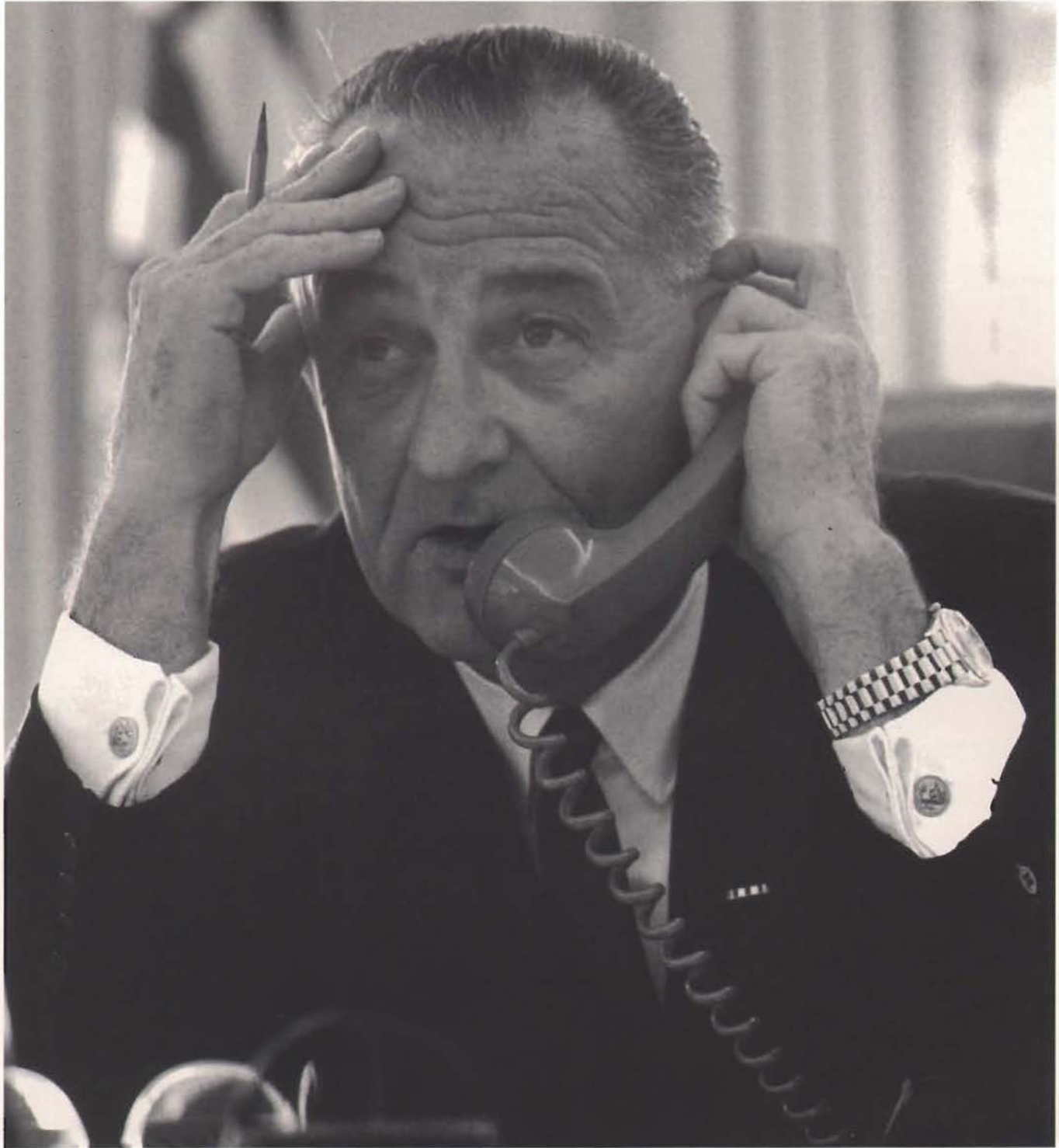


AMONG FRIENDS *of LBJ*

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President Johnson's Telephone Conversations Opened
(Pages 2-4)

Tapes Stir Scholars' and Media Interest

by Regina Greenwell
Senior Archivist

On October 11, the Johnson Library opened for research approximately eighty hours of recordings of President Johnson's telephone conversations, covering the months of January through March 1964. This new opening, along with the recordings for November 22 through December 31, 1963, which previously were opened in accordance with the JFK Assassination Records Act, presents both the scholarly community and the general public with a unique new perspective on Lyndon Johnson himself and on this pivotal period in American history.

