice president. "I turned him down," Rockefeller said. "Franklin Roosevelt wanted me to be a Democrat (back in the 1940s). It was too late."¹¹

Despite an inability to hide his personal disdain for Richard Nixon, Rockefeller campaigned for Nixon in both 1968 and 1972. He admired Nixon's tough stands in Vietnam and Cambodia—shaped by National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, who originally had served as Rockefeller's foreign policy adviser. Nixon appointed Rockefeller to serve on the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to oversee CIA activities. Meanwhile, Rockefeller's own politics were shifting toward the right, partly to make peace with conservative Republicans who had vilified him, and partly in response to the so-called "conservative backlash" of the late 1960s. Rockefeller's tough "law and order" stand during the Attica prison riots in 1971 further diminished his liberal image. The governor refused demands of rioting prisoners at the state penitentiary that he negotiate with them in person and instead sent in state troops, resulting in the deaths of many inmates and their captives. At the Republican convention in 1972, Rockefeller nominated Nixon. After the election, as Nixon sank into the Watergate scandal, Rockefeller steadfastly resisted attacking him while he was down.¹²

Broadening the Ticket's Electoral Appeal

When Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned in October 1973, Rockefeller let it be known that he would not turn down a vice-presidential nomination, as he had done in 1960 and 1968. But Nixon, believing that choosing Rockefeller would offend Republican conservatives, instead selected the more centrist Gerald Ford. Happy Rockefeller said she never expected Nixon to pick her husband because "weakness never turns to strength." That December, Rockefeller resigned after fourteen years as governor, to give his long-serving lieutenant governor, Malcolm Wilson, a chance to run for the office as the incumbent. Rockefeller then devoted his attention to the newly created Commission on Critical Choices for America, which many expected he would use as a vehicle to run for the presidency in 1976.¹³

Rockefeller was firmly convinced that Nixon would never resign, but events proved him wrong. In August 1974, when Gerald Ford assumed the presidency and prepared to appoint his own vice president, Rockefeller and George Bush headed his list of candidates. Bush, a former Texas congressman and chairman of the Republican National Committee, was the safer, more comfortable choice. But Ford believed in a balanced ticket (in 1968 Ford had urged Nixon to select New York City's liberal Republican mayor John Lindsay as his running mate). Weighing the assets and deficits, Ford acknowledged that Rockefeller was still anathema to many conservatives. Still, the new president believed that the New Yorker was well qualified to be president, would add executive expertise to the administration, and would broaden the ticket's electoral appeal if they ran in 1976. Also, by selecting as strong a man as Rockefeller, Ford would demonstrate his own self-confidence as president.¹⁴

Robert Hartmann, one of Ford's closest aides, asked Rockefeller why he had accepted the vice-presidency now after turning it down before. "It was entirely a question of there being a Constitutional crisis and a crisis of confidence on the part of the American people," Rockefeller replied. "I felt there was a duty incumbent on any American who could do anything that would contribute to a restoration of confidence in the democratic process and in the integrity of government." Rockefeller also reasoned that, while Ford as a former member of Congress understood the "Congressional-legislative side" of the issues, he as governor had mastered the "Executive-administrative side," and that together they could make an effective team. Although fully aware of the limitations of his office, and recognizing that he was "just not built for standby equipment," Rockefeller had accepted because Ford promised to make him a "partner" in his presidency.¹⁵

Number One Achievement

The media applauded the selection. After berating Nixon for picking Ford, reporters praised Ford's appointment of "a man of national stature." The *New York Times* called it a "masterly political act," and *Newsweek* congratulated Ford for adding a "dollop of high style" to his "homespun Presidency." *Time* observed that President Ford felt secure enough to name a dynamic personality as vice president. Ford basked in his accomplishment. In November, when reporters asked him what he considered the top achievements of his first hundred days as president, Ford replied: "Number one, nominating Nelson Rockefeller."¹⁶

