

Interview with Kathryn Cade, Director of Projects for Mrs. Carter

Interviewer: Emily Soapes of the Presidential Papers Staff

January 7, 1981, in room 213 of the East Wing of the White House

Transcriber: Lyn Kirkland

Soapes: Did you come at the beginning of the administration and had you worked with Mrs. Carter previously?

Cade: I did come at the beginning of the administration. I joined Mrs. Carter's staff during the convention and went to Atlanta to coordinate and encourage as she traveled in the general election. She had eight people who were out running around the country who were setting up visits and those eight people were doing briefings and working through the schedules.

Soapes: And you worked in the transition as well?

Cade: Right. As Mrs. Carter traveled around the country on behalf of her husband she also talked about several issues she wanted to pursue if he were elected President, principally mental health, and also problems of the elderly and she decided very shortly after the election that she wanted someone on her staff who would be solid with the issues and could assist her with special projects. I went through the transition not thinking that I would come on to the White House but was there as a staff person to deal with the influx of mail and there were requests coming from committees who recruited her interest and help. During the transition a great deal of thought was given to how she wanted to organize her office. It was at that point that she decided that she wanted to create a projects office.

Soapes: Yes. I didn't think that that had existed before.

Cade: It had never existed in a previous administration. There were some very funny moments about what the title of the office was going to be. At one point we were going to set it up just as the projects office and she said, "Well, I'm not going to be doing just projects. I'll be interested in all kinds of issues and I'm going to need people to do all kinds of research for me. I think maybe it ought to be the Projects, Issues, and Research Office. And, in fact, I think that's the way it appears on the chart--/the Projects, Issues, and Research Office. Then we fiddled around with whether I ought to be a project secretary or whatever and she said "No, I think I need a director of projects." And that's how the office evolved. She knew me from the campaign; not very well. I had come to the staff and worked with her in the transition and I had, in fact, known her from a project on mental health when I worked for public television. There was a certain logic to my staying on so I came to the White House on inauguration day. So, that was how it all started. That is more or less it.

Soapes: So, it sort of *happened*, really.

Cade: Well, it was at her instigation.

Soapes: She is the one who set it up physically.

Cade: She felt very strongly she wanted to be an activist first lady, that the influence of the office presented many different kinds of opportunities. That was going to be a very important part of her role as first lady. She wanted a separate office to deal solely with those contributions.

Soapes: How early did this idea evolve that you were aware of?

Cade: That she wanted a separate office? Well, she said, while she was campaigning and talking about what she wanted to do in terms of her own projects, she knew that somehow or other when she got to the White House she was going to have a staff that would help her with the projects. Right after the election I came back from Washington and because staff that was assigned to her transition was not very large, right at the beginning it was not very clear whether there would be a person on the staff who would in time be project coordinator and it took a couple of weeks before I even ended up over the transition. It was important to find some sort of slot to put me in. She knew there was going to be some kind of entity within her office that would deal just with her projects.

Soapes: So she essentially described and created the position?

Cade: Right. Yeah.

Soapes: I know about mental health and aging, but were there specific projects she began by saying--well, did you fill out a plan, I guess that's what I'm trying to ask, to handle issues?

Cade: I don't think we were quite that organized about it except in the mental health field. She had during the campaign in Bakersfield in October '76 announced that if her husband were elected President, she would ask him to establish a Presidential Commission to review mental health service in this country and to make recommendations about how it could be improved. So, that was a far end goal even before the election and no matter what else the office was going to do, it would in some way be involved with the Presidential Commission. She didn't have it clear in her mind the kind of things one might be able to do when she got here. When I was packing up the mental health files I ran across memos that were written in 1976 about a Presidential Commission, what one might do to get it established, the type things that it might study, and the potential people to head it up.

Soapes: I knew she had been active in mental health when she was first lady of Georgia. Is there any particular source of her interest in that? That is her main interest from what I gather from the press. Is that a correct assumption?

Cade: And as advisor to her husband, which is obvious. Well, if you look at her role as first lady, it is a very complex role. She had her own projects. She was also involved in women's issues and she spent a lot of time on problems of the elderly, trying to highlight ways older people can still contribute in our society, how to help older people stay in their homes. She got involved in social security issues, and as you probably know, she got very involved in the Cambodian refugee situation.

Soapes: Yeah, right.

Cade: She was quite concerned about figuring out ways to encourage people in their own communities to tackle different kinds of problems. She felt strongly that government resources were not sufficient to solve the broad range of problems that exist around the country. And, of course, she was the official hostess for the White House. She traveled many times on behalf of her husband, both to foreign countries and domestically. They had programs in common. She was a wife and mother. She spent a lot of time with Amy, but her role, I think, when people start to study it, is very complex. But truly, mental health is where, in my opinion, she made her most substantive contributions, and it was all because of the interest in the Presidential Commission.