Scholars researching the Johnson years often complain that LBJ himself is absent from materials at his own Library. The activities and decisions of the Johnson administration are well documented in the millions of pages available for research at the Johnson Library, but often from the perspective of his advisors and aides, not the man himself. He was not known to have committed himself in writing extensively, preferring to communicate directly, often over the telephone.

The recordings—part of the collections which the Library's archives

staff has been processing for the past three years—bring LBJ to life in a way no paper document ever could, dramatically demonstrating his persuasive ability, his humor, his determination, and at times his frustration. The conversations in these early months cover events such as the passage of a bill to cut taxes and congressional action on the civil rights bill and the poverty bill. Listeners will hear LBJ exhorting his staff and his Cabinet to appoint African Americans and women to important federal posts, and hear him tackling his first foreign policy crises—the Panama Crisis, the Cuban Guantanamo Water Crisis—while warily confronting the growing turmoil in Vietnam, all as he surveys an election-year political scene nationally and in Texas. LBJ's staff transcribed some of the conversations and these transcripts are also available for research, but they cannot duplicate the flavor and content of the actual recordings.

The amount of material available is so rich that scholars may at times feel inundated. To assist them in finding their way in the material, the Archives staff has used state-of-the-art audio-visual and computer equipment to make the collection available. The recordings, originally made on

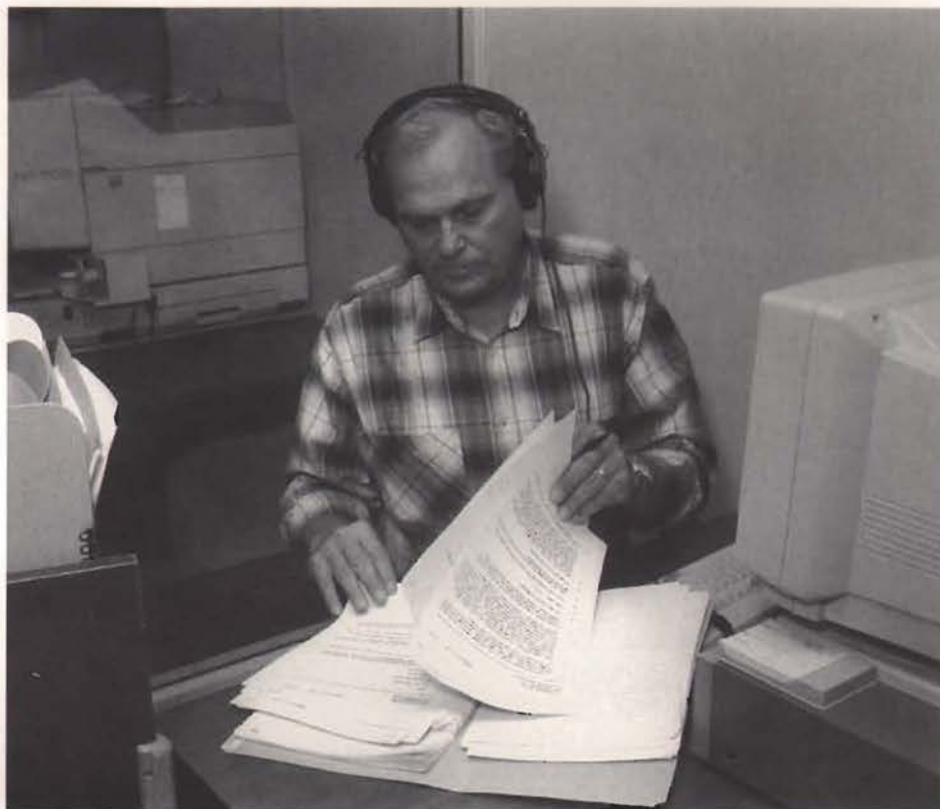
Dictabelt office equipment, have been reproduced and are available in the Library's Reading Room on Digital Audio Tape, enabling listeners to go directly to the beginning of the conversation of interest to them (although standard cassette recordings are available for purchase). The individual conversations have been catalogued on a computerized "infobase" which allows the researcher to pinpoint specific conversations relevant to their research.

