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**In His Own Words: Meeting President Dwight D. Eisenhower by Douglas J. Hopper, M.D. '64, (RES '68)**

*Douglas J. Hopper, M.D. '64, (RES '68) completed a rotating internship at the Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center. Upon finishing his psychiatry residency at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, Dr. Hopper started a private practice and worked as an inpatient physician at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center. He missed the hands-on aspect of medicine and completed a second residency in family practice. He practiced full service family medicine, including obstetrics, until 2000. He has been active in managed care systems; has worked in multiple low-income clinics and student health centers; and continues to practice outpatient family medicine in Santa Monica.*



Boys State is a summer leadership and citizenship program sponsored by the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary for high school juniors. Each year, two delegates are selected from each of the 49 American Legion Boys State programs in the United States. These delegates attend the weeklong Boys State in Washington, DC.

Now, rewind the clock back 60 years. It was prior to the Civil Rights Movement and Dwight D. Eisenhower was president. I won the governorship of California Boys' State and participated in Boys Nation. For the first time, I was involved with individuals and ideas from across the nation. In Washington, DC, I was able to develop my oratory skills and was elected as the president of Boys Nation. On July 28, 1955, I led the delegation of the American Legion's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Boys Nation to the White House Rose Garden to present President Eisenhower with a Suitland Tractor motorized rototiller for his Gettysburg farm and "pin him" with an Honorary Boys Nation label. The President shook my hand as I left the Rose Garden. It was a proud moment. I wasn't nervous at all. Shortly after I returned home to Glendale, California, I received a thank you letter from President Eisenhower, dated July 28, 1955.

*Dear Douglas:*

*I am grateful to you and to the members of Boys Nation for bringing me this morning a motorized rototiller for use in the garden at Gettysburg. I am sure it will prove to be a very important part of our equipment up there, and I am most appreciative of your thoughtfulness. Won't you please express to those in your group once again my warm thanks for your kindness?*

*I was a great pleasure to meet you all.*

*With best wishes.*

*Sincerely,*

*President Dwight D. Eisenhower*

This last summer, I was inducted into the California American Legion Hall of Fame, which recognizes members of the Legion family and US citizens for their significant and ongoing contributions to the American Legion and its organizations.

For more information:

[Boys State](#)

