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Conditional amnesty granted to Vietnam war resisters

by Richard Lerner
United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Ford Monday offered conditional amnesty to an estimated 28,000 Vietnam war resisters in return for up to two years public service and an oath of allegiance. He called it "an act of mercy to bind the nation's wounds."

Spokesmen for draft evaders and military deserters in Canada and Sweden denounced the plan as absurd and a gross miscarriage of justice, and predicted few would accept it. Ford's proclamation, twice delayed while he dealt with the Nixon pardon and economic issues, offered conditional

amnesty to those who deserted or evaded the draft between Aug. 4, 1964 and March 28, 1973, the date the United States withdrew its last soldiers from Vietnam.

Later, at his news conference, Ford was asked why he granted only conditional amnesty to war protesters while granting a full pardon to former President Nixon.

He said the aim of each action was to heal wounds the nation has suffered, and that "this is the only connection between the two."

Those wishing rehabilitation and freedom from prosecution must surrender to a U.S. attorney or military official before next Jan. 31. Basically, they will then earn forgiveness

by performing a 24-month period of public service and by taking an oath of allegiance to the country and its constitution.

Ford said the service paid could be reduced in individual cases at the recommendation of various designated officials or a clemency board established by the proclamation.

Byron Pepitone, director of the Selective Service which will administer the alternate service program, said about half the amnesty workers would likely serve in hospitals or homes for the aged or children. He said many others would find work in conservation or with religious service groups.

In addition to social rehabilitation, military deserters will first receive an undesirable discharge — a category considered less punitive than dishonorable — and, upon completion of alternate service, a clemency discharge not affording any veterans benefits.

"Desertion in time of war is a major, serious offense," Ford said. "Failure to respond to the country's call of duty is also a serious offense. Reconciliation among our people does not require that these acts be condoned."

"Yet reconciliation calls for an act of mercy to bind the nation's wounds and to heal the scars of divisiveness."

Ford set up a nine-member Clemency Board to help administer the program and urged it to give priority consideration to releasing the estimated 130 persons now imprisoned for such offenses.

The White House has estimated there are about 15,500 draft evaders and about 12,500 military deserters at large and eligible for amnesty, including about 4,500 evaders and deserters in Canada.

Ford empowered U.S. attorneys, the armed service secretaries and the Secretary of Transportation, who has jurisdiction over the Coast Guard, and the Clemency Board, in various circumstances, to recommend reduced periods of alternate service where

mitigating circumstances favor an individual.

Deputy Attorney General Laurence Silberman listed three general mitigating factors which will be taken into account in disposition of cases. They are:

- The degree of hardship to an individual's family now.
- The willfulness of the alleged violation, such as whether the individual was legitimately confused at the time.
- And how the individual has conducted himself since the violation.

Those evaders who fail to live up to the agreement afterward "will be subject to prosecution on the underlying charge of draft evasion," Silberman said.

Asked why he thought the program was attractive, Silberman said it guaranteed that those who abide by the terms are assured that they will not have a felony conviction. Beyond that, he said the program guaranteed individuals would not be imprisoned if they comply with all requirements.

All three government officials acknowledged a possibility that some individuals might be treated differently or more leniently than others when they present their cases to the authorities. As Silberman put it, "what we're dealing with is prosecutorial discretion" on the part of various U.S. attorneys.

Here is the proposed wording of the oath of allegiance to the United States that war resisters and draft evaders would be required to take:

"I (name) do hereby solemnly reaffirm my allegiance to the United States of America. I will support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and will hereafter bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

"I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help me God."

Nixon pardoned 'to spare the nation'

by Helen Thomas
UPI White House Reporter

WASHINGTON — President Ford, saying there was very persuasive evidence that former President Nixon was guilty of Watergate crimes, said Monday that nonetheless he pardoned Nixon to spare the nation a period of turmoil.

"I decided we could not afford in America an extended period of turmoil," Ford said in his second televised press conference since taking the nation's highest post following Nixon's resignation.

Ford, appearing confident but grim, said he had no secret reasons to pardon Nixon and there was "no understanding, no deal between me and the former president or between my staff and his — none whatsoever."

