

SUITE 600
815 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

December 6, 1977

Mr. J. L. Pruett
713 West Mahan Street
Clute, Texas 77531

Dear Mr. Pruett:

I have just returned to my office to find your letter regarding John W. McCormack, former Speaker of the House of Representatives.

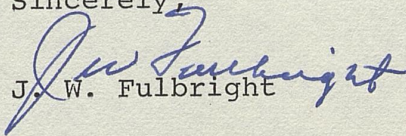
I had very slight acquaintance with Mr. McCormack, having served in the House only briefly and as a freshman. He was, of course, a very strong leader of the House, with positive attitudes toward most of the national and international issues of the day.

One incident that strikes in my memory was that he felt so strongly about Nikita Khrushchev that when Khrushchev visited this country in 1959, I was told that the Speaker refused to allow a Joint Session of Congress. It had been customary prior to that time that Heads of State officially visiting the United States were usually received in a Joint Session. As a result of that action, the Committee on Foreign Relations, of which I was Chairman, was requested to receive Chairman Khrushchev, which was done. This resulted in a most lively and interesting meeting between Mr. Khrushchev and some 25 or 30 members of the Senate.

Speaker McCormack was very close to President Johnson and always supported him in his international policies.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,


J. W. Fulbright

THE MIMIC

Dan Garcia, a Cotulla businessman and former student of Lyndon Johnson's third-grade classroom told the following story, years later:

In the mornings, Mr. Johnson would hurriedly walk into the classroom, arms swinging with each step. Before class, his thirty-two students would start the day with a song which their teacher had taught them. This was a theme song used for their opening number by Billy Jones and Ernie Hare, a vaudeville team of the late 1920's. The song, changed to fit the occasion went this way:

"How do you do, Mr. Johnson,
How do you do?
How do you do, Mr. Johnson,
How are you?
We'll do it if we can,
We'll stand by you to a man.
How do you do, Mr. Johnson,
How are you?"

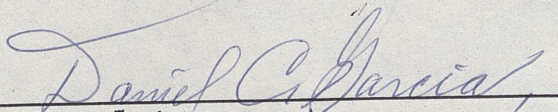
Three students, one being young Danny Garcia, came to the front of the room on one particular morning, after their teacher had quickly strode out of the room, arms swinging as usual, to take care of other business pertaining to his professional duties. These three students pranced around the room mimicking their teacher by swinging their arms in exaggerated motions. The other twenty-nine children roared with laughter at their antics. Suddenly the laughter ceased. Two of the imitators rushed rapidly to their seats. Danny, oblivious to the "storm clouds" that had gathered, continued his performance. When Danny looked up, there stood an unwelcomed addition to his audience, a very unimpressed Mr. Lyndon Johnson, with furrowed brow and penetrating eyes.

As Mr. Garcia recounted, "I thought I was going to be lectured as he led me to his office by the hand. This wasn't the case as I soon found out. Without a warning, he turned me over his knee and thoroughly administered about a dozen good licks on my behind, with that big hand which had so recently held mine as we came to the office."

He loved his students and would do anything for them, always offering encouragement and assistance, but demanding the respect due his position as their teacher.

He never forgot "his students" and their needs. Many years later; as the 36th President of the United States, he corresponded with a number of them, thanking them for their help, in his humble beginning. On March 22, 1965, in a letter to Mr. Daniel C. Garcia, the young imitator, of some thirty-odd years earlier, he stated:

"As you well know, what I learned from you and the other members of your class has been a constant source of inspiration to me."


Daniel C. Garcia

Date

8/28/78

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

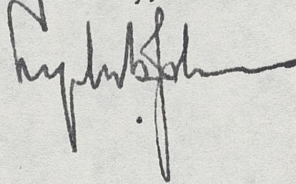
March 22, 1965

Dear Dan:

Thank you for your wire following my March 15 address.

As you well know, what I learned from you and the other members of your class has been a constant source of inspiration to me. I'm glad that you approve of our latest effort in the struggle for equal opportunity for all our citizens.

Sincerely,



Mr. Daniel C. Garcia

Cotulla, Texas

Copy

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Pruett,

What a wonderful project you have for the children of your school! You could not have picked a more outstanding American for them to study. Those of us who knew him personally were blessed, for he left such an important mark in the lives of others. Senator Bayh and I are happy to contribute this personal story about President Johnson, and we hope you find it useful.

When we first moved to Washington, our son, Evan, was seven years old. One Sunday evening President Johnson called us and said, "Birch, why don't you bring Marvella and come for dinner with Lady Bird and me in the family dining room." Our housekeeper was gone and the two teenage girls who babysat were also gone, so about forty-five minutes later Birch called the President back and said, "We can't find anyone to babysit." The President then said, "Well, bring Evan along." We got Evan all dressed up and went. We drove to the White House and were admitted to the grounds. We went in and was taken to the private quarters. Evan used wonderful manners, but he had never been confronted with finger bowls before and I didn't know what he would do with them. I thought he might drink out of them or something. Evan was seated next to Mrs. Johnson. I was across the table and could see him through the flowers.