The status of mental health in our country had not been looked at for fifteen years, since the Kennedy administration. It was poorly staffed in services around the country. The federal role was not at all appropriate for the day and age and without her none of that analysis would have been done. She really stuck with it and I think when people begin to analyze what had happened as a result of the President's Commission on mental health, they called for mental health legislation. There were a variety of other initiatives that got started to improve mental health care to address issues of prevention, patients' rights, all sorts of things; housing, community living for people who are permanently mentally ill, people who had spent time in institutions. From a public policy perspective it was a very interesting issue because you had a problem, a commission that was set up to study it, recommendations that went to the President, and direct follow through, all basically in the span of 3 ½ years. It was extraordinary that one could go from a commission, to legislation, to implementation of substantive recommendations in 3 ½ years and Rosalynn accomplished all of these because of her interest and persistence in mental health. It is not very appealing on the Hill. In the grand scheme of things it is not perceived as being very important as energy and some of the other major important issues of this administration, but in its own way it is very significant. There are 30 million people around the country that have mental health problems.

We have spent billions and billions of dollars in mental health care and yet often we have been giving people the wrong kind of treatment. We have been treating only those people that are middle class. The poor, the elderly, children, chronically ill, minorities, all these have little access to mental health. Even when they went they saw people who weren't trained to understand their particular challenges. So, in terms of public health issues, I think it is as

important as any other public health issue. I think as a result of her work there are going to be some very constructive changes both in the way the federal government helps to initiate services, in terms of relationships that are forged between federal and state government and local governments, and in terms of the way the public uses them...the federal and state and local partnerships. Historically what had happened is you had the state in the 1800s and early 1900s bearing the principal responsibility for the mentally ill and they were warehoused in institutions and people thought that was a great step forward because you got them out of the jails. Beginning in the 60's because of the joint commission reporting to President Kennedy, you had the development of community mental health center programs and that was basically the start of federal money because people decided that those people who were mentally ill were best cared for in their community and didn't need to be in an institution, and so you had the federal government funding a community based program. You still had the states investing billions and billions in institutional care and the two systems never meshed. The most severe consequence of that was you had the movement in the late 60's to protect the rights of those people in institutions and there were also court cases and court orders to improve the circumstances within institutions to get those people out and to the fresh air and the state could push them out into the community just because there was no coordination with the federal programs. There was nothing to help them adjust to community life. There was a huge population of chronically mentally ill people who were then out on the street. From a straight planning perspective it was ridiculous. There was a two track system where a lot of people got lost in the middle and we were spending lots of dollars on inappropriate care and having community systems that were struggling along because they weren't getting adequate funding and there was a real critical need to mesh the two and that's a lot of what the Mental Health Systems Act will do.

Soapes: So you feel good about what it is that is being done?

Cade: It's progress and then in terms of just the way the stigma attached to them is very real. There are a lot of people who have been mentally ill and won't talk about it and we have people who have been mentally ill and talked about it and have never been able to get jobs because of it. I know of people who have been mentally ill and been afraid to go see anyone and have gotten much worse because of that and I think because of this, she has made it very visible and she has made it much easier for people who have mental health problems to speak out about it and recognize it and be honest about it and seek counsel. She made a very conscious effort to speak to different kinds of audiences beyond the mental health community to try to sensitize them to some of the issues. For example, she went to talk to a group called the Washington Business Group on Health which is a consortium of corporations who get together once a month to discuss health issues, and she went and told them they had a responsibility to help change the stigma and they also had a responsibility to look at the area of financing, because of the benefits they were dealing with in their private health insurance budgets for mental health care. Another time she went out and talked to a bunch of Hollywood types—a dinner put together by Jennifer Jones and

friends who invited 200 of their actor, producer, and writer friends and she talked about the role the media could play to portray mental illness in a more sensitive way.

Soapes: Did you also write the speeches?

Cade: Well, the speeches she did that were substantive and related directly to her issues, I wrote most of them. I worked closely with Mary Porter, the editor, and Mary and I would sometimes have a much better idea of how to phrase things slightly more attractively, although not very often. But Mary and I worked very closely on some of her speeches and Mrs. Carter herself spent a great deal of time on her speeches. She did something to make them much better than what Mary and I could come up with.

Soapes: And you got interested specifically in mental health through the work you did in PBS, didn't you say?

Cade: Yeah. I worked at PBS for a number of years and did a five part series on health issues, and a five part series on mental health, and learned a lot more about it once I got into it.

Soapes: I bet you did. I bet you did.

