

Ron Reagan's Remarks
March 11, 2016

I love that story about the masseur. I just imagine my father lying naked on the table just waiting for this big man to do something else. What must have been going through his mind?

Well, I guess I'm batting clean-up here. So, let me on behalf of my family thank you all for coming here. We really appreciate it. My sister, Patti, and I, who suddenly find ourselves orphaned, really appreciate being surrounded by so much, so much love and kindness. And to Jim and Tom and everybody else who spoke and your kind words, we appreciate that very much too and to the folks at the Library here who've put this whole thing on, what a terrific job they've done and we so much appreciate that too.

She did love a party and she would want this to be a party. This is not a tragedy; this is a celebration. I hope you've had a chance to have a look around here. Some of you of course have been here many times before. Um but I hope you realize that none of this, none of this, would have been possible without Nancy Reagan. I don't mean that she was active in fundraising and building a library – of course she was. What I really mean to say is that there would be no Ronald Reagan Presidential Library without a President Ronald Reagan and there likely wouldn't have been be a President Ronald Reagan without a Nancy Reagan. Of course it may not have happened that way if she was not made of such stern stuff. She may not have made it all the way to being Mrs. Ronald Reagan.

See, my dad played hard to get little bit when they were dating way back when. He had already purchased a ranch not too far from here in Malibu and he loved to go there and ride his horses and buck hay and generally get dirty and sweaty outdoors and that sort of thing. Not the kind of thing that she's really crazy about – my mother. But she was a good sport and she wanted to participate in this. If he loved his ranch, well, she was going to love the ranch too. And so she would go out there he would do his thing and she would wonder about how she could help.

Now this ranch, out in Malibu, was about 700 acres or so and had a long driveway that led to the house, about a half mile with fences on both sides. So, they would go out there and they would hang out and be ranchers but she wanted to help, as I said, and so she asked him, "What can I do to help?" Did I mention the fences lining that half mile driveway were unpainted? So he handed her a bucket of paint and a brush. And my mother painted a mile's worth of fence. Every post, every plank, both sides – ONCE! That paint job lasted for the duration.

Now, my father was confident but he was not an arrogant man at all. It takes a great deal of chutzpah to run for President of the United States or even Governor of California for that matter. And her absolute belief in him gave him that chutzpah to run for office. I don't know that he would have done it otherwise. My mother provided the encouragement that he needed. She guided him. She provided a refuge into which he could repair to gather his strength. She guarded his privacy. She protected him. Both possessed great individual talents but as a couple, they were more than the sum of

their parts. And it would be a mistake, by the way, to consider her somehow subordinate to him just because he was usually the one taking center stage. They were co-equals. They complimented one other. Individually they may have gone far but together they could, and did, go anywhere.

My father was inclined to believe that everyone was basically good and that certainly anyone that worked for him was pure of heart and could never be nursing a private agenda. My mother didn't share that inclination and she didn't have that luxury. In my mother's world, you were either helpful to her husband or you were not. And I think we all know which side of the equation you would want to be on.

Since we're among friends, I think we can admit that she was not always the easiest person to deal with. She could be difficult. She could be demanding. She could be a bit obsessive. Truly, she could be a royal pain in the ass when she wanted to be but usually only so that my father didn't have to be. You did not want to get on Mom's bad side – particularly by hurting her husband. If you did that, you had earned yourself an implacable foe. If you happen to run into the ghost of Don Regan sometime, you can just ask him.

On the other hand, you couldn't ask for a more loyal or dedicated friend. Just ask Joan Rivers should you run into her in the hereafter. When Joan's husband died, he was on the east coast and Joan could not, for some reason, get the coroner to release the body so he could come home to the west coast. Joan's a comedian. She did not know who to call. Who do you call to pull strings like this to get something like that done? Well, she was acquainted with my mother but they weren't great friends yet. Nevertheless, she bucked up her courage and called the White House and got my mother on the phone. Joan's husband's body was on the next plane out of town to the west coast and Joan became my mother's buddy for the rest of her life.

I see the faces of many friends here today. People who've known and loved my mother for years but most my mother's buddies are gone now. She is among the last of her cohort - the old gang, her generation – and now she is truly with them.

If my mother had one great talent, I think it was that she knew how to love and she loved one man more than the world. In her later years, after my father had gone, she used to ask me whether I thought she would be with him again when she died. I'm not a believer in the supernatural but I always assured her that wherever Dad had gone, she was surely going to go there too. We should all be so lucky as to end up where we have always wanted to be and today my mother comes to rest on this lovely hilltop, with its far-reaching views next to her beloved Ronald Reagan Library.

And by the way, from here she will be able to keep an eye on things. Just saying – no slacking. How long will it be before tales begin to emerge of a petite Chanel-clad spirit roaming the galleries and halls. Just checking to make sure things are running smoothly.

But most importantly, she will once again lay down beside the man who was the love of her life. The one she loved 'til the end of her days. They will watch the sun drop over the hills in the west over

the seas as night falls. They will look out across the valley. My father will tell her that the lights below are her jewels. The moon and stars will endlessly turn overhead and here they'll stay, as they always wished it to be – resting in each other's arms, only in each other's arms 'til the end of time."