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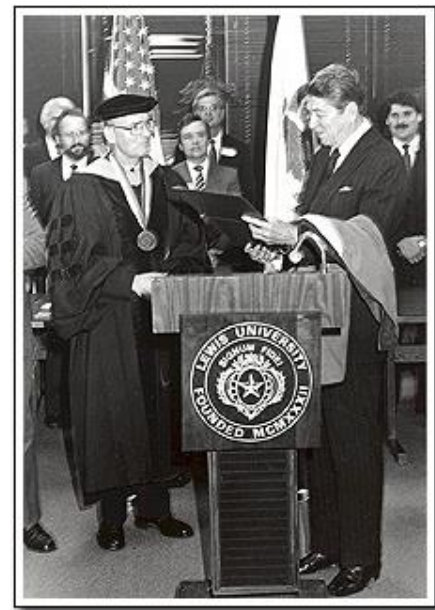
When the President Came to Romeoville

On October 16, 1984, Romeoville hosted a very special visitor: the President of the United States. Romeoville was one of multiple Chicagoland stops, including Bolingbrook and Glen Ellyn, that Ronald Reagan made in the final weeks leading up to the election. It was the first and only time a sitting president has visited the village.

That morning, Air Force One landed at O'Hare Airport. President Reagan met members of his traveling party, including Illinois Governor Thompson, Senator Percy, and Congressman Hyde, and they all boarded helicopters to travel to Romeoville. In the fields outside Wilco, the president's Marine One helicopter set down and dispensed the commander-in-chief for his visit. He toured the electronics laboratory, where a teacher showed him various stations where students were working on electronics of all sorts, including a laser system and a programmable robot.

Following some questions from the high schoolers and a quick tour of an auto mechanics class, he was presented an honorary degree (Doctor of Humanities) from Lewis University in a small ceremony at Wilco. He then went on to give some short remarks in front of a crowd of students. "[The job training] program, nationwide, has an average rate of placement in jobs of 70 percent... Well, you're topping that sizably; your job placement rate here is 85 percent. And I think you can all be proud that Wilco is a winner," proclaimed the president.

Prior to leaving, he expressed remorse that the '84 Cubs didn't make it farther in the playoffs. "I have to leave, but let me just say I shared some of your sorrow with regard to - - well, first, the triumph of the Cubs getting as far as they did, but then the sorrow they didn't get farther," he said. "Back in 1935, I was broadcasting the Cubs... I'm supposed to be nonpartisan now and on everybody's side, but I was kind of upset there in front of the TV set when they didn't go all the way." Following his remarks, he went to Bolingbrook High School for another stop on his Chicagoland trip.





To help secure Reagan's short visit to Wilco, the detectives of the Romeoville Police Department were each paired up with a Secret Service agent. Sometime after the visit, the department received a signed photo of the president with a message of thanks: "To the Romeoville, Illinois Police Department. With appreciation and best wishes." That photo is framed and on display for all to see in the police station lobby's trophy case.

The vast majority of cities, towns, and villages across the country are unable to say they've been visited by a sitting President of the United States. The Village of Romeoville can.