Cade: When Jimmy Carter was running for governor of Georgia, Rosalynn campaigned around the state for him. At the time he was running, Georgia had one of the worst systems for mental health around the country, and they still have. They had one hospital near Atlanta that had had at one time a population of 20 to 30 thousand people. I'm not very good on the facts, so you better check that, but it was like a huge warehouse and their greatest step forward had been to decide that they wanted to go to a series of regional hospitals to simply reduce the population from one central state hospital to regional hospitals somewhat closer to home for the ill, but with very few services at all for the mentally ill. As Rosalynn traveled around, one of the most frequent questions she got from people in the state was wanting her to help a mentally ill daughter, wanting her to help a mentally ill sister. Things like that. She tells a very funny story about being in a small town one day. Well, I guess it was a relatively good size town, because she was campaigning in the same town with her husband but not in the same place, and she decided after she had finished her event to go over and see him because they didn't see a whole lot of each other. There was a receiving line and she got in it and worked her way up and the President shook her hand and kind of looked at her and said "Well, what are you doing here?" And she said "Well, what are you going to do if you are elected governor to provide for mentally ill persons in Georgia?" And he looked at her and said, "Well, we're going to establish a commission to study the problem and make recommendations about how to improve services and I'm going to put you in charge of it. Well, subsequently when he was elected governor he did not put her in charge of it, but he did establish the Governor's Commission to improve services for mentally ill Georgians and announced a six month study group, and as a result of the recommendations of that commission Georgia embarked upon a program of developing

community based services. They did some very innovative things, including saying that if it was impossible at that time to start a community health center in a town because of the regulations that required that you couldn't provide services in place of using federal dollars, they would simply start with as little as they could and build, but they wouldn't wait until they had everything in place to get the federal money. There was a dramatic improvement in health services in that state under Carter's leadership.

Soapes: Yes, I know that had been a great accomplishment of his administration.

Cade: Yes. She basically got into it because as she traveled around people said this is really a problem.

Soapes: I know as you mentioned, there were a number of issues, but is that one the one that took the most time from your office, would you say?

Cade: Yeah, yeah.

Soapes: I've heard it was the one that gave her the greatest sense of accomplishment and you too. Is that a correct assumption?

Cade: Yeah, I just think from my own personal perspective, I consider it really a privilege to have been able to be involved in this because we've done something that needed to be done that affects millions of people that was very important but with attitudes, without the First Lady, it would never have happened because of all the things that I've said earlier. It is not an attractive or sexy issue. In terms of dollars it's not a very expensive issue, but it has a tremendous impact on the lives of people in every town and community in the country and it's just neat to think that she will be remembered as a First Lady who managed to pass a piece of legislation and everybody gave her full credit for it and she deserved it. Every time we had a slowdown in the legislation I would send a memo or give her a call and say "We need you to make this call or I need you to make that call."

Soapes: I was going to ask you, did you work directly with Congress?

Cade: In the first year we were here, the commission was doing its bit and so I worked very closely with the commission. Rosalynn had intended to be chairman of the commission but a lot of people warned that he could not appoint his family to any government position so she became honorary chair, but she was actively involved in everything pertaining to the commission's activities. They met monthly for a year and held a series of public hearings or meetings around the county that lasted eight hours a day. Rosalynn chaired all of those hearings---sat for 32 hours with hundreds of people telling us what was wrong and I think, as a result of that experience, had a very clear idea in her own mind about the direction the commission would want to take. In addition, every time the commission would drift away from their work, she would remind them that the President didn't like long wordy reports and he wanted very specific recommendations

that could be acted on. So, she had an enormous influence on the whole course of the commission as well as involvement.

In addition to going to the commission meetings, we had a series of little task panels that we set up that involved 450 professionals and private citizens from around the country who did in-depth studies of various aspects of mental health care. They looked at prevention, they looked at legal and ethical issues, they looked at funding, at community health centers, and they looked at financial support systems. They looked at the individual problems of different population groups----on and on and on. She attended several of the task panel meetings in those areas she was most interested in and she sat in on some of these and also I personally spent a lot of time with the commission when they were drafting their report to give them suggestions about content.

Soapes: Isn't it true of the legislation that she was the first First Lady since Mrs. Roosevelt to testify before Congress?

Cade: Yes. After the commission report was given to the President we saw that as only the beginning of our work, so we had to develop strategies for publicizing the commission's report and getting its recommendations implemented. She spoke at a variety of conferences that were held around the country, at state conferences that were looking at how to get affordable housing, and she spoke to different mental health groups, and also she agreed to testify before the Senate Sub-Committee on Health. She made that decision because she felt it was a very good way to focus attention on the issue and also it was an effective way to lay the ground work for the legislation. She in fact testified before the legislation was drafted. We did that purposefully so that she would go up and testify as the honorary chair-person of the commission and not necessarily as the First Lady of the U.S., and she went to report to the Senate Sub-Committee the findings of the commission and to describe what the administration's intentions were, translating recommendations into legislative action. There were a lot of people who had reservations about her going.