Ford acknowledged that Nixon's health was a factor in his decision, but "The man reason I had at the time I made the decision was to heal the wounds of the United States." The nation needed reconciliation, he said.

"I felt then, and I feel now, that the action I took will have that effect," he said.

Ford said he decided to pardon Nixon after finding out that Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski was contemplating charging Nixon with obstruction of justice and 10 other charges.

He said Nixon's "acceptance of a pardon . . . can be construed by many, if not all, as an admission of guilt."

Ford added that there was persuasive evidence developed by the House Judiciary Committee "that the President was guilty of an impeachable offense."

"I had no secret reason for granting the pardon."

Ford said he is advised daily on the health of the former president, but this was not a major consideration in granting Nixon his pardon. Nixon's family and physician have said that his health and emotional condition have deteriorated since his resignation last Aug. 9.

"I was more anxious to heal the nation," he said. "That was the top priority."

Ford denied he had acted abruptly in his surprise announcement Sept. 8. He said he had most carefully analyzed the information assembled by his lawyers on the Nixon case.

"I decided the country could not afford an extended period of turmoil and a continuation of division in America, and I took the action that I did promptly and effectively," Ford said.

"There was no deal between myself and the former president . . . none whatsoever."

O'Neal resigns from office; RHA head says he's ineligible

by Frank Griffin
Staff Writer

Residence Hall Association (RHA) President Mike O'Neal resigned from that office Friday.

In a letter dated Sept. 13 to Student Body President Marcus Williams, O'Neal said, "As of this time, I am no longer constitutionally eligible to continue my service as Residence Hall Association President, and I respectfully submit my resignation . . . effective at 5 p.m. today."

O'Neal's resignation came after five months of appeal for an undergraduate housing assignment that would allow him to remain RHA president. That appeal was denied by Chancellor N. Ferebee Taylor last week, and O'Neal, a graduate student, was assigned to Craige Graduate Center, which is not a member of RHA.

O'Neal announced his intention to appeal

the chancellor's decision Thursday, but in his letter to Williams O'Neal said, "I have informed Chancellor Taylor that I will not appeal his decision to the Board of Trustees."

As stated in the RHA constitution, chairmen of the Men's Residence Council (MRC) and Women's Residence Council (WRC), Jim Cohn and Joyce Dalghesh, will serve as acting co-presidents of RHA until a successor is elected in campus elections Oct. 2.

"I think it's a real blow for RHA," Cohn said. "Mike has a real genius for organization. He can get things done."

The MRC and WRC will meet jointly 7:00 p.m. Wednesday 100 Hamilton Hall to consider a proposed amendment to RHA constitution striking the word "undergraduate" throughout. Should the amendment pass by a two-thirds vote, the constitution would then require RHA

executive officers to "live in a University owned or approved residence hall," and O'Neal would again be eligible for office despite his living in Craige, Cohn said.

An elections board official said Monday, however, that O'Neal told him he would not run.

In his resignation letter O'Neal said, "Throughout this long ordeal it was my position and belief that University housing regulations did clearly provide for the placement of graduate students in predominantly undergraduate residence halls on an exception basis. In hindsight now, though, I must conclude that the responsibility for clearing up my housing status was primarily my own."

"Above all other considerations it is my strong desire to see the Residence Hall Association continue to achieve the progress and promise that has developed in the past few months."



Staff photo by Alice Boyle

The Board of Trustees has approved \$25,000 to repair this rotted porch

Porch for Friday To cost up to \$25,000

by Sandra Millers
Staff Writer

University President William Friday's house is scheduled for a new porch, and the bill may total as much as two-thirds more than it cost to build the entire house in the first place.

That was 1907, of course, when the price tag on a two-story, neo-classic style mansion ran about \$15,000.

Last Friday the UNC Board of Governors approved an appropriation not to exceed \$25,000 for replacing the broad, wooden porch that stretches around three sides of the big, white house at 402 E. Franklin St.

The decision to earmark money for the repairs followed a study authorized by the University's General Administration and carried out this summer by the Raleigh architectural firm of Dodge and Beckwith.

President William Friday said Sunday he did not request the study which reported rotting porch floors and steps.

"The physical condition of the building is such that we must repair it or quit using it," said Robert Bourne of the General Administration property office. "It's a repair project, and what we have to do is fix the porch before it collapses."

