

# **President Ronald Reagan Oral History Project**

## **Briefing Materials**

**Robert H. Tuttle**

**December 12, 2003**

**Prepared by Darby Morrisroe, Chief Research Assistant**  
August 2003

## ROBERT H. TUTTLE TIMELINE

Prepared by Darby A. Morrisroe

Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 7/20/2003

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Tuttle receives a Bachelor of Arts from Stanford University.

Tuttle earns an MBA from the University of Southern California.

Tuttle serves as Chairman of the Budget and Expenditures Committee of the California Republican Party.

Tuttle is the President of three automotive dealerships in Los Angeles and Tucson.

**1980** Tuttle serves as Co-Chairman of the California Reagan for President Committee.

During the Republican National Convention, Tuttle is a delegate and serves on the Rules Committee. (*National Journal*, 6/15/1985)

**1982**

*December* Tuttle is named Special Assistant to the President in the Office of Presidential Personnel.

**1983**

*February* Elizabeth Dole becomes Secretary of Transportation, replacing Drew Lewis. (Peter B. Levy, *Encyclopedia of the Reagan-Bush Years*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 68)

*March* Margaret Heckler assumes the post of Secretary of Health and Human Services, replacing Richard Schweiker. (Levy, p. 67)

*November* William Clark replaces James Watt as Secretary of the Interior. (Levy, p. 67)

**1985**

*January* The press reports that Tuttle is the leading candidate to replace Philip Abrams as Undersecretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is rumored that Tuttle would forgo the post at HUD for the chance to serve as White House personnel chief. (*The Washington Post*, 1/23/1985)

*February* On the 7<sup>th</sup>, Tuttle is appointed Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel. On the same day, former personnel head

John S. Herrington, is sworn in as Energy Secretary, replacing Donald Hodel, who becomes Secretary of the Interior. (Levy, pp. 67-68)

William Bennett assumes the post of Secretary of Education, replacing Terrel Bell. (Levy, p. 68)

James Baker III replaces Donald Regan as Secretary of the Treasury. Regan becomes White House Chief of Staff. (Levy, p. 67)

Edwin Meese III replaces William French Smith as Attorney General. (Levy, p. 67)

Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan resigns after a New York court refuses to throw out an indictment against him for defrauding the New York subway system of \$7.4 million. It is reported that Tuttle has been asked to canvas labor groups for suggestions to replace Donovan. (*Newsweek*, 3/25/1985)

*April* William E. Brock III becomes Secretary of Labor, replacing Donovan. (Levy, p. 67)

*June* It is reported that Tuttle is urging President Reagan to fire Loretta Cornelius, acting Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Cornelius has come under fire for ignoring a White House order not to make any personnel changes at the agency in the wake of the withdrawal of Donald Devine's nomination for a second term as OPM Director. (*The Washington Post*, 6/14/1985)

*December* The National Academy of Public Administration issues the final report of its two-year study of presidential appointments. The report makes a number of recommendations for reforms that would allow a president "to attract and hold talented persons who meet high standards of knowledge, experience and ethics." (*National Journal*, 12/14/1985)

Otis Bowen replaces Margaret Heckler as Secretary of Health and Human Services. (Levy, p. 67)

## **1986**

*February* After receiving a letter of termination from Tuttle, Deputy Director of OPM Loretta Cornelius refuses to leave, saying, "I cannot be fired by anyone but the President." Cornelius' dismissal becomes the subject of hearings before a subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee. Tuttle is invited to testify before the Committee. (*The Washington Post*, 2/6/1986, 2/28/1986)

*March* Richard E. Lyng replaces John Block as Secretary of Agriculture. (Levy, p. 67)

*April* It is reported that Chief of Staff Donald Regan gives Tuttle the task of scouting a replacement for the seat left vacant on the Federal Reserve by the resignation of Vice Chairman Preston Martin. (*The Washington Post*, 4/6/1986)

*October* The Senate Committee on Government Affairs removes from its voting agenda the controversial nomination of political scientist John T. Agresto to head to the National Archives. Tuttle indicates the Administration plans to renominate Agresto the next session. "More than any other individual I interviewed, John Agresto had a plan to really make the archives an institution we can be proud of," says Tuttle. (*The Washington Post*, 10/3/1986)

## 1987

*March* Responding to reports that the number of African-Americans holding top positions in the federal government has declined under the Reagan Administration, Tuttle says, "This Administration is opposed to the numbers game in any way, shape or form. It would be demeaning to people who come into the government to say there was any kind of quota. It would be an insult to every woman and minority." (*The New York Times*, 3/22/1987)

*April* Tuttle denies that the Administration's practice of selecting some ambassadorial nominees from outside the Foreign Service has resulted in unqualified appointees to ambassadorships. "This Administration...has been extraordinarily successful in coming up with people who are extremely well-qualified to be ambassadors," says Tuttle. "There are people outside the Foreign Service who know about foreign affairs, and it's not right to infer that appointment of a few well-qualified outsiders should be a cause of poor morale in the Foreign Service." (*The Washington Post*, 4/28/1987)

*September* Tuttle denies widespread reports that he will replace Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole, who recently announced her plans to resign at the end of the month. "I am not a candidate for Secretary of Transportation, with an exclamation point!" insists Tuttle. (*The New York Times*, 9/16/1987)