Soapes: I bet. Yeah.

Cade: Because no one had testified since Mrs. Roosevelt. Times are very different now. They brought up whether or not she would have to testify under oath----and if she were under oath would she be put in an embarrassing position. People went through all the worse case scenarios, but she and I felt very strongly that this was something that needed to be done. It was an opportunity that you couldn't pass up because it was focusing public attention on the issue. She got terrific press afterwards. It was one of the most extraordinary performances that I think anybody ever held there. She had 22 pages of testimony, I remember, we were working on and we were very concerned that it was too long. We had lots of conversations back and forth about how she wasn't giving a speech, she was going to testify to a board and the requirements were different, but in the end it wasn't an issue because she was so involved in the testimony she knew

it and she ended up not really reading the 22 pages but just talking her way through it and answering questions from the senators. Most of them had not spent time studying it but she did. It was stunning. It was an extraordinary performance and I think it generated a lot of good will on the Hill with the Senate. It got a lot of publicity and ended up laying a lot of the groundwork for getting the legislation passed. Subsequent to that we invited the House Sub-Committee on Health here to the White House and she did a similar but more informal kind of briefing with them because she felt it was important not to neglect one side of the aisle, but on the other hand we didn't feel like we needed to go up and publically testify.

Soapes: It might have lost its impact.

Cade: And also I think she spent a heck of a lot of time preparing for that. She spent one whole week-end and we spent one afternoon, Tony Brannon and I, who was the chairman of the Commission and who worked very closely with us and did an outstanding job with Mrs. Carter in terms of guiding her. She was extraordinarily lucky to get him. He understood the issues. An entire afternoon was spent just going back and forth on questions she might get reviewing the Commission report.

Soapes: This was an issue that your office more than any other office in the White House must have worked with. Were there other issues that you worked with other offices on? Someone, I don't remember who it was, someone I've interviewed in the last few months, told me one of his duties was to brief the First Lady. Now, I don't know on what issues it was.

Cade: It was probably David. [David M. Rubenstein of the Domestic Policy Staff.]

Soapes: Yeah. It was David.

Cade: Well, let's just get back to the mental health issue. I think mental health, around the White House, is perceived as her issue. From time to time that was quite annoying because we from time to time felt it wasn't getting the attention it deserved and rather than getting the help we needed from other people around, we had to always bird dog it ourselves. But, on the other hand, it is also a testimony as to how the rest of the White House viewed her that they legitimately thought that she could take a policy issue like that and deal with it. But we did work--I did work--with the people on the Domestic Policy staff and the people from the Congressional Relations in terms of keeping the legislation moving forward and I also worked directly with people at the National Institute of Mental Health and over at HEW, now HHS, particularly when it was up on the Hill. We used to have little meetings over here when we were working on the legislation---strategy meetings where I would pull everybody in from the DPS staff, the Hill and the HHS and IMH and we would sit down to figure out what we needed to do next. We really were the coordinating office over here and we would pull in the rest of the people from the White House and the agencies, but it was more than just here. Anyway, in terms of other issues, I worked with the Domestic Policy staff on lots of different kinds of issues,

depending on what she had just become involved in on daily issues and, I don't know, but my impression is that's pretty unusual for a First Lady.

Soapes: Yes. I think it is.

Cade: And, for a First Lady and a First Lady's staff to deal directly with Domestic Policy Staff.

Soapes: I was kind of surprised when he told me that that was one of the things that he did.

Cade: He did that because when she traveled around the country, either officially or during the campaign, people always expected her to be knowledgeable about the President's policies and programs, so David would come over and sit down with her, Mary, and me, usually, and he would go over whatever had happened the last week that might come up or any particular issues that were of major importance---like the situation in Iran or the railroads, whatever. Rosalynn was just a nut about knowing all of that stuff.

Soapes: Does she soak up detail like we hear the President does?

Cade: Yeah, and she really wants to know the answers to all the questions. Both David and I have been with her when she has come up with questions, I can't think of an example right now, but some issue that you wouldn't think would be at all important and suddenly she would remember that there would be something more she wanted to know about that and she would call up and say "find out what the status of this, that..." I remember at one point she was out and the Youth Employment Bill was about ready to be sent to the Hill and they were out traveling and she called up and said she and Mary were on the road --and Mary called up and said find out, Rosalynn needs to know where the Youth Employment Bill is and I called over to the Domestic Policy staff and David sat down with the President, and the person that dealt with the issue was Dana Inningham and I said "Well, just get her out of the meeting. Rosalynn is up in the airplane. We need to know where this thing is." So there was a lot of back and forth. We would work through David and so those were the kinds of issues we would have briefings on that the Domestic Policy staff would go over.