Yet nomination was only half the process, for the Twenty-fifth Amendment to the Constitution required confirmation by both houses of Congress. Democrats and some conservative Republicans relished the prospect of opening the books on the private finances of one of the nation's wealthiest families. Even President Ford expressed fascination with the details as they emerged. "Can you imagine," he said privately, "Nelson *lost* \$30 million in one year and it didn't make any difference." After the shocks of Watergate and the revelations that Agnew had taken kickbacks, it was reassuring to have a vice president too rich to be bought. But the confirmation hearings revealed that Rockefeller had been making personal contributions to government officials, including Henry Kissinger and the administrators of New York's supposedly independent commissions. Since state law had prohibited making large financial gifts to state appointees, Rockefeller had given the money as "loans" that he never expected to be repaid.¹⁷ Rockefeller's confirmation hearings dragged on for months, and House and Senate leaders talked of delaying his confirmation until the new Congress convened in January. "You just can't do that to the country," President Ford complained to House Speaker Carl Albert and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. "You can't do it to Nelson Rockefeller, and you can't do it to me. It's in the national interest that you confirm Rockefeller, and I'm asking you to move as soon as possible." The Senate finally acted on December 10, and the House on December 19. That evening, Rockefeller took the oath in the Senate chamber.¹⁸

The secretary of the Senate found it amusing to give Rockefeller the standard orientation, signing him up for health insurance and other benefits he did not need. Ironically, Rockefeller was also the first vice president eligible to occupy the new vice-presidential mansion—formerly the residence of the chief of Naval Operations—on Massachusetts Avenue. "Congress has finally determined to give the Vice President a home in Washington," Ford told Rockefeller. "It's up on Admiral's Hill, and you'll have to live in it." Rockefeller grimaced but nodded in agreement. He already had a home in Washington that he purchased during the Second World War, a colonial-era farmhouse situated on twenty-seven acres of land, one of the most expensive properties in the District of Columbia. Rockefeller spent only a single night in the vice-presidential mansion, but he stimulated some publicity by installing a mink-covered bed designed by Max Ernst that was valued at \$35,000. Press criticism later resulted in the bed being loaned to a museum. Years after, when Happy Rockefeller visited George and Barbara Bush at the vice-presidential mansion, she offered to return the bed to the mansion. Barbara Bush insisted that Mrs. Rockefeller was always welcome to spend the night and did not need to bring her own bed.¹⁹

Less Than a Full Partner

Gerald Ford told the nation that he wanted his vice president to be "a full partner," especially in domestic policy. "Nelson, I think, has a particular and maybe peculiar capability of balancing the pros and cons in many social programs, and I think he has a reputation and the leadership capability," Ford explained. "I want him to be very active in the Domestic Council, even to the extent of being chairman of the Domestic Council." But during the months while Rockefeller's nomination stalled in Congress, Ford's new White House staff established its control of the executive branch and had no intention of sharing power with the vice president and his staff. One Rockefeller aide lamented that the "first four month shakedown was critical and he wasn't

involved. That was when the relationship evolved and we were on Capitol Hill fighting for confirmation."²⁰

Rockefeller envisioned taking charge of domestic policies the same way that Henry Kissinger ran foreign policy in the Ford administration. Gerald Ford seemed to acquiesce, but chief of staff Donald Rumsfeld objected to the vice president preempting the president. When Rockefeller tried to implement Ford's promise that domestic policymakers would report to the president via the vice president, Rumsfeld intervened with various objections. Rockefeller shifted gears and had one of his trusted assistants, James Cannon, appointed chief of the Domestic Council. Rumsfeld responded by cutting the Council's budget to the bone. Rockefeller then moved to develop his own policies independent of the Domestic Council. Tapping the scientist Edward Teller, who had worked for Rockefeller's Commission on Critical Choices, he proposed a \$100 billion Energy Independence Authority. Although Ford endorsed the energy plan, the president's economic and environmental advisers lined up solidly against it.²¹

