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**Duke University School of Law, Class of 1937
37th President of the United States**

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IN MEMORIAM: RICHARD M. NIXON†

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In 1934, Richard M. Nixon responded to a notice on the bulletin board at Whittier College, announcing twenty-five \$250 tuition scholarships to Duke University School of Law. Nixon joined many other needy Phi Beta Kappa college graduates who began their legal education together at Duke in the 1930s at a Law School reorganized under the leadership of President William Preston Few and Dean Justin Miller, who had arrived from the University of Southern California. They were taught by a young and brilliant faculty, attracted by generous starting salaries made possible by gifts in the 1920s from James B. Duke.

President Nixon worked while a student in the Law School library to supplement his tuition scholarship. He had a very distinguished academic career as a student, graduating third in his class and being honored with membership in the Order of the Coif. He was also invited to work with Professor David Cavers on his new interdisciplinary law journal called *Law and Contemporary Problems*, for which he wrote and published an article. He was elected president of the Duke Bar Association, foreshadowing his interest in elective office. His family joined him in 1937 for his graduation, after which he returned to Whittier and became the first graduate of the Duke School of Law to become a member of the California bar.

President Nixon has remained a loyal alumnus of the Law School, where his 1937 classmates established a student scholarship

† This statement was prepared for the Nixon Library and was included in the program for the Duke University School of Law commencement ceremony on May 8, 1994.

endowment fund in his name. Through gifts from students, faculty and alumni, his portrait was presented to the Law School in 1969. President Nixon graciously hosted the 35th reunion of his class in the White House in 1972. He has been interested in the Law School's recent efforts to educate Chinese students in the law and legal institutions in a larger effort to create a rule of law in the People's Republic of China. In recognition of President Nixon's impressive achievements in foreign affairs, several of these Chinese students have been awarded the Richard M. Nixon Scholarship, along with American students who have shown a special interest in international law and organizations.

President Nixon had a distinguished and innovative record in international affairs during his presidency. His 1972 visit to China was probably his greatest foreign policy triumph, creating the opportunity for the United States later to establish formal diplomatic relations with China for the first time since the Communists controlled China. He was deeply respected by the Chinese leadership for his seminal act of diplomacy. His October 1989 visit to China, following the Tiananmen Square crackdown on demonstrators, was also probably his greatest act of statesmanship as a former president. He alone was able to communicate to the Chinese leaders the outrage and disappointment in the United States and elsewhere about these events, warning the Chinese leaders not to sink into "a backwater of oppression and stagnation." He is also closely associated with modern international arms control treaties. He signed the SALT treaty in 1972, and in his recent writings, he has stressed the importance of recognizing the limits of the use of force. He has always been concerned with the issues and problems in the separation of powers between the Executive Branch and the Congress in the conduct of foreign affairs. Since leaving the office of president, he has written several books, much of the contents of which deal with views of a senior statesman about foreign affairs. President Nixon will be considered by many to be the most interesting president in this century in the conduct of foreign affairs, both as president and as a subsequent senior statesman.

President Nixon is the only graduate of Duke University to hold the offices of vice-president and president of the United States. The Duke University School of Law salutes its graduate, President Richard M. Nixon, for his endless quest to address questions of public life and about humankind.