Soapes: So is that something that just evolved or did Stu Eizenstat assign him to be the liaison with the East Wing. However you want to put it.

Cade: I honestly don't know how it happened. I imagine at one point she did it because she needed to know more about issues, so probably they had to do this.

Soapes: Yeah. I found that fascinating.

Cade: Yeah, but that was very regular. That was as regular as before she went on an important trip, people from the National Security Council, like Dr. Brzezinski or people from the State Department, would come over and brief her on the kinds of issues that were going to come up in foreign travels in countries she was in.

Soapes: It sounds like a measure of respect that the rest of the staff held her in.

Cade: Yeah. There was a lot written about the influence that she exercised at night in the administration. And in some sense, I think that's overplayed a bit, but she did see herself as she traveled as the spokesperson for her husband and she wanted to be able to explain to the American people and to foreign leaders what his positions and policies were and she saw it as helpful to him because a lot of time she could get out and he couldn't and people knew she had his ear and so they would tell her things that he needed to know. Well, in order to be able to do that well you had to know what you're talking about, so she got extensive briefings the whole time she was here about issues of the administration.

Soapes: Did you say that the ERA passage took maybe the number two amount of time in this office? What would go after mental health?

Cade: Well, it's hard to say because things went in cycles. When we first came, the first spring we were here, there was a major effort to try to get the ERA ratified in the three remaining states and I spent a lot of time with people in the West Wing staff, people like ERA American, trying to figure out ways she could help them and the President could be helpful. But when you think about the Equal Rights Amendment and you think about the problems of the elderly and you think about what we call the Communities Project, an effort to promote voluntary activities of one sort or another around the country, well, I think the three of them were probably equally weighted in terms of demand on time.

Soapes: And did you also work with the daughters-in-law, Judy, I think, who was also working on the ERA? She was in the office as well.

Cade: Judy was a very effective person and did most of her work by herself. We talked back and forth and we would go to Judy for guidance, and so did Rosalynn. At one point, particularly early on before we got our feet on the ground, when the ERA was coming up in state after state after state, it came up in Nevada and in North Carolina and in Florida, I guess, right after we came in, and we would get calls from women's organizations around the country saying you just need to call this or that state legislator. That's the vote that we need. Well, a lot of times the intelligence from the field, particularly if it wasn't coordinated with everything else we did, wasn't that great. So when requests would come in like that we would do a lot of checking. We would often talk to Judy about what she thought about it because she was often better connected than any of the rest of us and understood better than the rest of us what the situation really was.

Soapes: I was going through trying to jot down issues on the problems of aging. I guess I found a speech about some of the issues. Did that get involved at all in the White House Conference on families? The problems of aging...do those two intersect at all?

Cade: They did, but we were not directly involved. The aging issue was an interesting one. The problems of the elderly, the issues that relate to aging, are so basic that it was difficult to figure out exactly what she could do that would be constructive. She was active on two levels. She went regularly to Nelson Cruckshank, of the President's Council on the Aging, and they would discuss a variety of issues, whether it was the appointment of people to the Federal Council on Aging or getting a White House conference off the ground, or events that he thought it was important for the President to participate in that he wanted her help plotting to get on the schedule. Social security issues; at one point there were questions about changes in the Social Security system and he wanted her help to protect certain entitlements that he thought were very important. So there were behind-the-scenes efforts she was involved with but they were never public, but she did try to focus more White House attention on the issue.

But beyond that, what she saw as the most constructive thing she could do was to try to help change the public attitudes about older people. This relates back to how the office of the First Lady can have enormous influence. You can use that influence to try to focus the public attention on a whole range of issues, just because people pay attention to what you say. So, she did a lot of speaking about how older people can contribute and tried to highlight various programs where older people were being helped to find jobs and had become involved and were helping other more infirm people or whatever. We also at one point held here at the White House a round table on aging with aging leaders and they gave her advice on the kind of things that she could do, and really the consistent theme of that was what the older people need is an advocate in the country, somebody to speak out about their needs and how important they are and what they contribute to the community at large. She chose to take this rather high-road tack to try to educate people. Because of her interest in mental health, she, of course, got involved in mental health for the elderly and went at one point to speak to a national conference that Congressman Pepper sponsored up on the Hill. His Select Committee on Aging held its two day conference that she attended and she did a very effective job of addressing some of the issues. Also, as she traveled abroad she met with some of the aging leaders from other countries to discuss what they were doing in the same areas she was interested in.