When the recordings were first opened, selections were played on national news programs such as *Nightline* and CNN. Since then, research interest in the collection has been strong and surprisingly varied. In addition to scholarly interest in areas which have traditionally been of high researcher interest, such as Vietnam and civil rights, scholars on such topics as speech communication, gender politics, and on the presidency itself, have begun to use the collection in their research, as well as curious members of the general public. All of the response the Library has received about the collection has been enthusiastic, and researchers are looking forward to the release of additional conversations in the future.



Eighty hours and three months of conversations, packaged for research.

Opening the tapes stimulated considerable interest among historians and others in the scholarly community. Whenever transcripts had been made, they were released along with the tapes. But the transcripts were made hurriedly in the White House and are not always reliable. Researchers are warned that they must be checked against the actual tapes to assure accuracy. One transcript quotes the President telling the person he is talking to that a "pack of bastards" is coming to see him. The tape reveals that what the President actually said is the "Pak Ambassador."



Elements of the media, too, found a fascination with the conversations. Here Mary Knill, one of the archival team that has spent three years processing the tapes, explains the process to a television crew.

Excerpts from a conversation with McGeorge Bundy, January 3, 1964

I wonder why you don't get Rusk and the five ablest men in the State Department and go up to Camp David and lock the gate this weekend and try to find some imaginative proposal or some initiative that we can take besides reacting to action.... I do not think we should do anything impulsive. I want plenty of deliberation, but I have been [in this job] six weeks and I have just had people tell me what I could not do. So just tell the

Secretary that I would like for you all to come up with some proposals beside just having [Khrushchev] run me in a corner and me dodge like a Mexican bullfighter.

From a conversation with Roy Wilkins, January 6, 1964

I don't know of a better [man] in the United States or a fairer one or an abler one.... What I want you to do, though, is get on this [civil rights] bill now, because unless you get 25 Republicans you're not

going to get cloture.... You're going to have to persuade [Everett] Dirksen why this is in the interest of the Republican Party. [If he] goes along with you on cloture, you ought to tell him you're going to go along with him and help him. I'm a Democrat, but I think [when] a fellow will stand up and fight with you, you can cross party lines.... If we lose this fight, Roy...we're going back ten years...I'll do everything that I can, but I don't want anybody to get any illusions that I'm a magician because I'm not.



"That LBJ would preserve his White House recordings for critical scholars suggests he may have been more serious about having history written 'with the bark off,' as he said while opening his Presidential library in 1971, than he got credit for. It also suggests that he knew something else. Historical figures willing to reveal their flaws often

have the best crack at immortality."
—Historian Michael Beschloss in *Newsweek*

"It is my judgment that everyone benefits from what has been done (and is being done and will be done): the scholarly community, from access to a new and rich vein of primary source material; the

Library, from the good will and open-mindedness among academics that such openness engenders; and the reputation of Lyndon Johnson, from scholars' deepened awareness of his human strengths and frailties and the immense complexity and burden of Vietnam."

—Historian Brian VanDeMark in a letter to Regina Greenwell

More Honors For Lady Bird



Photo by Carrell Grigsby

Lady Bird Johnson received three awards to add to her long list of honors. The Woodstock Foundation presented her with the First Laurance Spelman Rockefeller Conservation Award "in recognition of her lifelong commitment to the enhancement of the American environment." The medal accompanying the award is now on display in the Library lobby (right).

