

Reagan presidential library opens for history's judgment



SIMI VALLEY, Calif. (AP) — Ronald Reagan opened his presidential library Monday and invited the world to "come and learn from it." He was joined by President Bush and their three predecessors in the first gathering ever of five U.S. chief executives.

Eleven years to the day since he was elected president, the 80-year-old Reagan joined Bush, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon at the hilltop library under brilliant, windswept skies. A band played "Hail to the Chief" as they took the stage. Air Force F-16s flew over.

"The doors of this library are open now and all are welcome," Reagan told a crowd of 4,200 invited guests. "The judgment of history is left to you, the people. I have no fears of that. We have done our best. And so I say, 'Come and learn from it.'"

In addition to the presidents and their wives, Lady Bird Johnson and her daughter represented the late Lyndon Johnson, and John Kennedy Jr. and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg were there for their late father, John F. Kennedy. There were also relatives of President Franklin Roosevelt.

Reagan's fellow chief executives took turns at the microphone, praising him and looking back on the challenges of their own administrations.

Bush, who was Reagan's vice president, called him his mentor and hailed him as "an American original ... a visionary, a crusader and a prophet in his time."

"Ronald Reagan predicted that communism would land in the dustbin of history and his-

tory proved him right," said Bush. Reagan's defense buildup "paid off for every American" in the Gulf war, he said.

"He was the great communicator and also the great liberator," the 41st president said of the 40th. "No leader since Churchill used words so effectively to help freedom unchain our world."

Nixon said Reagan would be remembered as a president who believed in freedom and democracy and who "restored America's military might."

Ford said Reagan was a leader who was "able to articulate the highest hopes and deepest beliefs of the American people."

Even Carter, who hurried back from election-monitoring in Zambia to attend the dedication, had kind words for the man who ruined his reelection hopes. Under Reagan, Carter said, "our nation stood strong and resolute and made possible the beginning of the end of the Cold War."

Carter, the only Democrat of the five, jokingly alluded to Republican presidential dominance in the last quarter-century.

"I have one concern, and that is that the Republican representation has four times as much time on the program as the Democratic," Carter said to laughs from the largely GOP crowd. "You all have another advantage over me. At least all of you have met a Democratic president. I've never had that honor yet."

Bush said he felt badly about that but asked that voters "please don't do anything" about it.

Reagan's tone was sentimental, but no more so than at many times while he was presi-

dent.

"At one time or another I've run against most of these gentlemen and they've run against me," he said. "And yet here we are. It just goes to show that above personal ideologies and party politics, we stand united as Americans."

Reagan said, "I have been described as an undying optimist. ... It's true. I always see the sunny side of life."

Citing the collapse of communism, Reagan said, "I have seen the world turned upside down and conventional wisdom utterly disproved. Visitors to this mountaintop will see a great jagged chunk of the Berlin Wall, hated symbol of, yes, an evil empire."

"Today that wall exists only in museums, souvenir collections and the memories of a people no longer oppressed," he said.

Also on hand for the ceremony were former Reagan administration officials James Watt, Caspar Weinberger, Michael Deaver and Bush's secretary of state, James A. Baker III, just back from the Mideast peace talks in Madrid, Spain.

In keeping with Reagan's show-business background, the audience also included such Hollywood stars as Bob Hope, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Merv Griffin and Charlton Heston.

In the latest reading on Reagan's standing, nearly three years after he left the White House, a *Los Angeles Times* poll published Monday suggested that people who gave Reagan landslide victories are divided on his legacy, and many consider him only an average president.

Another election is just a year away, and Democrats saw Bush's attendance as an oppor-

tunity to criticize him for a heavy travel schedule and what they contend is inattention to domestic problems.

"U.S. unemployment is rising again and our costly recession is dragging on," Democratic Party Chairman Ronald Brown said in a statement. "So where is Mr. Bush? Today, he will attend the opening of the Ronald Reagan presidential library in California and celebrate the Reagan-Bush era. An era that tripled our national debt, crippled our education system, and raised taxes on nine out of 10 working American families."

The dedication gala included turning over of the keys to National Archivist John Wilson. The National Archives and Records Administration will operate the library at an estimated \$1.5 million annual cost to taxpayers.

The four-story structure, much of it below ground, is nestled on 100 acres of undeveloped Ventura County land about 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles.

Reagan's future burial site and a chunk of the Berlin Wall are on a patio area that commands a clear-day ocean view.

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Potential Kennedy trial jurors questioned

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — "Saturday Night Live," the Guardian Angels and Chapquiddick figured in questioning Monday of potential jurors for William Kennedy Smith's rape trial.

The third day of selection focused on attitudes about the Kennedy family and pretrial publicity, which in recent days has been mostly favorable to Smith.

"Now that it's time to do battle, there's a definite momentum in favor of the defense," said lawyer Joe Minberg, who represents an important state witness, Anne Mercer.

News stories in recent days have included profiles of Smith's daily routine that includes morning swims and playing with a new puppy, and declarations of his innocence by Cathy Bennett, a veteran jury-selection expert who's battling cancer while helping Smith.

Minberg said such publicity likely reaches potential jurors in some form. A Smith spokeswoman, Barbara Gamarekian, said Monday there's no organized publicity effort.

Smith, 31-year-old nephew of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., has denied a Florida woman's allegations that he raped her March 30 at his family's estate. Kennedy was at the estate that weekend and will be a trial witness.

Questioning of potential juror Robert Fleming resumed Monday with defense attorney Roy Black asking if he saw any

pickets outside the courthouse and if he watched NBC's "Saturday Night Live" over the weekend.

"It came on ... I turned it off," Fleming replied.

SNL began with a skit satirizing questioning by Smith's attorneys about potential jurors' attitudes on his famous uncles.

Fleming also told Black he saw no pickets.

Members of the Guardian Angels, the volunteer anti-crime group based in New York, picketed outside the Kennedy

estate Sunday and outside the courthouse Monday. Their leader, Curtis Sliwa, said they urge both sides in the trial to "keep it clean."

Smith glanced at the pickets as he went to lunch. His only comments were about Bennett, 40, "an extraordinary inspiration to me."

Prosecutors, lawyers, police and court personnel are under a gag order banning them from comment on the case beyond general statements.

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