Usually, Ford and Rockefeller met once a week. Ford noted that Rockefeller "would sit down, stir his coffee with the stem of his horn-rimmed glasses and fidget in his chair as he leaped from one subject to another." Nothing, Ford observed, was too small or too grandiose for Rockefeller's imagination. Beyond the substantive issues, the two men also spent much time talking over national politics. Yet Ford and his staff shut Rockefeller out of key policy debates. In October 1975, when Ford proposed large cuts in federal taxes and spending, the vice president complained, "This is the most important move the president has made, and I wasn't even consulted." Someone asked what he did as vice president, and Rockefeller replied: "I go to funerals. I go to earthquakes." Rockefeller had disliked the vice-presidential seal, with its drooping wings and single arrow in its claw. He had a new seal designed with the eagle's wings outspread and multiple arrows in its clutch. As one of his aides recalled, "One day after a particularly long series of defeats, I walked into the Governor's office [Rockefeller's staff always referred to him as "Governor"] with yet another piece of bad news. The Governor turned to me and pointed at the new seal and flag, sighing, 'See that goddamn seal? That's the most important thing I've done all year.'"²²

An Impervious Senate

Vice President Rockefeller found the Senate equally impervious to his desire to exert leadership. In January 1975, when the post-Watergate Congress met, the expanded liberal ranks in the Senate moved to amend Rule 22 to reduce from two-thirds to three-fifths of the senators the number of votes needed to invoke cloture and end a filibuster. Minnesota Democratic Senator Walter Mondale introduced the amendment, and Kansas Republican James Pearson moved that the chair place before the Senate a motion to change the cloture rule by a majority vote. When the Senate took up the matter in February, Senate Democratic Majority Leader Mike Mansfield raised a point of order that the motion violated Senate rules by permitting a simple majority vote to end debate. Instead of ruling on the point of order, Vice President Rockefeller submitted it to the Senate for a vote, stating that, if the body tabled the point of order, he "would be compelled to interpret that action as an expression by the Senate of its judgment that the motion offered by the Senator from Kansas to end debate is a proper motion." The Senate voted 51 to 42 to table

Mansfield's motion, in effect agreeing that Senate rules could be changed by a simple majority vote at the beginning of a Congress. The Senate, however, adjourned for the day without actually voting on the resolution to take up the cloture rule change. The leaders of both parties then met and determined that they disagreed with this procedure, which they felt had set a dangerous precedent. The leadership therefore devised a plan to void the rulings of the chair and revise the cloture rule in a more traditional manner. More than a week later, in early March, the Senate voted to reconsider the vote by which the Mansfield point of order had been tabled and then agreed to Mansfield's point of order by a majority vote. A cloture motion was then filed and agreed to, 73 to 21, after which the Senate adopted a substitute amendment introduced by Senator Robert C. Byrd, which specified that cloture could be invoked by a three-fifths vote on all issues except changes in the rules, which would still require a two-thirds vote.²³

In making his controversial ruling, Rockefeller had notified the Senate parliamentarian that he was making the decision on his own, contrary to the parliamentarian's advice. As parliamentarian emeritus Floyd Riddick observed,

Certainly it was contrary to the practices and precedents of the Senate, and I think that is why the leadership, under Mr. Mansfield as majority leader, wanted to vitiate in effect all of the statements made by the vice president and come back and do it under the rules, practices, and precedents of the Senate.²⁴

On another occasion as presiding officer, Rockefeller tried to break a filibuster by declining to recognize Senators James Allen of Alabama and William Brock of Tennessee and instead ordering the roll call to proceed. Senator Barry Goldwater challenged him, but Rockefeller replied, "It says right here in the precedents of the Senate, 'The Chair may decline to respond; the chair may decline to answer a parliamentary inquiry.'" "That is correct," Goldwater countered. "That is what it says, but I never thought I would see the day when the chair would take advantage of it." Later, Rockefeller apologized for any "discourtesy" he may have shown the Senate by this incident. "If I make a mistake I like to say so."²⁵

Investigating the CIA

President Ford also sought to use Rockefeller to head off a Senate investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency. In December 1974, the *New York Times*' reporter Seymour Hersh published an exposé of CIA spying on antiwar activists that constituted domestic activities in violation of the CIA's charter. When Democrats called for an investigation, Ford appointed a blue-ribbon Commission on CIA Activities and made Rockefeller its chairman. But the Senate went ahead and established its own Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, chaired by Frank Church of Idaho. When Senator Church asked for materials from the White House, he was told that the papers had been given to the Rockefeller Commission. When the senator demanded the papers from Rockefeller, the vice president declined to provide them on the grounds that only the president could grant access to the papers. One Church aide called Rockefeller "absolutely brilliant" in denying them access in a friendly manner. "He winked and smiled and said, 'Gee, I want to help you but, of course I can't—not until we've finished our work and the president approves it.'" Said Senator John Tower, vice chair of the committee, "We were very skillfully finessed."²⁶

