

# To succeed, you need a dose of luck

One evening in the long ago, The Stroller was privileged to sit as a guest on the speakers' platform at Michigan State University to hear Jimmy Gheen, then one of the country's outstanding after-dinner speakers, talk to members of the graduating class.

The wiry little Irishman held his listeners spellbound with his humorous tales of what happened to some of his friends when they entered the outside world. And many were listed among the nation's top officials.

In closing he became very serious. He told the class that while education was important to get along in the battle of life, it wasn't everything.

"You must have enthusiasm," he said, "and you must have a desire to excel, and you must be dedicated." Then he would add with a smile, "You must have all these things and a helluva lot of luck."

THE MEMORY of these remarks came bounding back for The Stroller the other evening when he saw former President Gerald Ford sitting with former President Jimmy Carter discussing foreign relations and later as co-author of a lead article in Reader's Digest.

Never was there a better example of Jimmy Gheen's warning to the MSU students.

And seldom has there been a more fortunate fellow than Jerry Ford since his college days at



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the University of Michigan. Jerry played football on the 1932-34 teams and had the dubious honor of being voted most valuable player on the '34 team — which won only one game and lost seven.

After graduation, he tried coaching — without great success. Then he entered politics. Even then his name wasn't anything close to being a household word. He repeatedly was elected to Congress from the Grand Rapids district. But for years he was just another member.

Then in a leadership change, he was named House Republican leader. That's when Lady Luck started to smile.

VICE PRESIDENT Spiro Agnew was forced to resign. To fill the vacancy, President Richard Nixon named Ford vice president. That was a turning point in Ford's life.

Soon Nixon was under fire as the Watergate scandal was uncovered. It was said that Nixon

appointed Ford in self-defense. He was quoted as saying, "Can you imagine Ford sitting in the president's chair?" Nixon was accused of using Ford as a buffer to save himself.

It didn't work. Nixon, too, was forced to resign, and Ford moved into the Oval Office — the first man to sit in the president's chair who hadn't been in a national election. It was the highest honor he could get.

Ford had the added distinction of being president during the Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. He became one of the world leaders and will have a place in history.

HE DID WHAT was generally considered a good job as president, though he provided laughs by stumbling while getting out of an airplane.

On the golf course he hit spectators with his tee shots. Tommy Watson, the outstanding pro who tried to teach Ford, said he had two problems. "How to hit the ball and then how to find it."

But as folks smiled, Ford started collecting pensions that have amounted to more than \$100,000 a year since he left office. And he is paid in the thousands these days to address groups around the country.

He proved Jimmy Gheen right when he said, "Education is fine . . . but to succeed you must have a helluva lot of luck."

# Watergate figures aren't real winners

THE NEWS that Frank Wills was arrested for stealing a pair of gym shoes sparked another round of remembrances of the interesting era known as Watergate.

It is said that Wills was the man who opened the floodgates of Watergate by discovering evidence of the burglary inside the hotel-office complex.

A private guard making his rounds, he found a taped door — taped to allow an easier getaway — and called police to report his suspicions. Washington D.C. police soon made the arrests inside Democratic Party headquarters which eventually led to the resignation of a president.

A number of prominent people contributed money to aid Wills in an effort to keep him out of jail.

Wills, a man who was almost a national hero, honored for his diligent adherence to duty after the Watergate fiasco unfolded, had indeed hit hard times.

THERE WERE inevitable comparisons between Wills' predicament and the fate of many of the prominent members of the Watergate bunch. It was noted by commentator Mike Royko that many of the top guys in the Nixon White House are enjoying more than comfortable lives after profiting from books, speeches and White House-day connections.

John Dean, the smooth-talking White House attorney, made a million from a book and TV movie and makes several thousand a speech.

Nixon advisor John Ehrlichman, who spent 18 months in jail, writes books. H.R. Haldeman,

Nixon's main man in the White House, made money from a Watergate book and is vice president of a California real estate company.

G. Gordon Liddy, the White House's black bag man who refused to talk to get out of jail, spent 52 months in prison but now earns a comfortable living giving speeches, mostly on college campuses.

RICHARD NIXON, old tricky Dick, of course, was pardoned by President Gerald Ford, and has made huge sums writing books in his own defense and being interviewed on television.

