

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, June 28, 1966

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It began with a sense of elation and it ended on a solemn note, followed next with fear. It was a restless night. We were awake at 4:00 and at 6:00 and at 8:00. And then I went to sleep and slept until 10:00.

I had an appointment at 11:00 with ~~some~~ Mr. Charles Palmer of Warm Springs, Georgia and Madame Shoumatoff to show me her completed sketch of the portrait of FDR. We went into the Lincoln Room to set it up on an easel, looked for the just right light, and then with an air of infinite excitement in all of us, Madame Shoumatoff lifted off the covering and there it was -- the most wonderful face of FDR -- a young, strong, magnetic leader -- years away and millions of worries away from the dying President she painted at Warm Springs. For once I looked at a work of art and loved it at first sight. No need to call in John Walker or Dillon Rippley to ^{bo}oster my opinion or to combat it!

Mr. Palmer, as proud as he could be because it was all his idea, said, "This is the eye of the compassionate father," pointing at one side of his old boss's face. "This eye is saying you can't deal me a card under the table."

And I thought it was true. This is ^{the} a delightful dichotomy of the man!

Coffee was brought in and nobody was interested. And just then Lyndon passed out in the hall, and I rushed out and asked him to come in a moment. He met them. He looked at it. He liked it too. I told him

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what I hoped for it -- that it would hang either in his office or in the Cabinet Room. This was my moment of elation.

And then, just as they were about to leave, Nash Castro and Mary Lasker arrived. I brought Mary in and introduced her. They were quite familiar with her name and with all that she had done. And she liked it too.

Only the face was done, with promises to have the finished product in the next few months. I said goodbye, and Mary and Nash and I left in a small car to visit the places that had won awards. Francis Scott Key School, and triangles, and down South Capitol Street to Southwest Washington, and past a Texaco station. My particular aim was to see several of the projects that were to receive awards this afternoon so hopefully I could feel and act intelligent about them.

We were back at the White House by 1:30, and I sent lunch in to Mary on a tray in the Queen's Room while I got ready for my 2:00 meeting with the Beautification Committee. It was the last meeting of the summer before "Operation Wedding" started for me, and for others, ^{dispersement} for all their vacation plans. ~~Stewart~~ Udall presided. The main business of the day was Nat Owe^{ing}s showing us the model for the Mall. Bernie Boutin and Stephen Currier, Mrs. Korner of the Garden Clubs were there. And Katie Louchheim and Admiral Phillips -- the first time I had seen him since his wife died. And Laurence Rockefeller. Polly Shackleton, who had worked faithfully on

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neighborhood projects. And Charlie Horsky and Walter Tobriner who are almost always faithfully present. Bill Walton was out of the country. Brooke Astor in Europe, I think.

It was a brief, out-spoken meeting, brutal in general, with an outcry about too many trees ^{placed} ~~face~~ too close. For my part, I kept on insisting there were already a great many trees between the Smithsonian and the Capitol. And one of my chief feelings is that the cherry trees planted around the Washington Monument grounds ~~must~~ ^{must} not march row on row like soldiers, but be casually, gracefully spaced like a tossed bouquet.

It was a short meeting, and then we all went down to the award ceremony at 2:45 in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. There some 200 representatives of the 46 winning projects had already assembled under a tent to keep off the heat.

I made a brief speech of welcome -- a summary of the wonderful things that have happened in ~~Washington~~ Washington this Spring -- magnolia soulangeanas lead from the Capitol to the Anacostia River, Pershing Square a blaze of glory, and all of the little triangles that have burst into bloom. But the business of the day was to recognize what residents of the District have been doing, to thank them and cheer them on, and hopefully to make them feel like doing more next year.

I introduced Katie Louchheim who is Chairman of the Awards Committee. And then she presented the winners with the 5 handsome

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bronze plaques that had been designed by Ivan Chermenev⁷ and that went to Walker Jones School and Francis Scott Key School, and my first old friend, Jefferson Junior High School. And delightfully enough, to the Second Precinct Police Station where Captain Owen Davis, a Negro, has practically made a career out of turning a barren police station into a pretty well landscaped place where young folks will want to congregate. And to the Texaco Service Station on South Capitol for design and landscaping. And very especially for reducing a 65-foot high Texaco sign that had towered above the Capitol on one of the main entrances to a modest 28 feet. When you get that kind of cooperation from private enterprise you think you are making some headway. Jimmy Pipkin was there to receive it. And I hope he felt the warmth of my smile and handshake.

The awards were made in three categories: Public, neighborhood, and commercial, by jury, under the chairmanship of Nicholas Satterlee, who had toured the city inspecting about 100 entrees.

In some instances I was less than ecstatic about the caliber of the effort put forth. Hopefully this will only spur them on. And there were certificates -- about 40 of them -- for other schools and playground projects, recreation centers, Garden Clubs. The whole emphasis was on citizen participation.

After the presentations I invited the guests to the South Lawn for punch and cookies under the striped tents. I asked all the Committee

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members to look for the award winners and congratulate them and give them that sort of cheering-on that may produce more results next year.

It was a full two hours of the work that has become a most cherished project in this last 18 months. And I was thinking of what ~~Stewart~~ Udall had said, "Most of the items shown in the plan for the Mall would either be in place or under construction in the next five years." And I wondered how much of it I would be here to see, or back on visits.

So, as Daddy used to say, "We've got the crop laid by this year and on to other things."

Next on the program was Esther Peterson's group -- The President's Commission on the Status of Women. And the rain which had held off for us was coming, so we had it in the East Room -- greetings by Lyndon, thanks to the outgoing president, a welcome for the new one. And then a receiving line in the Blue Room -- a few minutes of mixing, and upstairs.

And the next business of the day was to see with Liz and Tom Atkins and Simone, films about Luci, about our Rockefeller, LBJ Ranch trip. It was a sort of conference to try to cue Tom Atkins in and hope what we hoped to accomplish in the movies of the wedding, -- the dress rehearsals for this wedding, the preparations.

At 8:00 Marvin Watson brought Senator Dick Russell over -- and comfort and solace always accompany him when he comes into our presence no matter how much we differ, and we do. I have a firm faith in his rare

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ability as a public servant, though perhaps of a philosophy that is now on its twilight, and he is an earnest friend of Lyndon.

It was a quiet dinner -- just the three of us. One of the nicest things is that Lyndon comes home early for a guest like Dick. There were two hours discussing military future of the country -- the Senate and its problems and personalities and changes. The air was alive with a sense of change of a big decision having been reached. It had been gestating for days, weeks, as spoused, attacked, examined, explored from every angle in the long meetings with Rusk and Ball and Rostow and the military men. I asked no questions but I felt the decision had been reached -- to bomb the fuel depots.

When Senator Russell left early as he must these days ^{because} ~~to protect~~ his health, Lyndon called Luci and said, "I want to go to church. Are any of your Catholic churches open?" Luci very quickly said, "The Monks live in their church." She could get Pat to call one of them. We could go there. It was a quick call and less than 30 minutes later we were on our way -- Lyndon and Luci and I -- to a dark, silent church in the ~~W~~ Southwest, deserted except for us. We were let in by a Monk in a long belted robe. Luci told me he was a brother, not a Father. We went quietly to a pew and knelt. And each with his own thoughts took his troubles to the Lord. I was sitting quietly in my seat a long time before Lyndon. And then we filed out. The brother was looking as though this

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happened any day of the week -- quietly and courteously showing us to the door. Nobody ^{else} at all knew it. And we were back at the White House for a relatively early attack on the night reading at a little past 11:00.