Soapes: Her work with Cambodian refugees was another thing that was well publicized.

Cade: That was another example of how you can use the office. As you may recall in the fall of 79 there were more and more pictures coming out of Cambodia of the tragic situation that existed there and the President was very concerned about it. The people of the State Department had, in fact, been tracking the situation since early in the spring and knew there was going to be a crisis and knew there was going to be a severe food shortage and had been trying to encourage the United Nations to begin planning for a massive relief effort but all of that did not really gel until late summer and only in the fall when it became so desperate did people become very organized. But, at any rate, one day she was talking to the President about it and she said "Is there any way we can help?" Mary, Jane, and I and some other people were having lunch at the NET and

somebody from the East Wing called over. It was a Friday afternoon. She said Mrs. Carter wanted to meet us upstairs in the mansion and nobody could figure out what on earth was on the move. So we all trooped upstairs and she said, "Well, I've just talked to Jimmy and I think we need to do something about the Cambodia refugees. What do you think we can do?" So, we stayed about 45 minutes tossing around different ideas and decided that probably we needed to talk to some people at State and see what they thought would be the most effective thing to do and we raised briefly the idea of her going to Thailand to see the Cambodians, but we were concerned because we had another major trip planned in two weeks and if you waited beyond that trip then you were into Thanksgiving and...

Soapes: The timing was a problem.

Cade: Yeah, right. It was a difficult situation. Anyway, over the week-end we talked to the people at the State Department and she talked to some people herself. By Monday morning it happened that the U. N. Counsel on Refugees and representatives from USF and the International Red Cross who were involved in the relief effort were coming to the White House for another meeting, so she met with them. On Monday morning there was a Security Council meeting on Cambodia and she sat in on it and then she met with the other people in the afternoon. And by Monday afternoon we were talking about the various things she could do and the pros and cons of making the trip, and finally she just looked at everyone and said "I don't understand why, if I'm so frustrated and I want to go over there and work on this problem, I can't go." And everyone said you can go. Well, she left on Wednesday evening.

Soapes: So the White House had to plan a First Lady trip in four days?

Cade: Well, basically we had a very good ambassador in Thailand, Ronald Arnowitz, whom some of us knew from way back and we had great confidence in him and when you go that fast you can't even send an advance person. I mean you can't even contact the Embassy and figure out a schedule. Well, we got her on the airplane and away she went. We decided she needed to take some experts with her and so she took with her the Surgeon General and the head of the San Francisco Council. And we decided before she left that it was very important that she meet a goal, that there would be publicity and she needed a strategy to follow through. One of the immediate problems that they had was cash. The agencies didn't have the cash on hand to buy the food on the local markets to take to the camps and they needed two million dollars so they called for a referendum and said "We've got to figure out a way between now and Tuesday to get this two million dollars moving because they're going to starve to death right in front of us." There's food there but they can't buy it, the problem being that countries pledged money to support the relief effort but they hadn't come through with the payments on it. So I worked with the State Department and ISC and we got this authorization for the cash moving through the bureaucracy and on Monday they brought the papers over and I remember one of the State Department folks said "Well, Mrs. Carter, the Secretary has signed off on these and we're all

ready to release this money but it does need a presidential signature because it's out of the special emergency fund and the person who deals with presidential papers was not in today and the only way that we will be able to get this money released tomorrow and you can say that it's been released is if it is officially signed off." And she looked at him and said "Well, do you mean you want me to take it upstairs to Jimmy?" And he said "Well, that will be helpful." So she actually took the full set of papers up to Jimmy to get the President's signature in order to get the money.

But anyway, we did, in fact, have this meeting in the White House on Tuesday about 7:00 and there were about 75 people there. She and the other people from the delegation challenged DeVan to do something about addressing the issue of coordination, doing something to establish a coordinating body that could continue to keep this issue before the American people and they all got so turned on that they stayed. The meeting was supposed to end at 3:00 but they stayed there at the White House until 6:00 with the planning groups and actually that afternoon mapped out a strategy for what they were going to do and as a result of that meeting the Cambodian Crisis Center was established. That, in turn, was the group that set up the National Cambodian Crisis Committee which was a group of about 100 prominent Americans who agreed to lend their names to a fund-raising and education effort and throughout the entire winter and spring they were very, very active in private sector fund raising. They raised over 60 million dollars. Rosalynn Carter's television spot went on the air, for instance, and to my mind, it was just an extraordinary example of what a First Lady, when they make up their mind, can really do.

Soapes: And in such a short time.

