



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT BY FRED RYAN,
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE
RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION AND INSTITUTE
ON THE DEATH OF WILLIAM HENKEL**

Simi Valley, California – The Reagan Foundation and Institute mourns the loss of William (Bill) Henkel, President Reagan’s Assistant to the President and Director of the Presidential Advance Office who President Reagan once publicly thanked by saying, “I have relied on you extensively, your advice and your experience...and, I, personally, recognize how much credit for our success belongs to you.”

His responsibilities went far beyond the logistics of presidential travel. He helped develop the public events through which President Reagan communicated his agenda, worked closely with the White House Planning Group on the themes and programs of the administration, and played an important role in planning the President’s domestic and international travel.

President Reagan recognized the significance of Henkel’s contributions. In accepting his resignation in 1987, the President wrote that Henkel had served him in “many roles” throughout his two terms and the campaign that preceded them, carrying out his responsibilities with “unfailing professionalism, personal insight, and skill.”

Henkel’s White House career spanned some of the defining moments of the Reagan presidency. He helped oversee the planning and execution of presidential travel, including the President’s historic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva in 1985 and Reykjavik in 1986, as well as numerous domestic and international trips. He also served as Director of Operations for President Reagan’s Second Inaugural in 1985. His work encompassed the complex coordination of presidential schedules, events, security, logistics and public engagement that allowed the President to take his message directly to the American people and the world.

Perhaps most revealing of Henkel’s character and his understanding of President Reagan’s leadership was the letter he wrote upon leaving the White House in September 1987. Reflecting on his years of service, Henkel wrote that his most indelible memory was “the mutual love and respect between you and the American people.” He described witnessing firsthand a renewed pride in America and expressed admiration for Reagan’s willingness to “go to the people for what you believe in.”

The Reagan Foundation and Institute is honored to remember Bill Henkel not simply as a White House advance professional, but as a dedicated public servant who helped President Reagan bring his message directly to the American people and who played a behind-the-scenes role in some of the most consequential moments of the Reagan presidency.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Bill Henkel's entire family.

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