

FOR MAJOR FDR MEMORIAL DONORS, ACKNOWLEDGMENT SET IN STONE

By Doug Struck

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The FDR Memorial is the first presidential monument that comes with an ad for its sponsors. A granite plaque tells visitors the memorial is "brought to you by . . ."

The largest sponsor is the retiring chairman of Archer Daniels Midland Co., an agribusiness giant recently caught in a global price-fixing scheme. ITT Corp., owner of the Sheraton hotel chain, and local philanthropist Peter Kovler also made the cut in stone.

Some major donors were feted in the White House and given a private tour of the Oval Office by the president, who is honorary co-chairman of the Roosevelt Memorial Commission. They included lobbyists for big corporations and some foreign businessmen.

"I genuinely don't think {the contribution} had anything to do" with the lobbying concerns of his company, said Nicholas Glakas, senior vice president of ITT, which contributed \$500,000. "We were pleased to make a patriotic contribution."

The great bulk of funds for the FDR Memorial -- \$42.5 million of the \$49 million cost -- came from the federal government. But in 1992, Congress told the memorial commission to seek \$10 million in private donations to help with the cost. The commission has raised only \$5.6 million, but that is enough to complete the construction, according to Dorann Gunderson, executive director of the commission.

With the help of the president, the eight congressmen on the commission and Motion Picture Association President Jack Valenti, the commission tapped rich sources for big donations and then sought smaller gifts from all Americans. More than 2,000 individuals gave donations.

Major donors were invited to a black-tie event April 30, 1996, in the White House, which included such celebrities as Mikhail Baryshnikov and Walter Cronkite. Gunderson said another White House reception was held in October 1994.

The commission refuses to release the contribution amounts or any donor details other than names. "The commission is allowing the donors to decide if they wish to disclose" their contributions, Gunderson said.

But a donation of \$500,000 earned a line on a granite plaque in the entry building to the memorial. There are five names. Three are attributable to a \$1.5 million donation from Dwayne O. Andreas, chairman of Archer Daniels Midland until his retirement two weeks ago.

According to Gunderson, Andreas contributed \$500,000 personally, \$500,000 from the ADM Foundation and \$500,000 in the name of a close friend, Robert S. Strauss, a Washington lawyer, former chairman of the Democratic Party and a member of the ADM board. The plaque thus includes the names of Strauss, Andreas and ADM.

In October, the agribusiness company, based in Decatur, Ill., paid the largest antitrust fine in history, \$170 million, for fixing the global prices of food additives. Two executives, not Andreas, are awaiting trial.

Andreas, 79, has long been a political money tree. He has given millions of dollars to the Republican and Democratic parties over more than two decades, as well as to charities ranging from Mother Teresa to universities to the National Forest Foundation.

"President Roosevelt was the first president that I had a good relationship with," Andreas said in a statement released by his office. "Mrs. Roosevelt was a guest at our home in Lake Minnetonka, Minn., on two different occasions. Both Elliott and Jim {sons of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt} were close friends of mine, so naturally I feel comfortable in helping to preserve the Roosevelt name and reputation."

ITT, which owns 14 casinos and interests in Madison Square Garden and the New York Knicks in addition to hotels, contributed after Chairman Rand V. Araskog agreed that "if there was ever a president that saved Western civilization and pulled this country out of the depths . . . it was Roosevelt," Glakas said.

A \$500,000 contribution from the Kovler Family Foundation was directed by Peter Kovler, a Washington investor and philanthropist who describes himself as a Roosevelt enthusiast. He helped organize major events in 1982 for the centennial of Roosevelt's birth, helped conceive Roosevelt History Month and helped get a U.S. destroyer named after Roosevelt.

"How can someone not give if they are in a position to give?" Kovler said. Roosevelt "was our equivalent of Lincoln in the 19th century," he added.

The list of donors also includes several Asian businessmen solicited by Anna Chennault. She is the widow of Gen. Claire Chennault, who formed the Flying Tigers, American volunteer pilots who -- with Roosevelt's blessing -- helped fight Japanese forces in China and Burma before and after America's entry into World War II.

Chief among the donors is Stanley Ho, one of Asia's richest tycoons and king of the gambling business on the Portuguese enclave of Macao on China's southern coast. Chennault said Ho contributed \$500,000 but asked that his name not be listed on the plaque. Gunderson, however, said Ho was not listed on the plaque because he had donated only \$250,000 of his pledge.

According to a report on MSNBC News, Ho gave the check for \$250,000 directly to Clinton in 1994 and told reporters, "Having spent eight days at the air-raid warden's office in a basement . . . in World War II, I am especially appreciative of President Roosevelt's efforts in ending the war."

Also listed is Loretta Chan Fung, the sister of Chennault. According to MSNBC, Chan Fung owns an upscale strip joint in Hong Kong called Club Volvo and pledged to contribute \$50,000.

Chennault said she raised \$1 million in pledges from Asian businessmen because "they all realized what Roosevelt had done and what my husband had done. They were willing to write a check to show their appreciation."

Gunderson said a congressional fund-raiser in October 1995 was canceled, and she said there were no other White House or congressional fund-raisers. But a spokeswoman for Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.), a

member of the commission for more than 10 years, said the senator sponsored breakfast meetings of Washington lobbyists in his Capitol Hill office several years ago to encourage contributions.

Kathleen McShea, the spokeswoman, acknowledged that there were second thoughts about soliciting contributions from lobbyists in a congressional office. "It was Senator Levin's view that private contributions required by Congress {to the memorial} are different than gifts to congressmen," she said. "But to avoid any questions, Senator Levin decided to make future contacts to the corporate offices, not to their Washington representatives."

Bill Hogan, of the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity, said he does not believe the commission should keep details of donors and amounts of donations secret. But he also is not pleased to see the top donors engraved in granite on the memorial. "If you went to the Washington Monument and saw a lot of corporate names, I think it would be a little off-putting," he said.