

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT: GERALD FORD



Left: President Bush and first lady Laura Bush pause to pay their respects by the casket of former President Gerald Ford on Monday in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington. **Right:** Betty Ford is comforted by her children, Michael, Susan, Steve and Jack Ford, as she pauses at the casket of her husband, President Gerald Ford, in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington on Monday.



AP PHOTOS

ed by her children, Michael, Susan, Steve and Jack Ford, as she pauses at the casket of her husband, President Gerald Ford, in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington on Monday.

Remembering Ford

President, first lady join others saying goodbye

BY DEB RIECHMANN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

President Bush on Monday bowed his head in silence before the flag-draped casket of Gerald R. Ford, a man the president said used a calm, steady hand to guide the nation after the tumultuous Watergate years.

On a rainy afternoon, Bush and first lady Laura Bush joined thousands of other mourners in paying their respects to the 38th president lying in state at the Capitol.

Silence fell under the Capitol dome when the president walked toward the casket, illuminated by spotlights and guarded at each corner by members of the military honor guard. He and Mrs. Bush lowered their heads for a few moments, as if in prayer, then turned and walked away across the Rotunda's polished stone floor, which reflected the flag's red and white stripes.

Bush, who said nothing during his one-minute stop in the Rotunda, is to eulogize Ford on Tuesday at his funeral at the National Cathedral. After he died last Tuesday, Bush called him a "true gentleman" and recounted how Ford stepped into the Oval Office after President Nixon resigned in disgrace after the Watergate scandal.

"President Ford was a great American who gave many years of dedicated service to our country," Bush said in a statement released after his death. "On Aug. 9, 1974, after a long career in the House of Representatives and service as vice president, he assumed the presidency in an hour of national turmoil and division."

"With his quiet integrity, common sense and kind instincts, President Ford helped heal our land and restore public confidence in the presidency."

Bush visited the casket, his first public event of the new year, after returning from a weeklong stay at his Texas ranch. Afterward, the Bushes drove to Blair House, across the street from the White House, to visit for a half-hour with Ford's



Susan Ford Bales, the daughter of former President Gerald Ford, stands near the flag draped casket of her father as it lays in state in the Capitol Rotunda on Monday in Washington. Ford's funeral will be conducted this morning.

widow, former first lady Betty Ford. The Bushes then walked down Pennsylvania Avenue back to the Executive Mansion.

Bush visited the Capitol, where a changing military guard kept a watchful vigil throughout the night, on the third day of mourning there for Ford, who died at 93. His funeral service will be conducted today at Washington National Cathedral.

Shortly before the three-day public viewing ended, Mrs. Ford returned to the Capitol and sat in the Rotunda for about 20 minutes with her three sons and daughter and their spouses. She clutched the hand of her son Michael. Her son Steven helped her up when she walked over to the casket, touching it one last time.

Among the other dignitaries to pay their respects Monday were Bush's father; former President George H.W. Bush, and his wife, Barbara; former President Bill Clinton and

former first lady, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y.; Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who this week becomes the first woman speaker of the House; Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.; former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; and Vice President Dan Quayle.

Inside the Rotunda, Ford's daughter and son handed remembrance cards to some of the visitors.

The blue cards had the presidential, vice presidential and House of Representatives seals and a biography of Ford on one side. On the other was a photograph of the former president in the Oval Office, his head bowed.

The message on the card: "The family of Gerald R. Ford deeply appreciates your prayers and many kindnesses as together we celebrate and honor the life of a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather and the 38th president of the United States."

Michigan church prepares for president's funeral

BY JAMES PRICHARD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.

The Rev. Nixon McMillan started hearing the jokes soon after becoming interim rector of Grace Episcopal Church, where a funeral will be conducted for former President Gerald Ford.

"As I remember, they said, 'Isn't it funny that Ford pardoned Nixon and now Nixon will bury Ford,'" McMillan said following Sunday morning services at the church. The priest's first name is John but he goes by his middle name Nixon, which is his mother's maiden name.

Cleaning, maintenance and lawn-care crews have been busy preparing the large, brick church since Ford's death Dec. 26.

Workers inside the church on Friday steam-cleaned carpets and seat cushions. Outside, they cleaned windows, mowed the grass and swept up lawn debris.

The Ford family has belonged to Grace Episcopal since the early 1940s, when the parish was housed in a building in Grand Rapids, where Ford grew up as a boy. His funeral plans at the church have been in place for years.

He and Betty Ford were married in the old church on Oct. 15, 1948. About five years later, the congregation built the cur-

rent church, which is in the upscale suburb of East Grand Rapids only a few blocks from where Ford and his family lived during his 25 years in the U.S. House.

The funeral for Ford's stepfather and adoptive father, also named Gerald Rudolph Ford, was conducted at the new church in 1962. His mother, Dorothy Gardner Ford, who died in 1967 was eulogized there.

The president and his family remained members of Grace Episcopal after they moved from the Grand Rapids area more than 30 years ago, but only occasionally returned to attend services.

