

## **Statement by John H. Taylor, Nixon Foundation**

We understand and sympathize with these scholars' feelings about how the Nixon Library handled its participation in the Vietnam conference with Whittier College. The conference should have been conceived differently, with representation from a broad range of policy makers as well as scholars and journalists. Had we done that, the problem of little or no interest among the 10,000-plus persons who received invitations might well have been averted.

As far as our relationship with the National Archives is concerned, the Nixon Foundation is unwaveringly committed to free, full, total, and unmediated access to the public records of the Nixon Administration in a NARA library at Yorba Linda. When the records arrive here, they will be administered, conserved, and provided to scholars and researchers strictly by NARA officials and employees. NARA will also take over administration of our museum. The Nixon Foundation will become a public programming partner of NARA, just like Presidential foundations at other libraries.

Steps already taken by the Nixon Foundation and Estate amply demonstrate our commitment to public access to records. In the mid-1990s, we participated in a negotiated agreement with NARA and Professor Kutler that opened the Nixon White House tapes. In doing so we tabled an important litigation element that, had we pursued it at the time, could easily have delayed the opening of the tapes. When NARA asked us to make recorded copies of the tapes available for sale earlier than the date stipulated in the negotiated agreement, we agreed, which has made it easy for the tapes to be played on radio, television, and the Internet and to be used by researchers wherever they are. We have promised two successive Archivists of the United States that we will facilitate NARA's reintegration of the so-called personal-political tapes with the rest of the tape collection, even though the courts defined the political tapes as private and ordered them to be returned to the President and his Estate. Many NARA openings of tapes and other records have occurred over the last decade at College Park without a single formal objection from the Nixon Estate.

We took these steps, and we have promoted the idea of all of President Nixon's records being combined into one collection at the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, because we believe that the full picture about the President and his times resides in those records, to be extracted by scholars and other researchers now and in generations to come. Let the chips fall where they may.