The CIA assignment put Rockefeller in the crossfire between critics and defenders of the agency. Whether his report was critical or lenient, it was sure to draw fire. Rockefeller himself had a long involvement in CIA matters, dating back to the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations, when he served on panels that oversaw the highly secret agency. Yet even Rockefeller seemed unprepared for the revelations that the intelligence agency had plotted the assassinations of foreign leaders. To the surprise of both Senator Church and President Ford, the Rockefeller Commission chose to adhere to its original mandate and not investigate the assassinations. The panel turned those records over to the Senate committee, allowing Rockefeller to extricate himself from a difficult situation.²⁷

Ford's Biggest Political Mistake

In the fall of 1975, President Ford determined to run for election and appointed Howard "Bo" Callaway of Georgia as his campaign manager. Ford did not consult Rockefeller until the day he announced the choice. Callaway immediately began spreading the word that Rockefeller was too old, and too liberal, and too much of a detriment to the ticket. Some administration officials believed that Donald Rumsfeld wanted the vice-presidential nomination for himself and hoped that this humiliation would encourage Rockefeller to remove himself from contention. President Ford was given opinion polls that showed twenty-five percent of all Republicans would not vote for him if Rockefeller remained on the ticket. Ford's advisers complained that Rockefeller was not a "team player," and that he had been a "commuting" vice president, flying weekly to New York where his wife and sons had remained. Still, Rockefeller hung on doggedly, patching up his difference with Barry Goldwater and making public appearances in the South—to prove, as he said, that he did not have horns. After one rally in South Carolina, a Republican leader conceded that the vice president had changed some minds from "hell no," to "no."²⁸

When it became clear that former California Governor Ronald Reagan would challenge Ford for the Republican nomination, Ford reluctantly resolved to jettison Rockefeller. Putting the situation to him, Ford insisted that he was just telling him the facts, not what to do. Rockefeller, however, had been in politics long enough to know that he was being asked to leave gracefully. He announced that he would not be a candidate for vice president the following year. Although he publicly insisted that he jumped without having been shoved, privately he told friends, "I didn't take myself off the ticket, you know—he asked me to do it."²⁹

Rockefeller's withdrawal, along with Ford's clumsy firing of Defense Secretary James Schlesinger—replacing him with Donald Rumsfeld—became known as the "Halloween Massacre." It resulted in a plunge in Ford's popularity and polls that showed Reagan leading him for the Republican nomination. Southern Republicans largely deserted the president for Reagan, causing Rockefeller to comment that he had made a mistake in withdrawing when he did. "I should have said in that letter . . . when Bo Callaway delivered to you the Southern delegates, *then* I'm off the ticket." Ford responded, "You didn't make the mistake. We made the mistake." Dumping Rockefeller embarrassed Ford as much as it did Rockefeller. "It was the biggest political mistake of my life," Ford confessed. "And it was one of the few cowardly things I did in my life."³⁰

Despite being dropped, Rockefeller still wanted to be a major player. Before the Republican convention in 1976, he even proposed taking over as White House chief of staff, to help boost morale and public confidence. At the convention, Rockefeller delivered the large New York state delegation to Ford, participated in the choice of Senator Robert Dole as Ford's running mate, and placed Dole's name in nomination. He campaigned hard for the Republican ticket in the fall. At one stop in Birmingham, New York, hecklers provoked the vice president into making an obscene gesture back at them. Photographs of the vice president "giving the finger" were widely reprinted as a symbolic act of signing out of politics.³¹

Leaving office in January 1977, Rockefeller retired from politics and devoted his last two years (he died on January 26, 1979) to other interests, primarily in the arts. He always insisted that he had understood full well what he was getting into when Ford offered him the vice-presidency. "I've known all the Vice Presidents since Henry Wallace," he said. "They were all frustrated, and some were pretty bitter. So I was totally prepared." Rockefeller expressed thanks for the respectful way in which Ford had treated him. "I was never told to make a speech or to clear a speech with the President," he noted. But he regretted not having had more responsibilities in the administration and not being able to make a greater contribution to public policy. "The Vice-Presidency is not much of a job," he concluded. "But at least Washington is where the action is."³²

