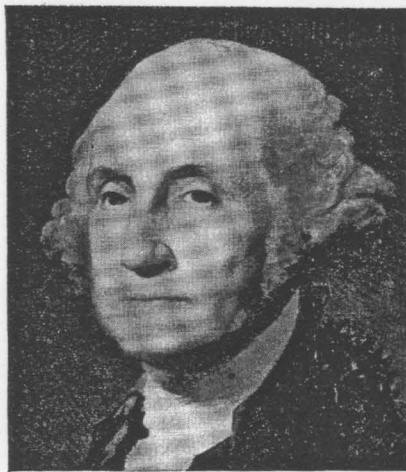


BY Eleanor Roosevelt



## IF YOU ASK ME

**Q** Which do you consider the five greatest American Presidents?

Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and my own husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Though it is early to assess in a historical way a man's greatness, still I feel that the problems my husband met and solved will make the period of history he lived in a great period, and therefore I believe history will feel that he was one of our great Presidents.

**Q** Is it true, as *Time Magazine* recently wrote, that in 1949-50, your "biggest year," you earned \$250,000?

I did not have the remotest idea, but I have looked up the figures since this question came in. The second volume of my autobiography was serialized and the book published in 1949. In that year I earned and received from every source a gross of \$206,542.60.

When you get into these high brackets the federal government takes all but about ten or fifteen cents out of every dollar, and you also have state taxes.

I have discovered that it is very difficult to clear \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year, no matter what my total earnings are. Sometimes I think it would pay not to work so hard, but I happen to like work and to think that one has to justify one's existence, and I continue because of the pleasure and interest it gives me.

**Q** In his recent book *Judge Rosenman* says that if you had been given your way there would have been fewer compromises and fewer accomplishments on the part of the New Deal. Can you explain this remark?

Of course, I think Judge Rosenman could probably explain better than I can. I can only imagine that he meant what my husband often said to me—that I was much too impatient to be a good politician, that I wanted to see results much too quickly and therefore would sometimes perhaps have accepted the attitude of a benevolent despot rather than have had the patience to wait for democratic forces to work out the problems and solutions far more slowly. With age I have become more patient!

**Q** It is a mystery to me how a man from a conservative, wealthy home like Mr. Roosevelt ever became such a great liberal. What do you think influenced him most in this direction?

Very often a social conscience is more easily awakened in one who has not been hardened by having to battle for every advantage in life. My husband's parents brought him up with a sense of obligation to other people. He had a chance to travel and make contact in a simple way with people in other parts of the world. His mind was open and intelligent, and as his contacts broadened his sense of justice deepened. He was a liberal because he believed in social justice.

**Q** How did you break your children of thumb-sucking when they were small?

Not all of my children sucked their thumbs, though I remember having trouble with two of them. In those days we put the hands into Celluloid balls at bedtime. I do not know whether this was a mistake or not. I am now told that thumbsucking should be permitted. Many ideas change as the years go on.

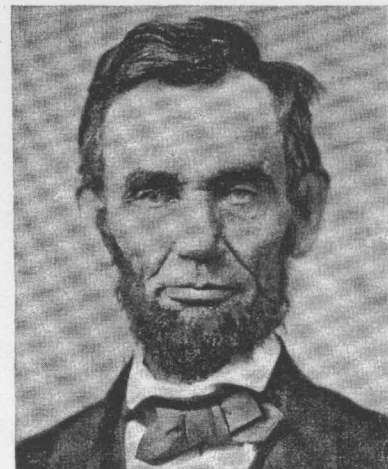
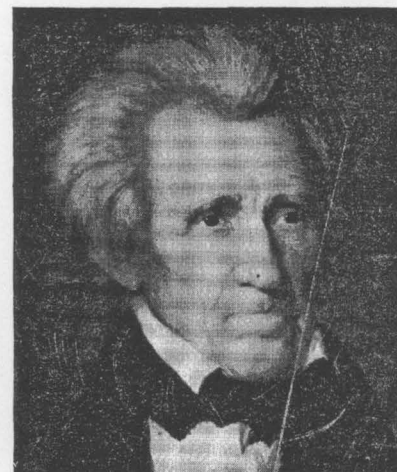
**Q** My sister died recently, leaving her nine-year-old daughter in my care. I know you went through something like this yourself as a child, and thought you might suggest ways my husband and I could make this little girl happy. And mistakes we might avoid.

The great thing, I think, is to make children feel that they are needed and actually belong in the family. Give them certain responsibilities, and they will respond with confidence and joy. If this child is sensitive, avoid talking about her before other people and letting her overhear your remarks about what you are doing for her. The main thing is to love her and let her give you her love.

**Q** At what age do you hope to retire from public life?

I never plan ahead.

Address letters to Mrs. Roosevelt, in care of *McCall's Magazine*, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.



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Mrs. Roosevelt believes that these five men are the greatest Presidents the United States has ever had. (See her answer to first question)