



A LIFE IN LETTERS

Edited with an Introduction and Commentary by Kiron K. Skinner,
Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson

FOREWORD BY GEORGE P. SHULTZ

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Ronald Reagan may have been the most prolific correspondent of any American president since Thomas Jefferson. The total number of letters written over his lifetime probably exceeds 10,000. Their breadth is equally astonishing—with friends and family, with politicians, children, and other private citizens, Reagan was as dazzling a communicator in letters as he was in person. Collectively, his letters reveal his character and thinking like no other source. He made candid, considerate, and tough statements that he rarely made in a public speech or open forum. He enjoyed responding to citizens, and comforting or giving advice or encouragement to friends. Now, the most astonishing of his writings, culled in *Reagan: A Portrait in Letters*, finally and fully reveal the true Ronald Reagan.

Many of Reagan's handwritten letters are among the most thoughtful, charming, and moving documents he produced. Long letters to his daughter Patti, applauding her honesty, and son Ron Jr., urging him to be the best student he can be, reveal Reagan as a caring parent. Long-running correspondence with old friends, carried on for many decades, reveals the importance of his hometown and college networks. Heartfelt advice on love and marriage, fond memories of famous friends from Hollywood, and rare letters about his early career allow Reagan to tell his own full biography as never before. Running correspondence with young African-American student Ruddy Hines reveals a little-known presidential pen pal. The editors also reveal that another long-running pen-pal relationship, with fan club leader Lorraine Wagner, was initially ghostwritten by his mother, until Reagan began to write to Wagner himself some years later.

Reagan's letters are a political and historical treasure trove. Revealed here for the first time is a running correspondence with Richard Nixon, begun in 1959 and continuing until shortly before Nixon's death. Letters to key supporters reveal that Reagan was thinking of the

(continued on back flap)

(1960)

RONALD REAGAN

July 4

Dear Mr. Hefner

I've been a long time answering your letter of May 13 and my selection of "The 4th" as an answering date is coincidence plus the fact that Holidays are 'free time' days around our house.

Your letter has been very much on my mind and I question whether I can answer in a way that will make sense to you. First because I once thought exactly as you think and second because no-one could have changed my thinking (and some tried). It took seven months of meeting communists & communist influenced people across a table in almost daily sessions while pickets rioted in front of studio gates, homes were bombed and a great industry almost ground to a halt.

You expressed lack of knowledge about my views, political background etc. Because so much doubt has been cast on "anti-communists" inspired by the radicalism of extremists who saw 'Reds' under every 'cause' I feel I should reveal where I have stood and now stand.

To Mr. & Mrs. Mickey Rooney 7500 Davista Dr.
Hollywood Calif. 90046

Dear Joan & Mickey

Sorry you can't make it June 12th. but you
have an ongoing haircheck. While we'll miss you
we're happy you are working cause that means
pleasure for a lot of people.

Mickey I'll bet you don't remember the 1st
time we met. The year was 1937 ^{on Cheesecake} ~~at~~ I was
new in Hollywood living in the Montclair apartments.
Someone had run over a dog in the street outside.
You came in to look for a phone booth so you
could find the nearest Veterinarian & take the dog
to him. I figured this had to be a nice guy & I
was right.

Nancy sends her love & so do I.

Sincerely RR

To Rev. Paul T. Butler - Ozark Bible College
1111 No. Main, Joplin Mo. 64801

AP October 2003

To our leader the
Prime Minister of
Malaysia -

I hope the days
ahead bring you
great peace, excellent
health and many
more years of accomplishment.

Your friend,
Ken Sheffer

*Other works by Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson,
and Martin Anderson*

REAGAN, IN HIS OWN HAND
STORIES IN HIS OWN HAND
REAGAN IN HIS OWN VOICE

Reagan

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WITH FOREWORD BY GEORGE P. SHULTZ

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*For Ronald Reagan
Who wrote all the letters*

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