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Mrs. Johnson was terrific with him. She realized his problem and took the finger bowls away. She took him on a tour and he sat on the Lincoln bed. It was just like President Johnson to say, "Bring him along." It showed what a great man he was.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marwella Bayh".

Mrs. Birch Bayh

Mr. J. L. Pruett
Principal
Special Education
713 W. Mahan Street
Richwood-Clute, Texas 77531

St. David's Church
(EPISCOPAL)
1300 WILTSHIRE AVENUE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78209

Dear Mr. Pruitt,

Thank you for your warm letter which shows the affection you feel for the students with whom you are working. My church has a Saturday morning program for Special Education students and we have a week long program on the Texas coast each summer. So, I feel a special kinship for you and those with whom you work.

The President was a very human person, with many fine, strong characteristics and also with some weaknesses like any of us. He loved his country very deeply and was an unashamed patriot. He loved the land and was never happier than when he was able to be on his ranch, looking at the cattle

and watching the whole of nature with an eye that didn't miss much of what was there. He was a restless man, filled with lots of nervous energy and never able to sit for very long. He loved life and had a great appetite for everything, especially the good meals that Zephyr enjoyed preparing for him. He loved to talk and had a telephone hooked up to the table in the family dining room of the White House. If a conversation brought someone to his remembrance he would pick up the phone and ask the operator to get that person on the line.

The Johnson family was quite close, but it was very obvious that each parent had their favorite child and each child their favorite parent. Lyndon and Lucy were "soul mates" and so were Lynda and Mrs. Johnson.

The president always had a deep feel for the common people and a strong sense of identification with the underdog.

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This was apparent in the years ⁸²⁴⁻²⁴⁸¹ he spent teaching Mexican-Americans in Cotulla. It was evident in all the civil rights and educational legislation which was passed during his presidency. He always had a circle of friends that went from the high and mighty to the little people whom everyone else passed by. He was the kind of man who would pick up a stray dog and bring it home with him. He was warm, impulsive at times and very generous with those he liked the best. He worked hard and played hard and was generally impatient with people who were supposed to be competent but really were not. He was a very complex person with many sides to his personality. Some of his "sides"

were more appealing than the others,
but they were all wrapped up in
one man who proved to be big
enough to step down from the
office of President when he felt
that it would be best for his
country if he did.

I thank you for your
letter. Best wishes to you in
your ministry of teaching and
to the children whom you
serve.

Faithfully yours,
Gerald McAlester

S. A. TX
Nov 10th

Dear Mrs Pruett -

I show your inquiry in the interest of President Johnson. Congressman Kleberg was elected to Congress in a special election in 1933 - Roy Miller who was Mayor of Corpus Christi managed the campaign of Mr Kleberg & introduced President Johnson to Congressman Kleberg. The President had been teaching school at Cotulla Texas then Houston Texas. When the NYA was established by the Congress, President F D R appointed a Mr Brown to administer the NYA and Mr Brown asked Lyndon to be the Director for Texas, hence he left Mr Kleberg to accept the Directorship of the NYA for Texas. He made a great Director and established the first Roadside Park in Texas about 8 miles north of San Antonio on San Pedro Ave. He became well known over the State and had a wonderful NYA organization of young men most of them from his school mates. The Congressman Walter Buchanan from 10th district of Texas died but since Lyndon lived in

the 10th District he was eligible to
be a Candidate to fill the vacancy. Two
of his friends met in Austin Sunday morning
to discuss his possibilities - The meeting lasted
all day and at five o'clock I told the
group I had to leave to return to San
Antonio and I told Lyndon if he wanted
to be a Congressman he would have to
announce his intention and "run" for the
vacancy and he said "That I will do" and
he was elected. On election day he was in
Brookridge Hospital in Austin as a result
of surgery. I took him a load of tamales
to the ranch on several occasions and would give
the State Police and Secret Service tamales when
approaching the gate to the ranch. He found
out and said I was giving his tamales away
He called me one day and said - "Now you know
I invited your Boss (the Postmaster General) to the
White House for a Mexican Dinner and I don't
want to tell the Postmaster General the reason we
don't have tamales is that your Postmaster in San Antonio
gave you tamales to the State Police + Secret Service
so you should send me some tamales for your
Boss Mexican Dinner. He went to all that
trouble to make up that fictitious story

I would send his samples to the White House. I made arrangements with a Vice President of American Airlines in Washington to transport the can. Left airport La @ 11 am on way to Wash for 4 pm. The Vice President of America met the plane took the can to the White House but when they removed the lid found the samples were still hot.

I sincerely trust you + your students will find some of this interesting.

