

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jim & Lenore McKenzie

Part of the Dixon Historic Center's  
*Ronald Reagan* Oral History project

Interview # ISR-V-D-2010-064

Jim and Lenore McKenzie discuss their interactions with Ronald Reagan through their connection to Ralph "Mac" McKenzie, Jim's father, who was also Ronald Reagan's coach at Eureka College. They were interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Dixon Historic Center's *Ronald Reagan* Oral History project.

Interview dates & locations:

Date: April 22, 2010      Location: Dixon Historic Center

Interview Format: Digital Video

Interviewer: Rev. Scott Porter

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): Jerry Knox, Dixon Historic Center

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_      Total Time: 38 min / 0.63 hrs

Transcript being  
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on July 30, 2015.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in  
Springfield, Illinois.

## Abstract

Jim & Lenore McKenzie, *Ronald Reagan*, ISR-V-D-2010 064

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Jim and Lenore McKenzie, from Sterling, Illinois, have been married for over fifty years. Jim is the son of Ralph “Mac” McKenzie, who in the late 1920s and early ‘30s was Ronald Reagan’s football coach at Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois. Through that connection Jim and Lenore were able to experience a rather close relationship with the president. They discuss interactions that Mac had with Ronald Reagan as his coach and how Reagan used to give play-by-play commentary after practices. This was certainly a sign of his future in sports radio in Des Moines, Iowa before going to Hollywood in 1937. In 1976, Mac’s wife Betty passed away and although he was in the middle of a campaign, Reagan still took time out to call Mac and express his condolences. When he was elected president, Mac, Jim and Lenore all received invitations to attend the inauguration. In 1981 they all attended a private luncheon with the president at the White House. As Mac went on to be honored by various organizations, Reagan was often chosen to be the guest speaker.

**Subject Headings/Keywords:** Ronald Reagan at Eureka College; Eureka College; Ralph “Mac” McKenzie; football at Eureka College; swimming in Dixon, Illinois; Dixon, Illinois marching band; White House during Reagan administration

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