

# Reagan Luncheon

## A BIRTHDAY PARTY TO REMEMBER!

Celebrating the birth date of a former President of the United States of America with the President's son is a memorable occasion. Three members of the Fulton Historical Society were invited to the birthday luncheon in honor of President Ronald Reagan's 99th birth date. Michael Reagan, his eldest son, presented an impressive and heartfelt speech.

Fulton has recently been added to the Ronald Reagan Trail, which includes several cities, and approved by the Illinois General Assembly. President Reagan's parents were born, worked, married, and made their first home in Fulton. Both of the President's grandmothers are buried in Fulton along with two of his favorite aunts, both of whom he speaks of fondly in his autobiography, *AN AMERICAN LIFE*.

The Reagan birthday luncheon was sponsored by The Ronald W. Reagan Society of Eureka College and hosted by the Sauk Valley College Foundation on its College campus.

A new brochure, designed as a self-guided tour and developed by Fulton Historical Society members, was presented to Michael Reagan. He also autographed one which is now located in the Reagan Room at the Fulton (Martin House) Museum. The art design was done by Fulton Historical Society member, Pam Leavens Blecha.

Guests at the luncheon learned of the "Ronald Reagan Fellowships" created at Eureka College by the Ronald W. Reagan Society. This leadership program provides full-tuition, four-year scholarships to six freshmen each year. The program carries forward the President's legacy at the College. Students in the program were seated with guests at the luncheon and shared their experiences of being in the Ronald Reagan Fellowship Program.

Michael Reagan, a popular national speaker, shared life lessons he learned from his father. One story, especially enjoyed by the audience, was when Michael, at the age of 10, asked his father for an increase in his allowance. His father spent 35 minutes explaining the burdens of the tax system and how much in taxes he had to pay the government. When his father finished talking, Michael said, "I offered to give part of my allowance back to him."

The speaker emphasized the values learned in the Whiteside County were carried throughout his father's life. He never forgot his roots and remained proud of them. "My father was 'versed in the Bible and quoted it frequently.'" He found the positive in everything, focused on the big picture, and continually looked for areas of agreement.

Michael Reagan's closing comment, "My father always stayed true to himself and his values. They were a direct reflection of his roots in Whiteside County."

The Reagan Room in the Fulton (Martin House) Museum displays memorabilia of the President's parents and is entitled, "Reagan's Roots in Dutch Soil." Of particular interest are these Fulton sites: the Rectory (where the President's parents were married in 1904); their first home; the Broadhead Store (where Nellie and Jack both worked); the church building (site of the President's grandmother's funeral); and family burial sites in the Fulton Cemetery.

The Museum is open every Sunday from 2:00-4:00 and any time by appointment.