Cade: After the meeting was over we had pictures blown up for the meeting of the trip and she and I walked around and looked at the pictures afterwards and she would look at the pictures and say, "I remember that little girl." Rosalynn said "Her arms were laid across her body and she was so weak she couldn't control her limbs, and when you held her arms up they just fell down so I had to lay them across her chest or they would just dangle." And there was another picture of a young woman who had come into the camp with a 10 day old baby and she was so weak when Rosalynn tried to feed her she couldn't even eat. She told me about Dr. Richland who said ordinarily even if you have a very sick mother, you can always elicit some response if you say "You have a very beautiful baby", particularly with a new mother. When Rosalynn said that to the mother and she was so weak she couldn't even respond to that. I don't think that there is anything that Rosalynn has done that had the emotional impact of that visit. So much suffering--suffering that people in this country can't even fathom. There were hundreds of thousands of people just starving to death and dying. I talked to several people who were in the camps or who wrote afterwards that said when she was there they had never seen anybody respond with such compassion. I think they thought she would come in and just sort of walk through the camps and bless the masses, but she didn't. She helped children and tried to feed the women and spent a lot of time talking to relief workers and I think just really made a marvelous impression.

Soapes: I remember the TV commercial.

Cade: Right. They just couldn't believe that she was so nice and so concerned about what was going on and so unassuming to the people over there. It was enormously important that the First Lady came because it was an indication of the concern and commitment that the United States government had to do something to relieve the situation. It turned out it was not only important to the Thai government but to the relief organizations. So, that was one project we worked on where you really had a sense we were making a huge contribution. There are lots and lots of people alive who probably wouldn't have been if the American people had not responded in the way that they did. What was really moving about it was the response and interest. We got letters from school kids and old ladies---all sorts of people who read about her trip and the profoundness of her contributions. The American people were so generous and so willing to help, from the corporations to labor, just right on down the line to individual citizens. Rosalynn invited the corporate leaders here, and labor leaders here to get involved with her. Another thing that was interesting with this particular project is that she also went in and spoke to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York about her trip and about the United States response to the situation over there, and I think it is probably the first time a First Lady ever did that. It was a very distinguished audience. She met with Secretary General Waltheim to talk to him about what she encouraged him to do to give the full support of his office.

Soapes: Were there things that she wanted to undertake that she couldn't that were deemed by someone as perhaps too politically sensitive or for other reasons?

Cade: No, I think the only thing that constrained her was her own time because of her other responsibilities in terms of being hostess here and taking care of Amy and being home for her husband, just personal responsibilities. I can think of things she wanted to do more with---The Communities Project. I think if she had had more time--- volunteerism is something I think she would have done more with. From time to time people would give her recommendations on what she might do. For instance, when we were working on mental health, Congressional Liaison had questions and would call about this, that, or the other because of things she would deal with, but overall, she kind of made up her own mind. She did pretty much what she wanted to do.

Soapes: There are a number of *official patron* projects that the First Lady is supposed to do. Did that run out of here too and was that pretty time consuming?

Cade: No. I guess you're speaking about the White House.....

Soapes: Like, well, isn't there some board at the Kennedy Center where the First Lady is listed as an honorary member?

Cade: Well, yes.

Soapes: Boards where the First Lady is listed as honorary member or chair.

Cade: Yes. We're responsible for dealing with all the requests for honorary chairmanships but it's really not very time consuming. Most of the time those things are traditional and they don't require any effort but a message from time to time. Obviously, Mrs. Carter would like to be more personally involved but ordinarily the schedule didn't have it.

Soapes: Basically the name on the letter head kind of thing.

Cade: Exactly---and those requests would come in here and recommendations would come from staff about what she ought to do and we'd send them up to her and she'd make the decision. This office also handled all the messages she sent.

Soapes: You had what.....about three or four staff members?

Cade: I started out with one and then we added another one and there were two of us and now there are two more. One is a researcher that works under my supervision. She is responsible for preparing briefing books. She did a lot of writing. We did a lot of writing. She prepared background papers for major events, not as extensively as the papers for the President does, but we did that so she would get a paper explaining what she was doing, what the background was, what people were involved, unless it was something that was strictly a social event that the social office would handle or prep her for.

Soapes: Now, you're not going with her to Georgia are you?

Cade: No.

Soapes: Do you know if Projects and Issues as an office that is going to continue?

Cade: I met yesterday with someone from Mrs. Reagan's transition staff. It is my understanding that they will have an office of special projects and correspondence. They are going to make some changes. Given Mrs. Reagan's past history I don't think she will be the same kind of First Lady as Mrs. Carter. I think every First Lady has to decide for herself how she wants to use the office. I think Rosalynn will go down in history as a truly remarkable First Lady. I think she has used this office as effectively as any individual has used it and I don't think that she has to date been given the credit that she deserved for all that she does. I think that is particularly true in the area of the women's issues and the Equal Rights Amendment.