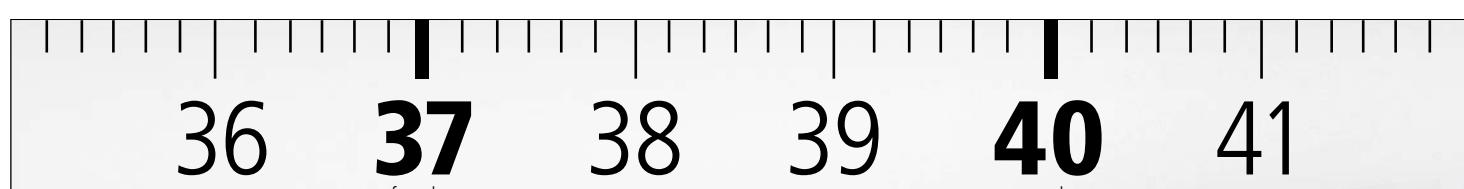


Your Dental HEALTH

by Philip J. Mirise, D.D.S.
www.cedarlanefamilydentistry.com

HEALTHY GUMS LINKED TO OVERALL HEALTH

Healthy gums not only contribute to better oral health, they also can improve overall health. According to the latest research, periodontal disease may lead to the worsening of such health problems as diabetes, respiratory disease, heart disease, and even premature births. For example, preliminary studies have found that diabetics with gum disease can reduce their blood-sugar levels to normal by treating their gum problem. In addition, a large-scale study shows that pregnant women with moderate-to-severe gum disease were twice as likely to give birth to premature babies as women with healthy gums. These findings and others should lead patients with heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory disease, as well as pregnant women, to pay greater attention to the health of their gums. Whatever your age, it's important to keep teeth.



36 37 38 39 40 41

female

male

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Those extra inches around your waist can be as life threatening as Stage II cancer.

While any excessive weight gain is dangerous to your health, weight around the middle concerns doctors the most. In fact, if you're a woman with a 37" waist or a man with a 40" waist, the risk to your health may be equal to someone with Stage II cancer. Other serious weight-related problems include diabetes, heart disease, osteoarthritis, asthma and infertility. Fortunately, though, there is something you can do about it. Our Bariatric Care Center provides weight management treatments that range from noninvasive, self-directed programs to surgical options.

Medicare plan brings savings, frustrations

By KEVIN FREKING
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

At first, Ruth Goundry wasn't sure about participating in the new Medicare drug benefit. It was too confusing, she said. But in the end, she gave it a try.

She's glad she did.

As the program's first year draws to a close, Goundry estimates that she saved about \$150 a month on her five medicines, compared with what she was spending before Medicare Part D began.

"I would say I'm very impressed with the whole thing. I have no complaints," said Goundry, a resident of Chesapeake Beach, Md. "It's meant a tremendous savings. I know other people who are saved by it. I mean that. They don't hardly pay anything."

Goundry is like millions of seniors who say they are happy with the benefit, which cost the federal government about \$30 billion in 2006.

But the program affects seniors and the disabled differently, depending upon their income and health. There are many people who believe the program could be improved.

Just down the street, at the Chesapeake Care Pharmacy, Wesley Copeland is not so impressed.

In August, he began picking up all the cost of his medicine — about \$300 a month. Plus, he had to continue paying his monthly premium of \$38. That gap in coverage is called the doughnut hole.

"We've got a lot of people in my neighborhood who are seniors like me on retirement. We have to stretch pennies, so when it gets to that doughnut hole, we have to scramble like hell to keep going," Copeland said.

Goundry and Copeland represent

"(Seniors in retirement) have to stretch pennies, so when it gets to that doughnut hole, we have to scramble like hell to keep going."

Wesley Copeland

On a gap in coverage when seniors must cover all of their prescription costs out of pocket

the millions of stories surrounding the addition of a drug benefit to Medicare this past year. The drug coverage has often been described as the biggest change in Medicare in the program's 40 years.

Under the program, seniors and the disabled enroll in a private plan. They pay a monthly premium to the plan. The government also pays the plan.

The Bush administration estimates that the coverage saves the average beneficiary about \$1,200. But many in Washington, particularly Democratic lawmakers, say the savings could be greater if the government were allowed to negotiate with drug manufacturers concerning the cost of medicine rather than leaving that chore to the plans.

Overall, about 22.5 million people enrolled in private plans during the program's first year. Nearly 7 million more people get their medicine through their employer, and those employers get a tax credit for providing that coverage.

Herb Kuhn, deputy administrator at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said that he believes the federal government learned many lessons from the past year that will make this year's startup run more smoothly.

"We have a much more sophisticated and built up infrastructure from a year ago," Kuhn said.

Pilots searching for snowbound travelers

By JON SARCHE

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER

Pilots in a dozen planes were sent up over the plains of Colorado and Kansas on Monday to look for any stranded travelers following a blizzard that dumped nearly 3 feet of snow and piled it in drifts 15 feet high.

Utility crews, meanwhile, struggled to restore electrical service to tens of thousands of homes and businesses.

The storm, which struck Thursday, had dwindled to a line of heavy rainfall Monday along the East Coast, but a few roads in southeastern Colorado and western Kansas were still choked by snow.

"Life and safety are still the No. 1 priorities. We need to get the roads open so people can get out and deal with the situation," said Dick Vnuk, chief of operations for the Colorado Division of Emergency Management.

The huge storm was blamed for at least 12 deaths in four states. It was the second blizzard in as many weeks.

The Civil Air Patrol sent six planes into the air Monday over Colorado's Kit Carson County, where there had been reports of more people snowbound along Interstate 70, even though that



A collapsed building rests on a vehicle after a snow storm on Monday, in Trinidad, Colo.

highway was reopened Sunday for the first time in two days, patrol 1st Lt. Steve Hamilton.

On Sunday, CAP crews spotted two stranded vehicles with five people near the Kansas state line, along with several trucks whose crews chose to stay with their rigs, Hamilton said.

Some roads in southeast Colorado were choked by snowdrifts that measured 10 feet high and 15-foot drifts had been piled up in western Kansas.

The Kansas CAP and Highway Patrol sent up six planes aiding the search for possible snowbound travelers, and troopers driving I-70 were looking for stranded vehicles.