

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

NEWS

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ANN ARBOR---As a producer of illustrious graduates, The University of Michigan traditionally has ranked among the top three institutions in the nation.

Seldom does the limelight fall as brightly as it is currently upon a 1935 Michigan graduate named Gerald R. Ford, the incumbent 38th president of the United States.

President Ford, in a move that should gladden the heart of every university alumni director, has chosen to speak at his alma mater.

He speaks Wednesday (Sept. 15) at the University's Crisler Arena, in a public program to begin at 7 p.m.

It is not surprising that Gerald Ford has risen to national prominence in a leadership role. The earmarks were there 40 years ago when he was a student at Michigan.

As a football center, Ford had earned all-state honors in Grand Rapids even before he played on national championship teams at Michigan in 1932 and 1933. He was named most valuable player on the 1934 Wolverines, a kind of political victory based on ability and the respect of his teammates. He was selected to play in the East-West Shrine game in San Francisco and in the College All-Star game against the Chicago Bears following his senior season.

After receiving his bachelor of arts degree in 1935 from the U-M (College of Literature, Science, and the Arts), Ford obtained his law degree at Yale University. He utilized his Michigan football experience by serving as assistant football coach at Yale while in law school there.

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While a student at Michigan, Ford was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, serving it as chapter treasurer and house manager. He was co-chairman of the senior ball. He was elected a member of Michigamua, prestigious senior men's honorary society. Ford took two courses at the U-M Law School in summer 1937.

President Ford is one of four brothers to attend the U-M. The others are Thomas G. Ford, bachelor of arts, 1941; Richard A. Ford, bachelor of science and master of science in engineering, 1949; and James F. Ford, who attended in 1945-46.

The president received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from his alma mater in 1974 when, as vice president of the United States, he delivered the commencement address.

Ford was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1948, where he served for 25 years. Papers covering his political career have been given to the Michigan Historical Collections at the University since 1963. The material includes his papers as a member of the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He subsequently co-authored with John R. Stiles the book, "Portrait of the Assassin" (1965).

Ford today resides in the White House, the best known address in the nation. But as a Depression-era university student he waited on tables in the interns' dining room at University Hospital in Ann Arbor, living much more modestly.

As Ford recalled those days in a biography by J. F. terHorst, "The hotshot center from Grand Rapids came to live at Michigan in a third-floor ten-by-ten room in the back of the cheapest rooming house I could find. I shared the rent (\$4 a week) with a basketball player. We each had a desk and a bed, which pretty much exhausted the floor space, and there was one small window between us."