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May 4, 1981

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of my mother, Marjorie Hagerty, I wish to express our family's deep appreciation and sincere thanks for your kind expression of sympathy. Please convey to Mrs. Reagan that your prayers and comments concerning my father meant a great deal to her at this most difficult time.

Dad was extremely pleased with your election last November, and only wished that his health was such that he could have contributed in some small way to your administration.

We all were deeply distressed with the recent assassination attempt. At that time our prayers were with you, Jim Brady, and the others involved in the unfortunate incident.

Knowing how busy the last few weeks have been for you, both with regaining your own health and leading our great nation, to receive your letter of April 21st was a gesture we will never forget. We hope the days ahead will provide you the strength to handle the burdens of the Presidency; you have our full support in the hope that our nation will recover from its economic woes.

Respectfully,

Bruce Hagerty

Bruce C. Hagerty

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ME 001-03

April 21, 1981

Dear Mrs. Hagerty:

Nancy and I were saddened to learn of your husband's death and we are praying for you at this difficult time.

Jim Hagerty's name is a legend of the White House. He is fondly remembered by all who served with him, and by those who saw the results of his efforts. Whether in private enterprise or public office, he always honored the highest canons of the journalism profession. His innovations in the office of Press Secretary to the President adapted that position to the television age. He remains a lasting standard for all who have followed him in that position.

On behalf of a grateful nation, we send our prayers and hope that they can bring you some comfort at this time.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN *A*

X
Mrs. Marjorie Hagerty
7 Rittenhouse Road
Bronxville, New York 10708

*Sympathy msg sent re death of
husband, James C. Hagerty*

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James C. Hagerty, 71, Press Aide In Eisenhower Administrations

BRONXVILLE, N.Y. (UPI) — James Campbell Hagerty, a New York newspaper reporter who became the trusted press secretary for President Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953 to 1961, died yesterday. He was 71.

Hagerty, who retired seven years ago as vice president of news for the American Broadcasting Corp. after suffering a stroke, was admitted to Lawrence Hospital Friday suffering from chest pains, said Bruce Hagerty, his son.

A hospital spokesman said Hagerty died at 5:45 p.m. yesterday, but the actual cause of death was not yet known.

During his career, Hagerty was known as more than a press secretary — he helped shape the decisions that he reported to the news media and helped run the government when Eisenhower was incapacitated.

The trust Eisenhower held for Hagerty, a former New York Times political reporter and longtime press secretary to New York Gov. Thomas Dewey, was exemplified when the president suffered a heart attack in 1955 and told aides: "Tell Jim to take over."

Hagerty was an innovator. It was his idea to let television cameras cover presidential press conferences and to drop the old rule that president's could not be quoted directly. He served the president well by briefing him in detail on questions that were likely to come up and insisted that Eisenhower face the press more often than the president may have wanted.

He also commanded nationwide attention in providing medical updates on Eisenhower after his ileitis surgery in 1956 and a stroke in 1958. Until then, the details of any president's health were not meant to be public knowledge.

Hagerty, a blue-eyed, paunchy Irishman with a love for classical music and ballet, had a sharp tongue when his temper would flare, but he would usually apologize to reporters not long afterward. He suffered from ulcers and drank prodigious amounts of milk.

He would frequently answer "no comment" to questions rather than mislead or lie to reporters, and since Eisenhower was not the skilled communicator later presidents were, it



JAMES C. HAGERTY

was Hagerty who most often met the press for extensive and wide-ranging news conferences.

He often provided eyewitness details to historic events he participated in, rather than merely hand out bland diplomatic clichés.

Hagerty, born May 9, 1909, in Plattsburg, N.Y., was the son of a local newspaper editor. His first job was as Columbia University campus correspondent for The New York Times. He went on to cover the Wendell Willkie presidential campaign in 1940, and became Dewey's press secretary in 1943.

In 1960, Hagerty was sent to Tokyo to lay groundwork for an Eisenhower visit, but students protesting a U.S.-Japanese security treaty rioted against him, trapping the press secretary in a car they pounded with sticks. Hagerty was rescued from the mob by a Marine helicopter, and the presidential visit was called off.

After Eisenhower left office, Hagerty became the news director for ABC and in 1963 was made vice president of ABC for corporate relations.

He is survived by his wife Marjorie, two brothers and two sons.

Funeral arrangements are expected to be private, a family member said.

CONDOLENCE LETTER TO MARJORIE HAGERTY

Dear Mrs. Hagerty:

we were saddened to learn of your husband's death & we
Nancy and I are praying for you *at this difficult time* ~~in your time of sorrow.~~ We ~~know the loss that you feel, and share your sorrow.~~

Jim ~~James~~ Hagerty ^{is} ~~is~~ *name is legend of the White House. He is* fondly remembered by all who served with him, and by those who saw the results of his efforts. Whether in private enterprise or public office, he always honored the highest canons of the journalism profession. His innovations in the office of Press Secretary to the President adapted that position to the television age. He remains a lasting standard for all who have followed him in that position.

On behalf of a grateful nation, we send our prayers and hope that they can bring you some comfort at this time.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

RR/AVH/EJL