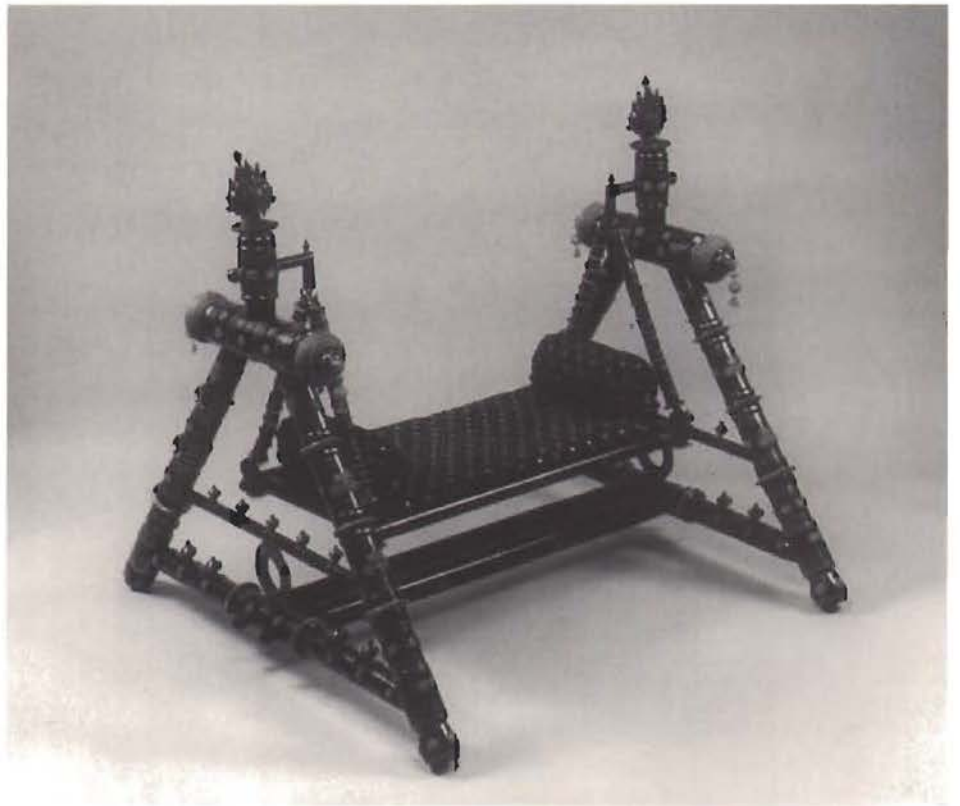
In Austin, where some 750 people gathered to pay tribute to her, she was honored for her philanthropic and civic efforts by Caritas, an organization that assists low-income families. Grandchildren Lyndon Nugent, Cathy Robb, and Nicole Nugent Covert (above) gave tributes.

In Washington, the Environmental Law Institute honored her for her work in "nature protection." Lucinda Robb accepted the award on her grandmother's behalf.

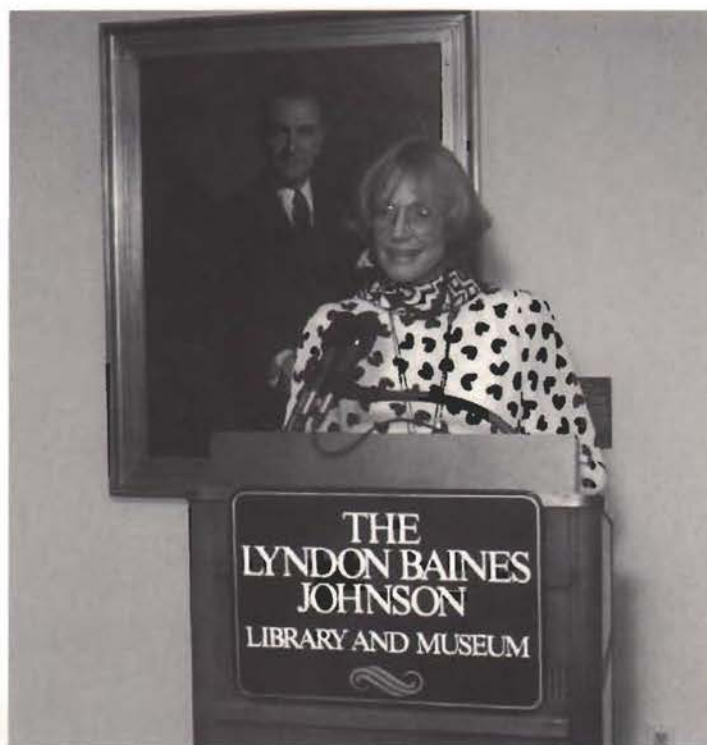


New Gallery Displays Exotic Gifts

A new gallery in the Library's museum has recently been opened, displaying gifts given to President and Mrs. Johnson from foreign Heads of State. In six cases, like the one below, are mounted art objects, jewels, swords and other exotica. One (right) contains an unusual swing presented by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Another holds a painting by Diego Rivera, a gift from Mexican President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. The exhibit documents, with photographs and text, the ceremony attendant to a visit from a Head of State, which includes an exchange of gifts.



At a dinner formally opening the new gallery, Bess Abell, White House Social Secretary during the Johnson years, told of the preparations and ritual that went into planning dinners for presidents, prime ministers and kings.



Adjoining the new gallery is an open patio which is available to visitors for the first time. It is hoped that eventually the patio will take on the look of a sculpture garden.



