

THE HISTORIC STRATER HOTEL PRESENTS

ROOM 333: PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

38TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1974-1977

REPUBLICAN. MARRIED TO BETTY BLOOMER, 4 CHILDREN. BORN UNDER THE NAME : LESLIE LYNCH KING, JR., IN OMAHA NEBRASKA. 16 DAYS AFTER HIS BIRTH HIS PARENTS SEPARATED. HIS MOTHER REMARRIED LATER TO GERALD RUDOLFF FORD. LESLIE'S NAME WAS CHANGED IN 1935 AND HE GREW UP IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

HOW DID HE COME TO THE STRATER HOTEL?

Former President Gerald Ford and his business partner Leonard Firestone purchased the local Durango radio stations KIUP-AM (930) and KRSJ-FM (100.5) in 1979. Ford visited Durango three times between 1979 and 1997. He and his wife stayed at the Strater Hotel on two of these visits in room 333.

On his first trip he came for the transfer of ownership of the radio stations. On his second trip, he came to celebrate Durango's Centennial on August 13, 1980. He was in a parade on Main Ave. with Louis and Kathy L'Amour, Centennial Queen Marion Jarvis, Charles Bradshaw (former

owner of the Durango & Silverton NG Railroad), Governor Richard Lamm and former Mayor Ian Thompson. On the same visit, he helped open the back nine holes at the Hillcrest Golf course.

"Ford was the first to tee off on the tenth hole", said Duane Smith, local historian and Professor at Fort Lewis College. "There were people lining the fairway and, well, he had been known to hit spectators-but he put the ball on the tee, took a mighty swing, and the ball went straight down the fairway. He had the biggest smile I ever saw on Gerald Ford's face. He was a real human being."

During that trip Gerald and Betty attended the dedication of the Animas Museum, where Betty was a speaker. Ford was the only President to ever visit the Animas Museum.

Ford's final visit to Durango was in 1997 when Fordstone merged with another company to form Four Corners Broadcasting. It was said that Ford "had a general good sense of community, not only to Colorado but to Durango."



President & Mrs. Gerald R. Ford on the north side of the Strater Hotel with then owner Earl Barker, Jr. (second to end on left.)

TIMELINE OF A PRESIDENT'S LIFE

Born July 14, 1913.

1935-Graduates from the University of Michigan

1942-46-Serves in U.S. Naval Reserve

Oct. 15, 1948- Marries wife Betty

Nov. 2, 1948- Elected to U.S.

House of Representatives

1963-64- Serves on Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy

Aug. 9, 1974- Becomes President after Richard Nixon resigns

Sep. 8- Pardons Nixon

Nov. 2, 1976-Loses election to Jimmy Carter

Oct. 27, 1999- Receives Congressional Gold Medal

Dec. 26, 2006-Dies at age 93 in his home from mini-strokes and pneumonia

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- President Ford was an avid football fan and played college football at the University of Michigan 1932-1934.
- Ford received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award in 1970 and is the only U.S. president who was an Eagle Scout.
- Ford was a graduate of Yale Law School.
- Ford was a Lieutenant Commander in WW II.