There was even a comparison to former vice president Spiro Agnew, who resigned from office in face of convincing evidence that he had taken bribes as Maryland governor and even accepted continuing payoffs in the White House itself. Agnew is reportedly doing well in Palm Springs, Calif.

It may seem a bit unfair to those of us who plod along day by day with no hope of a big payoff for notoriety and only the expectation that if we work hard and everything goes well, we will stay even with the economy.

But as John Kennedy once noted and the Bible noted long before he did, life is not necessarily fair — "Time and chance happen to all." We tend to think that good fortune have accumulated wealth by chance or good fortune have also resolved life's problems, that they are indeed free from our mundane worries, even if the largesse that frees them is tainted or undeserved.

WHAT ISN'T reported, however, is the amount of misery that ends of those who were part of the Watergate-era must feel when they reflect on what they might have accomplished

and what they failed to accomplish.

In fact, they left the White House, individually and in groups, in public disgrace. The infamy that surrounded them will be with them to some degree evermore and cashing in on their notoriety does not erase from our minds the fact that they betrayed the public's trust.

They will always know that they had the chance to contribute something good to their country, and instead they contributed scandal and ample reason to distrust government.

There is a price to pay for everything. The price that the Watergate figures are paying for their infamous actions and the earnings of that infamy is not readily apparent, but we can be sure that it is being paid.

I wonder, if we knew all the circumstances of their lives, would we feel even a twinge of envy?

## oral quarrel

This week's Oral Quarrel Question asked readers questions regarding Dow Chemical Co.'s part in contaminating state water and the Reagan administration's part in a report involving Dow. The questions were: Who should be held responsible for cleaning up the contaminated water? How do you feel about the way the Reagan administration handled the situation with Dow?

Following are the answers:

The EPA officials should be responsible for the cleaning up of all waters in central Michigan polluted by dioxin and I think the Reagan administration's handling of the Dow situation was outrageous and deplorable. They are guilty of not only a coverup, as John Dingell suggested (U.S. Representative Dingell of Trenton represents the downriver area), but also willfully ignoring pollution control laws to further their own selfish interest and the selfish interest of big business.

To me the question posed is a prime example of very irresponsible journalism. An accusation becomes guilt, the guilt becomes the guilt of Dow Chemical Corporation and the guilt "coverup" becomes that of President Reagan. This will not sell the Observer to me for Thursday's edition.

I think the EPA should be held responsible. They are very inept in doing the job they did. I think Reagan should chastised for not following through with it.

Dow Chemical Company shouldn't pay for it all plus they should make Reagan eat the fish that are contaminated and hope-fully he'll be contaminated too.

I think the cleanup should be paid for by Dow Chemical in their profits. I think the Reagan administration has done a sloppy job and I think that later on we will find out there has been a lot of kickbacks from these other companies that have hushed this up.

It won't take me 30 seconds to tell you that your question is exactly the same kind of a question as I might ask you, "When did you stop beating your wife?" This is irresponsible reporting and questioning on your part. You are finding the Dow Chemical Company guilty and the Reagan administration guilty before you have any of the facts, or before it has been tried in the courts.

I think the news media should be held responsible for it. They are the ones covering it in the first place.

Thank you. They say everything is contaminated. The next thing you know they will be recalling Michigan honey because they say it is contaminated with BPP.

They should, of course, clean up whatever should be cleaned up. How the Reagan administration handled it? Well, I think it's a political football. They were really trying to get something on the EPA in order to hurt the President, and they were trying already to do this in the South with some contaminations there, and it didn't work, so they came up with some old reports that Dow was requested to make to supply the data.

Dow should be held responsible if the evidence points to them. The Congress should pressure the Reagan administration to appoint people to the EPA who are willing and able to do the job they were intended to do. Currently it seems Reagan's administration appoints people to regulatory agencies who undermine our quality of life rather than protect it. I'm disgusted.

Dow Chemical and whatever other industries are responsible should be responsible for cleaning up the water but also partially the EPA should take on some of the responsibility since they have allowed the situation to develop. It reflects the common problem of much of our government being controlled and owned by big money.



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