

Reagan ceremonies to continue in D.C.

By JEFF WILSON
Associated Press Writer
SIMI VALLEY, Calif. (AP) — More than 100,000 admirers of Ronald Reagan filed past the former president's flag-draped coffin at the hilltop library that bears his name, a steady stream of well-wishers that continued past nightfall.

"It's a lifetime event. I wanted to show my gratitude. I wanted to show my love," said Jesse Garcia, 52, who with his wife traveled down from their home in Northern California to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

The Reagan family was to escort the body from the library Wednesday to the nearby Navy base at Point Mugu for a flight to Andrews Air

Force Base near Washington aboard a presidential Boeing 747.

The body was then to be taken to the Capitol to lie in state until a funeral at the National Cathedral on Friday. It will then be returned to California for burial at the presidential library that evening.

Reagan, the nation's 40th chief executive, was 93 when he died Saturday of pneumonia, as a complication of Alzheimer's disease. He announced he had the disease a decade ago.

His death revealed that the popularity of the former Republican president, California governor and movie actor remained strong despite his long absence from public life.

"It is unbelievable what I am seeing on TV," Reagan office chief of staff Joanne Drake quoted Nancy Reagan as saying Tuesday. "The outpouring of love for my husband is incredible."

Mourners endured hours-long waits just to drive into a nearby college that was shut down to provide parking.

They waited hours more to board shuttle buses to the library, which had to add more buses and extend the period of lying in repose to handle the turnout.

"He gave us eight years of service," said Keith Godliman, 50, of Santa Clarita.

"It doesn't hurt for us to wait eight hours for him. He deserves us

to wait eight hours for him."

About 106,000 mourners passed by the coffin from noon Monday until the public viewing ended Tuesday night, library officials said. The viewing period was originally supposed to end at 6 p.m. Tuesday, but the overwhelming turnout forced an extension to 9 p.m.

The steady stream was occasionally interrupted by the arrival of political figures and celebrities. Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry stood quietly before the casket, made the sign of the cross, put his hand over his heart and left.

Visitors to the library Tuesday included Govs. Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, and celebrities Morgan Fairchild and Bruce Boxleitner, who arrived as representatives of the Screen Actors Guild, which Reagan once led.

Bush seeks support in Middle East

SEA ISLAND, Ga. (AP) — The United States and its biggest allies are proclaiming that a unanimous U.N. vote will heal their bitter divisions over Iraq. But the newfound unity faces a major test when they take up a U.S. plan to expand the push for democracy throughout the Arab world.

President Bush was touting the success on Iraq in a one-on-one meeting with the new interim Iraqi president, Ghazi al-Yawer on the sidelines of the Group of Eight summit.

But significantly, the four G-8 nations that have refused to send troops to Iraq — Russia, France, Germany and Canada — said the U.N. Security Council resolution did not change their opposition to putting troops in the country.

A resigned Bush said, "I expect nations will contribute as they see fit."

Massive security kept the handful of anti-globalization protesters far away from the exclusive barrier island resort where this year's G-8 summit was taking place.

The G-8 leaders were confronting an array of topics on their second day of talks Wednesday, starting with threats to the global economy, such as the spike in oil prices.

Many allies see America's soaring budget and trade deficits as equally threatening to world prosperity. But administration officials

say Bush will defend his tax cuts as the critical ingredient to jump-start the U.S. and world economies.

Bush will also cite his pledge to cut the federal budget deficit in half over the next five years.

The world leaders were meeting over lunch with the leaders of six Middle Eastern nations in a discussion aimed at boosting Bush's initiative to promote freedom, democracy and economic growth throughout the Middle East. Bush hopes the plan will emerge as the central achievement of the summit.

But the plan has stirred deep suspicion in the region, home to some of the world's most authoritarian regimes. Many Arab and European countries view the proposal as unwanted meddling. And three Arab countries — Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco — turned down Bush's invitation to participate.

The U.S. cause in the Arab world has not been helped by Bush's support for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nor by the worldwide uproar over the Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal.

But after weeks of bad news on Iraq, the administration was heartened by Tuesday's unanimous U.N. Security Council vote to approve a resolution endorsing the transfer of sovereignty to Iraq's new interim government by the end of June.

Bush said the resolution would prove to be a "catalyst for change."

Other G-8 leaders expressed hope the vote, which came after the United States and Britain revised the proposal to meet other countries' concerns, would represent a new era of cooperation on Iraq.

"We all now want to put the divisions of the past behind us and unite behind the vision of a modern, democratic and stable Iraq," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bush's closest ally on Iraq.

Even foes of the U.S.-led war such as French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke hopefully of a new era of cooperation. Putin said the U.N. vote would produce "a quality change in the status of Iraq."

On the broader Middle East initiative, the G-8 was expected to endorse a scaled-down version of the U.S. plan. One European official stressed it left plenty of room for countries to choose their own preferred methods to promote reforms. The declaration also does not require any specific financial contributions.

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