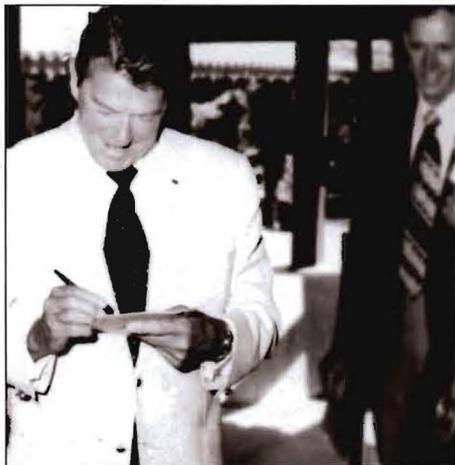


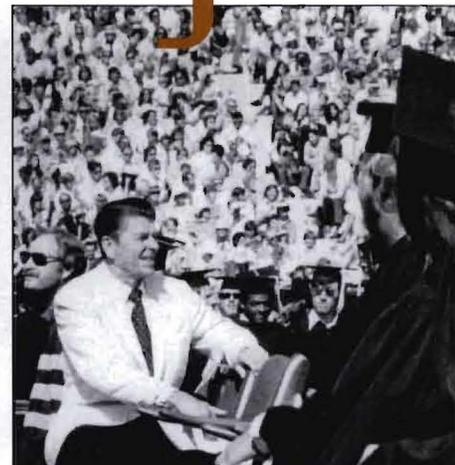
Remembering Ronald Reagan



Then-California Governor Ronald Reagan on the Cal Poly campus



Reagan and then-Cal Poly President Robert E. Kennedy, on Reagan's left



Reagan during commencement

Cal Poly's 1974 graduating class had the distinct honor of hearing California's Governor Ronald Reagan deliver a poignant commencement address.

In introductory remarks, Robert E. Kennedy, Cal Poly's president at the time, noted, "Never in the previous 67 years has a governor of the state of California accepted an invitation to be a speaker at a commencement exercise on this campus."

And to this date, Governor Reagan remains the only governor to do so.

That talk, though, was not the first time Governor Reagan addressed a campus crowd. As head of the State College Board of Trustees, he delivered the principle address during Kennedy's April 1968 inauguration as Cal Poly president. Kennedy, who served as president until 1979, writes about that day in his own words:

A loyal democrat, I thought Reagan, a former motion picture actor, would always recite from memory speeches prepared by professional writers. His actions that day changed my mind; I almost

became a republican. While we sat next to each other on the platform waiting our turn to speak, we heard from about a dozen other people.

I had written a speech, and I had practiced it for days. Reagan, on the other hand, reached inside his coat, pulled out

"NEVER IN THE PREVIOUS 67 YEARS HAS A GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO BE A SPEAKER AT A COMMENCEMENT EXERCISE ON THIS CAMPUS."

some 5-by-7 cards and a pen. While we sat, I watched as he scribbled notes on those blank cards.

When he spoke, he only glanced at those cards. That's when I changed my mind about his speaking ability and intellect. His remarks were well received by the largest audience I had ever seen in the gymnasium. I remember well one piece of advice for educators: 'A college's obligation is to teach, not indoctrinate.' I, too, tried to clarify the role of a poly-

technic college. I said, 'At this polytechnic college, we may emphasize science and technology, but we shall strive for appropriate equilibrium between the knowledge man needs to reform his environment and the understanding he needs to live at peace with other men.

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, wants to be the best polytechnic college in the state and nation – and that's our thing.'

Here we remember the former governor and 40th president of the United States, who passed away in June. We look back at that time 30 years ago, a time that Reagan referred to in his commencement address as "a day of nostalgia, of looking back on a montage of memories ..." ■