

Nevada was a place of reflection and recreation for Nancy, Ronald Reagan

By Ed Koch, Las Vegas Sun

While driving home to California following his less-than-triumphant two weeks at the Last Frontier in Las Vegas in February 1954, song-and-dance man Ronald Reagan, then at the lowest point in life, shared his sorrows with Nancy Reagan.

“I hope I never have to sink this low again,” said Ron Reagan, whose acting career had been on a nosedive since the release of the 1951 film “Bedtime For Bonzo,” in which Ron’s co-star was a chimp – and after Reagan was forced to play Vegas because he was \$18,000 in debt, out of work and badly in need of a paycheck.

Nancy, his wife of less than a year, consoled the future two-term Republican president and vowed to strongly support her husband through whatever lay ahead – and she would continue to do so until his death 50 years later.

Nancy Reagan’s death Sunday at 94 conjured memories of how she helped lift Ronald Reagan’s spirits on that desolate Nevada highway, how she and Ron fought to preserve Lake Tahoe and how Nancy tried unsuccessfully to persuade Ron to pick former Nevada Gov. Paul Laxalt – and close friend – as his vice president.

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