*October* Calvin W. Verity, Jr. assumes the post of Secretary of Commerce, replacing Malcolm Baldrige. (Levy, p. 67)

Expecting an end of term "exodus" of personnel from the Administration, Tuttle reports that such a significant departure of staff has not materialized. Tuttle challenges press reports of widespread departures, asserting, "The idea of a mass bailout is simply not true. The low turnover rate points to the success of the Administration." (*The New York Times*, 10/2/1987; *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10/22/1987)

*November* Frank Carlucci replaces Caspar Weinberger as Secretary of Defense. (Levy, p. 67)

- December* Ann D. McLaughlin replaces Brock as Secretary of Labor. (Levy, p. 67)
- James Burnley IV becomes Secretary of Transportation, replacing Elizabeth Dole. (Levy, p. 68)
- 1988** Tuttle is named Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Personnel.
- February* Tuttle dismisses reports of prevalent vacancies in the Cabinet departments saying, "There is no brain drain. There are no more vacancies than there have ever been." According to White House personnel office statistics, 22 percent of executive level positions in the Cabinet departments are vacant or filled by acting appointees. (*The Washington Post*, 2/15/1998)
- August* Nicholas Brady replaces Baker as Secretary of the Treasury. (Levy, p. 67)
- Richard Thornburgh replaces Meese as Attorney General. (Levy, p. 67)
- September* Lauro Cavazos, Jr. becomes Secretary of Education, replacing Bennett. (Levy, p. 68)
- November* George H.W. Bush is elected the 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States.
- Reagan makes recess appointments of 32 individuals, including a number of ambassadors. According to Tuttle, the appointments include "the most compelling" of the remaining nominations left pending after Congress' adjournment. "We felt there were compelling reasons in each case," remarks Tuttle. "This isn't something we did haphazardly." (*The Washington Post*, 11/23/1988; *The New York Times*, 11/24/1988)
- Tuttle meets regularly with Chase Untermeyer, Personnel Director for Bush's transition team.
- December* Tuttle and Untermeyer jointly issue a memo to political appointees asking those who have not yet done so to submit their letters of resignation. (*The Washington Post*, 12/31/1998)
- 1989**
- January* Tuttle is appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1/15/1989)
- Bush is inaugurated President of the United States on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **ROBERT H. TUTTLE SUGGESTED TOPICS**

*Prepared by Darby A. Morrisroe*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 6/20/2003*

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### ***Origins of Relationship with Reagan***

- Describe the circumstances surrounding your entry into California politics.
- Discuss your recollections of Reagan as Governor of California.
- Were you involved in the 1976 Reagan presidential bid?
- Discuss your observations of the role of Reagan's "kitchen cabinet."

### ***1980 Presidential Election and Transition***

- Describe your role and responsibilities in the 1980 presidential campaign as Co-Chairman of the California Reagan for President Committee.
- Comment on the 1980 Republican National Convention (California delegation, Rules Committee, vice presidential selection, the possible Reagan-Ford ticket, etc.)
- What were the major challenges faced by the campaign in California?
- Were you involved in the transition? If so, describe the process of recruitment and selection of the Cabinet and White House staff.

### ***Office of Presidential Personnel***

- How did you come to be selected as Special Assistant to the President in the Office of Presidential Personnel? What was your portfolio in this position?
- How did your responsibilities change when you became Director of Presidential Personnel?
- Describe the range and type of activities that most occupied your time.
- Discuss your relationships and interactions with other White House offices and staff (Office of Political Affairs, Office of Legislative Affairs, Office of the White House Counsel, Chief of Staff, etc.). With whom in the White House did you work most closely?
- What differences did you observe in the management of the White House under James Baker III, Donald Regan and Howard Baker, Jr.?
- What attributes did President Reagan consider most important for his staff and Cabinet? How involved was President Reagan in making personnel decisions? Discuss the frequency and nature of your interactions with President Reagan.
- Comment on the role of Cabinet members and agency directors in personnel selection during the Reagan Administration. How much control did they have over the staffing of their departments and agencies? Does any particular personnel selection stand out in your memory? Which Cabinet members or agency heads were most involved in your personnel selection process?
- Describe the process of personnel selection for the White House staff, the Cabinet, and sub-Cabinet posts. How were candidates identified and recruited? Who participated in the selection process? What was involved in the vetting process? What attributes did you look for in candidates? Did the process differ for domestic and foreign policy positions? How were confirmations handled?
- Discuss the judicial selection process during the Reagan Administration and your role in it.

- Did the Republican National Committee or other party organizations play a role in staffing the Administration? Did the Administration seek input from interest groups or outside organizations?
- Discuss your efforts to prepare for the transition to the Bush Administration. What were your priorities for the transition?
- Comment on your appointment to the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution.

***The Reagan Presidency in Retrospect***

- Discuss your observations of Reagan's decision-making style. What were the distinctive characteristics of Reagan as a public leader, a legislative leader, and a party leader?
- What features of Ronald Reagan and his presidency were overlooked or misunderstood by the press? What were the strengths and weakness of the Reagan presidency?
- How should the Reagan presidency be viewed in history?

## TIMELINES

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