

EXIT INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH SWEANEY,
SUPERVISOR, DATA PROCESSING, WHITE HOUSE
CENTRAL FILES, JANUARY 26, 1979

Interviewed in OEOB 492, at 10:00 A.M. by David Alsobrook of NLC. Lyndon Flood of NLC prepared the questions and conducted the research for this interview.

During the summer of 1974, Deborah Sweaney worked as an intern in John Nesbitt's office in the EOB. She worked with the photograph identification project during her internship. After Nixon resigned in August of 1974, she remained briefly with the Nesbitt staff as a temporary employee. Later Frank Matthews of Central Files interviewed her for a job with his staff. She began working in Central Files on September 28, 1974. She will be leaving her White House job for a position as a records management consultant with a legal research organization.

Deborah is a native of Missouri and took a B. A. in history from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Her internship in Nesbitt's office grew out of a program that Drake sponsors in which students can spend a semester in Washington. Earlier she had worked on a study of Presidential libraries. She visited the Truman and Hoover libraries and talked with some of the staff in central office of Presidential Libraries (including Martin Elzy now of NLJ). Deborah recently completed an M. A. in Public Administration.

She is very much in favor of computer retrieval systems and is a strong advocate of their application in the White House and in Presidential Libraries. She said that she hoped that the future Carter Presidential Library would be located near a university where the staff could "share" a computer system of some type.

According to Deborah, the term "Central Files" is a misnomer since each White House unit maintains its own records. She said that White House units do not send materials to Central Files on a systematic basis.

Deborah's title is "Supervisor of Data Processing," in Central Files. In the administrative scheme of things, she reports to Doris Austin, Chief of Central Reference in Central Files. Yet, Deborah also goes to Frank Matthews with questions about overall duties of the office. She has worked closely with Clarence "Biff" Henley in implementing the various computer systems in the White House. Some of these computer systems are described in some detail in the attached breakdown). For the past several months, Deborah has supervised several ADP keypunch technicians, namely: Diane Richey, Roberta O'Lare, and Joan Hios. O'Lare will be assuming Deborah's job after today.

During Deborah's tenure in the White House, her office worked closely with the First Lady's Office (i.e., Rhonda Bush), Presidential Correspondence (with all of Landon Kite's staff, esp. Pam Zinn, who was involved in MI mail and special referrals). On one occasion, Ralph Peck of Val Giannini's office requested a special report on all letters received from Georgia in regard to the Panama Canal Treaties. Peck had received this job from Betty Rainwater's office.

According to Deborah, a great deal of discussion has arisen over the computer system and the alpha and subject filing systems. At present, Central Files does cross referencing work between the alpha and subject files. Under the proposed system, such work will cease, and a numerical coding will be substituted for the present subject file designation.

Deborah felt that the use of computers in the White House is a good idea, but that initially, there were some conceptual problems that were not effectively resolved. She also mentioned briefly the tremendous pressure involved in meeting deadlines within the White House.

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