

Richard Milhous Nixon

(1913–1994)

Richard Milhous Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, is remembered for his achievements in foreign policy and as the only president to resign from office. Born in Yorba Linda, California, Nixon became a lieutenant commander in the United States Navy during World War II. After the war, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and in 1951 he moved to the Senate. Two years later, Nixon was nominated to run as the Republican vice presidential candidate with Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Elected 36th vice president on November 4, 1952, Nixon was reelected in 1956. He was unsuccessful as his party's candidate for the presidency in 1960 and as its candidate for governor of California in 1962. After practicing law in New York, he sought the Republican presidential nomination in 1968 and was subsequently elected. He was reelected in 1972 but resigned the presidency on August 9, 1974, in the face of the Watergate affair. The president was named unindicted coconspirator in the break-in of the offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex in June 1972. Later the House Judiciary Committee voted to recommend his impeachment on grounds of obstruction of justice, abuse of power, and contempt of Congress. A month after his resignation, Richard Nixon was officially pardoned for all federal offenses by his successor, President Gerald R. Ford. Nixon spent his remaining years as an author, foreign policy commentator, and advisor to several of his successors. Following a stroke, he died at the age of 81 in a New York City hospital.

Richard Nixon poses for artist Gualberto Rocchi, ca. 1965/1966.

(Architect of the Capitol)

Richard Nixon selected Gualberto Rocchi of Milan, Italy, to sculpt his bust for the Senate's Vice Presidential Bust Collection. The artist previously had executed likenesses of other Republican leaders, including then-Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York. Rocchi, after six sittings with Nixon in the sculptor's studio in New York City, sent the plaster model to Washington, D.C., for official approval in 1965. Nixon himself had already approved the model by letter, and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration did likewise on January 26, 1966. Although some senators expressed dissatisfaction with the Nixon likeness, the committee deferred to Nixon's judgment, and the model was returned to the sculptor for translation into marble. Nevertheless, in response to the criticisms of committee members, Rocchi arranged a follow-up sitting with his subject and made modifications to his model. "With a fresh eye, after almost one year, within an hour's [sitting] time only, I felt that the perfection an artist always strives for was achieved. . . . I should thank those Senators," wrote Rocchi in a letter to the architect of the Capitol.

The marble bust was executed in Italy, and the finished work was accepted by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration in 1967. Because Nixon believed it inappropriate for his bust to be displayed before his return to private life, the work was stored. It was placed on view in the Senate wing in May 1979, at the same time the bust of Lyndon Johnson (p. 218) was installed.



Richard M. Nixon

Gualberto Rocchi (born 1914)

Marble, modeled and carved 1966

29 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (74.6 x 57.8 x 33.3 cm)

Signed and dated (on subject's truncated right arm): G. ROCCHI / 1966

Commissioned by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, 1965

Accepted by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, 1967

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