Bourne said the architect's estimate for the restoration is \$18,000 but the actual cost may vary from that figure, depending on bids received.

Raleigh architect William Dodge agreed the restoration is needed.

"There's considerable work to be done due to destruction by rot and weather," he said.

Dodge, who has supervised the restoration of several historic houses and is currently involved in restoring the North Carolina Capitol building, said the president's house is architecturally valuable.

The house, distinguished by its immense Corinthian columns, is included in the National Registry of Historic Places, buildings of historic or architectural importance in the United States.

Francis P. Venable became the first UNC president to live in the house when he moved in following its completion in 1907. Since then, every university president has called it home.

The house has been remodeled once in its 67-year history. That was in 1929 at a cost of \$7,000.

Checking out stereotypes on Fraternity Row



Staff photo by Alice Boyle

Several brothers relax on the front porch of their Fraternity Row house

Staff writers Alan Bisbort and Michael Fawcett, both admitted non-frat men, have spent several weeks looking into fraternity life to provide these insights for prospective rushees during rush week.

Most students know little about fraternities. Only 19 per cent of UNC's male undergraduate population belongs to them, and among non-fraternity members stereotypes dating back to who-knows-when are prevalent.

Drinking, carousing, noise-making, ridiculous and demeaning initiation rites, debauchery — these are words often used to describe fraternities by those who don't belong to one (and occasionally by those who do).

But the fact is, something is going on down at Fraternity Row, and we don't mean wild drinking parties, either. But what? So we decided to take a random sample of the 28 UNC houses.

One of the first things we found was that almost every fraternity member stoutly insisted his was not the "typical frat."

Our observations convinced us that despite attempts being made to change, fraternity life remains pretty much as it has been for a century. For the most part, Hell Week, black house-boys (30 years of age or older), beer chugs, mixers with sororities and the comforts of a plushly decorated fraternity house all still exist.

At one of the houses, a member said, "My house bill is \$80 a month. If I didn't spend the

\$16 social fee, I'd probably spend \$30 a month on liquor."

At another house, we were told, "This is a great place to eat — hell, we're like kings."

Fraternities pride themselves on closeness among the brothers. The fraternity rush guidebook even states, "Fraternity, brother, house — conjure up some kind of exotic group. In reality, they are just somewhat strange labels for groups of people that by choice have decided to make everyone involved in (sic) a close and lasting friend of everyone else."

The words are inflated, of course, because the writers are striving to convince others. But, in truth, we found that a large number of fraternity members, mainly upperclassmen, live outside the house and use it mainly for its social function.

One senior and former fraternity social chairman said, "I don't see many of the guys in this house on a daily basis."

At one house we visited, brother after brother dipped his glass into a bucket of ice and got himself a Bloody Mary. An officer talked affectionately of the elderly houseboy who had been working for the fraternity when the officer's father was a member. "Oh, my, could your father drink liquor," he quoted the houseboy as saying.

The officer said he was in the habit of doing spontaneous favors for persons he considered prospective members — he spoke of the time he loaned his car keys to a student

who had misplaced his own.

A literal blackball system is still used as the final means of selecting members, he said, but it is now harder for one brother to prevent a prospective rushee from joining.

At another house, we were told the fraternity's alumni hit the ceiling a few years ago when the house spent \$30,000 for a super concert featuring James Brown and Martha and the Vandellas. That resulted in alumni supervision of all concert-related finances to prevent wild overspending.

There are indications of change in fraternity life.

For the first time, all 28 fraternity houses will feature a new informal rush system, under which houses are open to anyone interested. Prospective pledges can come and talk to the brothers of any house without being invited. The old trick by which pledges were intoxicated to keep them from going elsewhere is gone. Alcohol is prohibited during the times when the brothers are available to talk with rushees.

During Rush Week, going on now, freshmen and other pledges will have to decide if they like the fraternity lifestyle, with its concerts, mixers, intramurals, beer and other liquor. If they do, then the advantages of a fraternity are pretty clear — less money for your room, food at most houses, parking, a good location, plus lots of friends. But if a freshman feels strange or uneasy when he enters a house, perhaps that house isn't for him.