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EXCLUSIVE

What People Don't Know About My Son

by Mrs. HANNAH MILHOUS NIXON as told to PEER J. OPPENHEIMER

Here, for the first time in words and family-album pictures, is an intimate profile of Vice President Richard M. Nixon as revealed to Family Weekly by his mother

TO THE REST of the world he is "Mr. Vice President" or "Mr. Nixon" or, if they know him well, "Dick."

To me, his mother, he has always been "Richard." I chose the name when I read about Richard the Lion-Hearted. And after he was born, somehow no other name seemed to fit him as well.

I suppose like any mother I live more in the past than in the present. This seems to be truer since my husband passed away almost three years ago. My oldest and youngest boys, Harold and Arthur, died a long time ago. Richard of course, is in Washington, D. C., and Eddie, 28, is in the Navy. Only Don, who is 45, lives close enough to call on me regularly.

Richard tries to keep in touch, though.

When he flew to southern California a few weeks ago to be commencement speaker at Whittier College, from which he was graduated, he drove all the way from Anaheim to Yorba Linda, just to take me to the East Whittier Friends Church for Sunday morning service.

Richard is not much of a correspondent. He likes to read but never cared for writing. Not even in school. Pat writes some, to keep me informed of what is happening in Washington. And so do my granddaughters, Tricia and Julie.

Richard prefers to telephone. Not often and not unless it is important. He is very conservative that way. He knows long-distance calls cost money and saves them for birthdays, holidays and anniversaries. I think he is wise there.

But if something really urgent happens, he always manages to get in touch with me, no matter where I am or how difficult it may be.

I was terribly worried when he went to South America last year and I heard the reports of violence he encountered. I didn't know all that happened because I was visiting a friend in an isolated part of the mountains, near Redding, Cal. But it was enough to upset me. And I didn't relax till two days after Richard came home, when I received his long air-mail, special-delivery letter written the night he arrived in Washington, tired from the long flight, the reception at the airport and the many interviews.

I never appreciated hearing from him more, except maybe the time Julie was born. Mr. Nixon and I were living on a farm in Pennsylvania at the time, near Menges Mills, about 78 miles from Washington. We had bought the farm shortly after Richard was elected to his first term in Congress. The nearest phone was at a grocery store about eight miles away. Knowing how anxious we were to hear about our new grandchild, Richard called the store owner from the hospital at 6:30 in the morning, and asked him to give us the good news.

I WILL never forget the day he left for overseas during World War II. Mr. Nixon, Pat, Don, Eddie and I were all at the Los Angeles railroad station to see him off. Just before Richard stepped aboard the train, he turned to Eddie. He put his hand on his younger brother's shoulder and with deep sincerity in his voice said simply, "Eddie, you take care of your mother."

His concern for people has always been one of his most outstanding virtues. While stationed in the South Pacific, he heard that Don had become the father of a baby girl, Lorene. He promptly wrote the sweetest letter to the new baby, telling her how glad he was that she was born, and how her father was the best-looking of the boys and the one with the most personality and that her mother, Clara Jane, was one of the prettiest women he had ever met.

My sons were very close to one another. Of course they had their scraps once in a while, but I don't recall that they ever really hit one another.

Richard was particularly fond of his younger brother, Eddie, who is now a lieutenant in the Navy.

I remember when Richard was still practicing law in Whittier, and I called him one day at the office after Eddie hurt his arm playing ball. It wasn't too serious, but it was painful. Richard promptly rushed home and insisted on staying up with Eddie all night.

Another thing that is characteristic about Richard is his intense concentration. When Richard's mind is on something he is interested in, it's next to impossible to get his attention.



When he was a little boy, his main aim in life was to become a fireman on a train. He would play "train" with his brothers for hours. They were supposed to take turns and once in a while Richard reluctantly agreed to be the conductor, engineer or passenger. But mostly he was the fireman and if I called him to eat while he saw himself shoveling coal, I all but had to grab his arm before he heard me.

AS HE GREW OLDER, Richard continued to be so absorbed in thoughts that it shielded him like a wall from any intrusion. I can still see him visiting us when he was a Congressman, working on the Alger Hiss case. He was in the garden when supper was ready. I called him to come into the house. He walked a few steps toward me, then stopped. I called him again, and he came a few more steps closer. "Richard," I finally cried out. "Supper is getting cold!"

He looked up. "Mother—I know the man is guilty!"

"And if you don't give up the case for a while,