Foundation Awards Fall Grants



Following the LBJ Foundation's policy of giving grants twice a year, a University of Texas selection committee recommended the awarding of 14 grants totaling \$15,000 for the fall semester. The funds, a bequest from the Moody Foundation, are used to help defray travel and living expenses for researchers using the Library's resources. The selection committee, appointed by the University President at the Foundation's request, is composed of Bruce Buchanan, Government Department; Robert Divine, recently retired from the History Department; and Richard Schott, LBJ School of Public Affairs.

Those receiving grants-in-aid and the titles of their proposed topics are: Joseph A. Bongiorno, "Doves and Eagles: The History of the Relationship Between U.S. Presidents and U.N. Secretaries-General since 1945"; Pamela A. Conn, "Losing Hearts and Minds: U.S. Pacification

Efforts In Vietnam"; David Penn Elliott, "The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta"; Mark A. Erickson, "One Trajectory, Two Vehicles: N.A.S.A. and the D.O.D. from Sputnik to the Lunar Landing"; Joseph R. Glancy, Jr., "Quid Pro Quo: U.S. Approaches Toward West German Trade with Eastern Europe during the Kennedy/Johnson Administration"; Jussi M. Hanhimaki, "In the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Foreign Policy, Bridge-Building, and the Specter of Neutralism in Western Europe, 1963-1969"; Craig A. Kaplowitz, "Mexican Americans, Ethnicity, and Federal Policy"; Kay Mills, "If You're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands: The Head Start Story"; Steven L. Moss, "NASA and Racial Equality in the South, 1961-1968"; Nicholas A. Pedriana, "State, Society, and Power Transformation: Early Enforcement

of Federal Equal Employment Opportunity, 1965-1970s"; Stacy K. Sewell, "Resulting Equalities: The Civil Rights Movement and Employment Discrimination, 1945-1972"; Glen E. Taul, "Government, Development & Poverty in Southern Appalachia: The Origins of the Appalachian Regional Commission"; Robert J. Topmiller, "The Unleashing of the Lotus: The Buddhist Struggle Movement in South Vietnam, 1964-1966"; and Maria De Los Angeles Torres, "Peter Pan Operation: The Cold War and the Politics of Refugee Children."

Pictured above: Selection Committee members Buchanan, Divine (now replaced by Michael Stoff) and Schott

LBJ Birthday Commemorated in Three Places



Following custom, President Johnson's 88th birthday was observed on August 27 at the LBJ Ranch, the Library and the LBJ Grove in Washington. Roy Butler, former Austin mayor and long-time Johnson friend, presided at the wreath-laying ceremony at the President's grave in the family cemetery at the Ranch (above).

The Library offered the traditional cake and punch to the Hector Medina family of San Antonio and other visitors (right).



A color guard presented arms at the LBJ Memorial Grove in a ceremony conducted by the Texas State Society. Leonard Marks, Washington attorney and head of the United States Information Agency in the Johnson administration, spoke.

Library Programs Feature Observations on White House



Susan Ford Bales, Luci Baines Johnson, Maureen Reagan



Liz Carpenter moderated the First Daughters' reminiscences

Three daughters of U.S. Presidents reflected for a delighted audience on what life in the White House during their respective fathers' administrations was like. Two—Luci Baines Johnson and Susan Ford Bales—were teenagers at the time. Maureen Reagan was older—40—but she said she learned “there was not a whole lot of difference between adolescence and menopause.”

All three shared memories of experiences ranging from dramatic to hilarious.

Luci Johnson told how she, as a 16-year-old girl, learned at school

Life, Political Campaigns, Russia

about her father's ascendance to the Presidency with the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Ms. Bales, daughter of President and Mrs. Gerald Ford, recounted the night she spent sleeping in the bedroom that had been used by Abraham Lincoln, to add to her meaningful remembrances. At 4:30 in the morning she was awakened by a ghostly apparition making eerie sounds. It was her mother, Betty Ford, who had decided to make the experience *really* meaningful.

Maureen Reagan also spent a night in the Lincoln bedroom, with her husband. She thought she saw Lincoln's ghost on that occasion, and when she told her father about it the next morning, President Reagan said: "Well, next time you see him, send him down the hall to my room. I'd like to speak to him."

On her first night in the White House, Luci and a girlfriend filled a room with smoke trying to start a fire in the fireplace. Susan roller skated on the mansion's marble floor. Maureen's dog ate ornaments off the Christmas tree and vomited under an historic bed.