Notes:

1. *Floyd M. Riddick: Senate Parliamentarian*, Oral History Interviews, June 16, 1978 to February 15, 1979 (U.S. Senate Historical Office, Washington, DC), pp. 255-65.
2. For Aldrich, see Horace Samuel Merrill and Marion Galbraith Merrill, *The Republican Command, 1897-1913* (Lexington, KY, 1971); for Rockefeller see Allan Nevins, *John D. Rockefeller: The Heroic Age of American Enterprise* (New York, 1940), 2 vols.
3. *Memorial Addresses and Other Tributes in the Congress of the United States on the Life and Contributions of Nelson A. Rockefeller*, S. Doc. 96-20 (Washington, 1979), p. 16.
4. Joseph E. Persico, *The Imperial Rockefeller: A Biography of Nelson A. Rockefeller* (New York, 1982), pp. 25-32; Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Rockefellers: An American Dynasty* (New York, 1976), pp. 206-10.
5. Collier and Horowitz, pp. 214, 237, 242-43.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-76; Michael Kramer and Sam Roberts, "I Never Wanted to be Vice-President of Anything!" *An Investigative Biography of Nelson Rockefeller* (New York, 1976), p. 373.
7. Collier and Horowitz, p. 342.
8. See Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1964* (New York, 1965).
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 469-77.
10. Persico, p. 227; *Memorial Addresses*, p. 229.
11. Richard Reeves, *A Ford, Not a Lincoln* (New York, 1975), p. 150; *Memorial Addresses*, p. 237.
12. Persico, p. 241.
13. Robert T. Hartmann, *Palace Politics: An Inside Account of the Ford Years* (New York, 1980), p. 238.
14. Reeves, p. 149; Gerald R. Ford, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford* (New York, 1979), pp. 143-44.
15. Hartmann, pp. 230-36; Persico, p. 245.
16. Mark Rozell, *The Press and the Ford Presidency* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1992), pp. 45-46; Reeves, p. 147.
17. Reeves, p. 147; Kramer and Roberts, pp. 369-70.
18. Ford, p. 224.
19. *Dorothy G. Scott: Administrative Assistant to the Senate Democratic Secretary and the Secretary of the Senate, 1945-1977*, Oral History Interviews, 1992 (U.S. Senate Historical Office, Washington, DC), p. 174; Ford, p. 145; Persico, pp. 262-63.

20. "How It Looks to Ford," *Newsweek* (December 9, 1974), p. 37; Paul C. Light, "The Institutional Vice Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 13 (Spring 1983): 210; Paul C. Light, *Vice-Presidential Power: Advice and influence in the White House* (Baltimore, Press, 1984), pp. 180-83.
21. Hartmann, pp. 304-10; Kramer & Roberts, pp. 372-73.
22. Ford, p. 327; Persico, p. 262; Light, "The Institutional Vice Presidency," p. 211.
23. Riddick Oral History, pp. 212-219; U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, *Senate Cloture Rule*, by Congressional Research Service, S. Print 99-95, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, pp. 30-31.
24. Riddick Oral History, pp. 218-19; U.S., Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., p. 3841.
25. Kramer and Roberts, p. 371.
26. Loch K. Johnson, *A Season of Inquiry: The Senate Intelligence Investigation* (Lexington, KY, 1985), pp. 30-31, 41-43.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 48; Light, *Vice-President Power*, pp. 184-87.
28. Light, *Vice-President Power*, pp. 183, 189-90; Hartmann, p. 354; Persico, p. 272; Kramer and Roberts, p. 375.
29. Ford, p. 328; Hartmann, pp. 357, 365-66.
30. Ford, p. 331; Hartmann, p. 367; James Cannon, *Time and Chance* (New York, 1994), p. 407.
31. Hartmann, p. 400; Persico, pp. 274-75.
32. Ford, p. 437; Hartmann, p. 231; Persico, pp. 245, 277.