



Pat Nixon looks admiringly at husband Richard during 1953 inauguration. In next row are (l to r) Nixon's late father, mother (author of this article) and Uncle Ernest.

you are going to starve to death, son!"

It took him two more stops before he finally made it into the house.

Richard hasn't changed much over the years. He was always serious, intense and determined to go after what he wanted. He never did much cutting up as a boy or as a young man. He was the only one of my sons who seldom got reprimanded, and even less frequently spanked. I never really paddled him at all. This made my mother-in-law furious. She insisted I was too easy with him. But if I was, Mr. Nixon made up for it. When he spoke, the boys knew they should move. There was no dilly-dallying.

Richard is pretty much like his father in this respect. I have never seen him paddle Tricia or Julie. But if his daughters get into mischief, he'll raise a finger, say "Children!", without particularly upping his voice, and they behave.

Richard never got an allowance as a boy. We couldn't afford to give him much, anyway. Besides, when he needed anything he told his father about it. Mr. Nixon never turned him down. He knew Richard wouldn't ask unless it was really necessary.

When Richard was in high school, Mr. Nixon gave him a chance to earn some money. Every morning after school, Richard drove to the produce market in downtown Los Angeles, and on his own picked out vegetables for our general store. When he came back he washed and trimmed them, and got them ready for sale before he went to school. Mr. Nixon said Richard used good judgment when buying vegetables. Whatever profit we made was his. His money went for school books, clothes and, occasionally, a movie.

TO CONCENTRATE on his school work, he dated infrequently as a youth. Pat was the first girl he ever fell in love with. It's been written that they met in school. I don't know how that story came about. Richard was already practicing law and Pat was teaching typing and shorthand in school when they met in a play at the Community Theater in Whittier's Women's Club Auditorium.

Richard has always been interested in acting.

He used to participate in high-school and college performances and, according to his drama coaches, did quite well in them—except for his inability to cry on cue.

I was particularly anxious to see this play because Richard had mentioned Pat to me a few times. He never talked much about girls, which made even a limited interest significant.

After the performance, Richard brought her over to the house for a snack and introduced her to us. After he had taken her home and returned, he asked me what I thought of her. I told him I thought she did her part very nicely. Since we had only just met, it was too early for me to form a personal opinion. Yet as I got to see her more often, I grew to like her. It did not come as a surprise when Richard told me they would get married.

I feel Pat has been very helpful to his career, not just because she did a lot of his secretarial work when he campaigned for the House of Representatives and the Senate, but because she knows her responsibilities as a wife and acts accordingly. She has been a good wife and mother. You can see I'm also very proud of my daughter-in-law.

To be sure, though, my son is not hard to live with. He is meticulously neat. As a boy, I never had to remind him to clean his room. He always kept his clothes tidy and was quite particular about his shirts. They had to be pressed without a wrinkle in them. I know this well. I did the pressing.

Also, and this Richard inherited from his father, he is punctual to the minute. Mr. Nixon hated being late or having anyone else be late. He would never have stood for it in the boys.

Richard was only a fair eater, at best. He liked chopped meats and pies, but he never grew enthusiastic about any particular dish. When Pat asked me for recipes that would please him—and she is a very good cook herself—I honestly could only suggest apple and cherry pies.

Richard has always been a sensitive boy—but he can no more show his feelings openly than he can show pain.

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The Nixon brothers: Don in tire and (l to r) Richard, Harold and Arthur. Richard was nine.



Harold watched over kid brother Dick, 3. Harold died when 33.



Three cousins (on left) visit Richard and Harold at Nixon family get-together in the mid-1910s.

At Fulton High School, Richard (center, second row) was top student and football player, too.