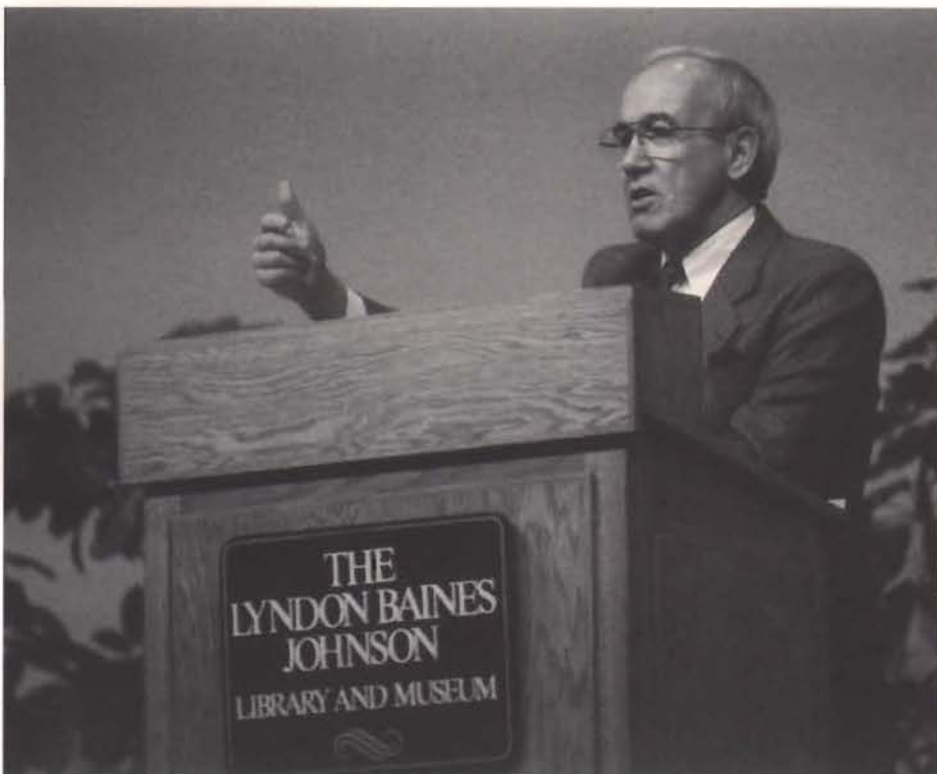
When Susan Ford moved into the White House, she got a letter from another former First Daughter—Alice Roosevelt Longworth, who, as the high-spirited daughter of Theodore Roosevelt, had been the object of much attention in her father's administration.

"Have one hell of a good time," her letter to the new Presidential Daughter read.

"I took it to heart and did my very best," Susan reported. She spoke for her two colleagues as well.



David Mariness, reporter for the *Washington Post*, gave a pre-election look at the two Presidential candidates.



John Dancy, who covered Russia for NBC before his recent retirement, provided a correspondent's inside look at that "endlessly fascinating country." Although the collapse of communism brought crime and economic privation along with freedom, the Russian people would never voluntarily return to the Soviet-type days, he said.

Max Sherman to Retire as LBJ School Dean

Max Sherman, who has served as dean of the LBJ School of Public Affairs since 1983, will retire that post next August.

His tenure at the School followed a career as state senator and then as president of West Texas State University.

University of Texas officials praised his service. "Everyone who knows Dean Sherman likes and

respects him and appreciates all that he has done to build the LBJ School into one of the premier schools of public affairs in the nation," President Robert Berdahl said. Provost Mark Yudof called him a "distinguished statesman and academic administrator who has provided outstanding leadership to the LBJ School."

Professor Robert H. Wilson said that the LBJ School is now "ranked fourth among all graduate programs of public administration and is tied for the best among public universities."

A search committee has been appointed to seek Sherman's replacement.



Johnson Saunders Covert was born November 14, 1996. Son of Nicole Nugent Covert and her husband Brent Covert, he is the second great

grandchild of Lady Bird Johnson. (The first was Tatum Rebekah Nugent, daughter of Lyndon and Nicole Nugent.)

In Memoriam:



McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.



Rufus Youngblood, special agent in charge of the White House detail during the Johnson years and later Deputy Director of the U. S. Secret Service.

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The LBJ Library is one of nine presidential libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration.