Good wishes

Sincerely
you

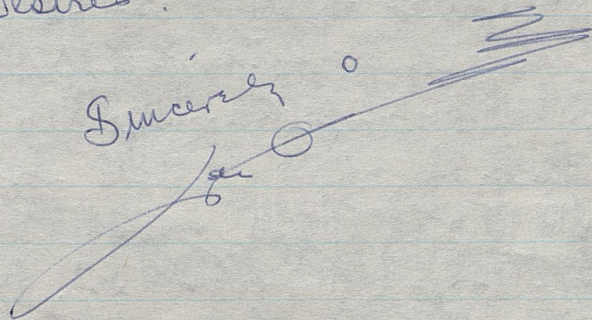
Dear Mrs. Pruett:

Acknowledgment is had of your request concerning any interesting item of President Johnson. This may be helpful. He called me from Karmack Tex 730 a Nov 22 1934 & said, "Lady Bird & I want to be married at the Rt Marks Episcopal Church @ 8pm to wit, arrange for the church + Pastor, reserve 2 Connecy rooms at Plaza Hotel for 6 pm as we will see you there @ 6 pm and you know what happened. He hung up the phone and since he was some 400 miles away + would travel all day there was no way I could contact him during the day. I spent the good part of the morning endeavoring to convince the Rev Arthur M. Kenney the Rector of Rt Marks that he was going to perform a Wedding ceremony at 8p. He protested such haste saying it was contrary to all the procedures of the Church. He must talk with them to learn their back ground etcetera - etcetera. Then there was the marriage license, which required a physical, then a reception, dinner & last but not least a few people to be invited. St Marks as a large church, I finally had about 15 present. We met as scheduled and in bringing them up to the state of arrangements, Lady Bird

and "Don where is the wedding ring - I had forget
the wedding ring, actually I did not forget it for
I did not think that was any of my business. These
two love birds, I presumed passed a least 50
Jewelry stores from TovarKona to Ben Antonio
at 7pm there are not many places selling these
rings. I rushed out I tried open a Deas
Rockback store and when the sales lady
inquired as to the size I said give me 20
and I'll bring back 10 - I fitted one of the rings
on lady Bird's finger, returned to Deas with
the 19 rings and (\$2.50) two dollars + fifty cent the
cost of the ring (for which I have never been paid)
we went to the Church. The Rev McKinstry
adhered to the Episcopal ritual with a
handful of witnesses and they lived happily
ever after.

And I trust this will be helpful to
you in your desires.

Sincerely



1
From L. B. J. Country came our 36th president. There have been many changes since President Johnson grew up here. At that time there were no highways, no electricity and few entertainments. The country was farming and ranching country and there ~~was~~ no wealth. People lived comfortably according to the standards of the area and the times but according to city standards and perhaps other rural areas, the conditions were poor. However, there was pride and ambition and a genuine love for country, neighbors and friends.

Lyndon Johnson was a typical boy. At that time boys played baseball, basketball on outdoor court, hunted, trapped varmints, swam in the river and creeks. There were parties in homes each week end and many family picnics. There were three churches in Johnson City at that time and during the summer there was a union tabernacle revival. Lyndon loved fun and pranks. He and three friends followed the bachelor super-

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intendent of schools and his teacher friend each time they had a date. Lyndon was ^avery good student in history and he, Cecil Redford and the girls of the class engaged in many heated arguments. During summer vacation Lyndon worked on farms and had a shoe shine stand at the barber shop. His father was interested in politics and served in the State Legislature. His mother was a gentle soft spoken lady who loved her husband and children.

Lyndon loved the hill country and was loyal to his friends. He never forgot them. When my mother died, Lyndon was vice president. He happened to be in Texas at the time and came by the house and brought peach preserves from the ranch and then took time to attend the funeral. When he was to be inaugurated as President of the U.S. he was in Texas the week end before inauguration. He phoned

3

and invited my husband and me to ride on Air Force I to Washington with him and Lady Bird. He returned to Johnson City after he was president and addressed the graduating class just 40 years from the time he graduated. That was the first time a president had ever addressed a high school graduating class. He and Mrs Johnson entertained many V.D.P.'s at The L.B.J. Ranch. Many times they entertained with barbecues and invited neighbors and friends to join them.

After President Johnson's retirement to The L.B.J. Ranch, he became interested in the children at Head Start which was held in the Lutheran Church Educational Building near the L.B.J. Ranch. He visited the children often and always took some treat to them. Usually, the treat was jelly beans.

We, of the Hill Country are proud of our 36th President. We lost a

4

friend and a true statesman who
placed country above the welfare
of self.

Kitty C. Leonard

59c

During the spring of 1970 Lyndon Baines Johnson entered the Commons Cafeteria at Southwest Texas State University while I was having lunch. This visit was a total surprise and many of the students quickly got up to shake the President's hand and ask for his autograph. President Johnson was quite receptive and very friendly to all. He told us he was very glad to once again return to his alma mater and see the many changes taking place. He also added he was pleased to see the older traditions of the school being preserved.

I remember thinking immediately how long and gay his hair was. At that time longer hairstyles for men were just beginning to come into style.

After about fifty minutes of browsing through the cafeteria President Johnson went outside and was greeted by quite a crowd. He once again shook many hands and signed many books.

I was very much impressed by President Johnson's friendly attitude to

the students and his apparent sincere concern for the University. I will always remember that afternoon when I shook the hand of President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Kathy Kellebrew Poehl