First of all, just as a woman and the kind of model she has presented; with her model of a woman that was involved in a substantive way in a variety of different activities while still maintaining her role of wife and mother, and she meshed all of these roles very well and I think that is probably where a lot of American women are today. At the same time she understood the importance of women's issues and spent a great deal of time making sure that other people in the administration were as sensitive to the importance of getting women placed in high positions and

aggressively pursuing other things that are important to them, and she spent a great deal of time on the Equal Rights Amendment. She took a great deal of criticism because she didn't do enough and then some people criticized her for doing anything at all. She felt it was more effective for her to go behind the scenes because if you go public, legislators say they don't want to be pressured. I think her feeling was that whatever you do, you get criticized. If you are going to be in a visible public position you are going to expect criticism, and so you just have to work and do what you think is right and proper and not worry about it. As I have said, she has just done a terrific job with this position.

Soapes: And obviously it is something you have enjoyed being involved in.

Cade: Oh, I have loved it. She was an extremely easy person to work with and I developed what I think is a very good and close relationship with her. I saw her all the time and never worried if I had a problem and this tended to come up in mental health more than the other issues. If I had a crisis and needed her help I would just call her up. We spent a lot of time on the budget. She was never hesitant to weigh in and talk with her husband and Mr. McIntyre and educate them about the importance of this issue and there are so many issues that needed the President's attention and that of other senior staff and, if you don't have an advocate somewhere, lots of times you just get lost in the shuffle, and she was very much aware of it and enjoyed doing it. I just have enormous respect for her and for her willingness to just jump in. She is a very natural person. She never gave off the sense that she was the First Lady and therefore you had limits on what you could ask her to do. She was here to do a job and I was here to help her do it. I would say in terms of the country at large she has been a force for compassion and concern and caring about one another and that has an impact. You can relate to someone and remind them that even when difficulties come in times like this there are a lot of people around the country that are less fortunate and we all have the responsibility to reach out and care for one another. And I think she has done an excellent job of that.

Soapes: It is going to be very interesting to see if this isn't a more appreciated function.

Cade: I mean, she has really had an impact on so many millions of people in the same way that the President has and I don't suppose you ever get credit for that, the credit that you deserve, but millions of people are going to be affected by what she did. And the people that are alive in Cambodia because of what she did and the elderly people that feel that there is someone who cares about them. That's an important message to have coming from the White House, that there really is a President and First lady who care about them. They're there to try to make this country better in many ways and I think that was consistently her motivation. So, she's made a great contribution. It will be interesting to see how people analyze it in the future.

Soapes: Yeah, yeah, to have been involved with it would have been terribly absorbing and maybe even make it hard to get something else.

Cade: Well, it took a lot of time.

Soapes: I'm sure it did. I'm sure it did. Do you have something now that you are going to?

Cade: No, I haven't really figured out what I need to do. I feel very strongly that because this was the first Projects Office that ever existed, and because of the kinds of things that she did, that these files ought to be in good order for historical purposes, in addition to which there are just massive files because of the number of things she got into. So, I'm just worried about trying to get these files and myself out. I think I will probably stay in the human services field somewhere, but I haven't figured out the best way to do that. Mine was really an extraordinary job because even people who worked on President Carter's staff didn't have the kind of access to the President that I had to her and we really operated outside the bureaucracy.

Soapes: Yeah, it was a front line type of situation.

Cade: Rosalynn had that flexibility and it allows you to accomplish a whole lot more than if you had to work through various layers and basically it's also much more fun.

Soapes: Sure it is.

Cade: I remember sitting in committee and a bill coming up in session and I had my secretary calling every hour checking on when it was coming up and what was going on with it, and in addition to being worthwhile it is a lot of fun. You've got a job to do and you have a sense of accomplishment. It is going to take me while to put it all in perspective.

Soapes: So, to get in touch with you in the future, do you have an alumnae association that keeps up with where you are that we could get in touch with you through them? How do we best go about finding you from the library?

Cade: I expect to stay in Washington for the next couple of months at least. Whatever I can do to be helpful to her in the future I'll be glad to do. Certainly for the short run they need the time to put this all in perspective and figure out what they want to do, but I am sure that Rosalynn plans to pursue her interest and investment in mental health.

Soapes: Several people mentioned to me that there was talk of having a sort of alumnae society of the people who had worked at the White House. I don't know if they ever got that off the ground or not.

Cade: Yes, I agree.

Soapes: It never got off the ground and I don't remember who was talking about it. Several different people said they had heard that maybe we will get this done. Yes, if you are keeping in touch with them that would be the best way to keep in touch with you.

