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Interview with Mrs. Jimmy Carter
December 21, 1974
Conducted at the Governor's Mansion by Joyce Gallagher, Dept. of Archives and History

Interviewer: Mrs. Carter, I would like you to tell me a little bit about your family background and what it was like growing up in Plains, Ga.

Mrs. Carter: Well, I was born in Plains and lived there until Jimmy and I got married. I have two brothers and one sister. My father died when I was 13. My mothers mother died the next year, and my grandfather came to live with us, and he was like a father to me. We didn't have a lot of money; my mother worked in the school lunch room for a while and she sewed for other people and she taught me how, when I was very little, to sew. I used to help her make trouseaus for brides and I loved it and Mother enjoyed it too. But then she went to work in the post office and she is still in the post office now. She is assistant to the post master.

We had a very close family life, I think because of those tragedies. My youngest (I was the oldest of four children) sister was two when my daddy died...so as the oldest I felt that I had to help mother kind of raise the children. And um, I look back on it and it was a happy time. Mother put us all through college. I went to Georgia Southwestern, a junior college, two years and graduated and then married Jimmy. I had known Jimmy at home all my life. He was older than I was and he graduated from high school when he was 16, as we did back then, because we only had 11 grades, and he left home. And um, I was 13 at the time and his sister was my best friend and I knew him but I didn't go with him at all, because I was 13 years old when he left home. And then he came home on leave the year before he was a first classman at the Naval Academy. I had two dates with him and then I went to Annapolis a couple of times and back for June Week and then we got married

the next summer when he graduated. And so I enjoyed growing up in Plains. It is a small town and it's still a small town. We had 575 people in the 1960 census; in the 1970 we had over 600 (laugh) so it has grown a little bit. But we love it and we we...

Jimmy was in the navy for 8 years after we got married; then we came back to Plains in 1953. And um, his father had a very small warehouse, no employees except during the harvest season and planting season. It was a farm supply warehouse. He bought and resold fertilizer, bought and resold seed peanuts, and then bought the crops from the farmers when they harvested them. Well, Jimmy took over the business and built it up into a really good business. For instance, we manufacture our own fertilizer; we grow our own seed peanuts and have a processing plant and sell high quality seed peanuts. We, um, sell all kinds of farm supplies, for instance, and do services for farms like spread fertilizer on the farms.

Well, anyway, a few years after Jimmy came home he got involved in local politics. He was on the local school board. His father had been before he died; his father had been in the Legislature before he died. But we were home for about 10 years before Jimmy ran for the Senate. But he had been on the hospotal authority and involved with local causes, and the Lions Club. I know one year he won two or three prizes in some kind of contest... was it Better Homes and Gardens?...anyway we won first prize for beautifying the community. We...Jimmy was a head of a committee at the Lions Club to get everybody in town to paint their house, which we did. We got the streets paved in town; they had never been paved. We built a swimming pool...anyway we won three or four prizes in a state-wide contest that we were very proud of. But then in 1962 he decided to run for the Senate; it was when the Senate was reapportioned and he only had 21 days to campaign. We had a court...we

had a poll watcher at one of the polls who was supposed to be kinda crooked (laugh) and sure enough we had 330 that voted and they counted 400 and something ballots (laugh). So we had to go to court but finally did win and he served in the Senate for four years, two terms, a second term without opposition. And then he ran for Governor in 1966 and, as you know, was defeated. But I always think, because he got in so late, that he didn't have time for people to know him. But, um, he said many times that it was a blessing that he did not win in 1966, because for the next four years he traveled the state and campaigned and really learned so much about the state. I thought that I having lived in Georgia most all my life, except for the time Jimmy was in the navy, I thought I knew a lot about the state. But when you start traveling over and campaigning and meeting people there is so much to learn, and it's really exciting to me. I enjoyed it so much and Jimmy did too. When you look back upon it those four years are very valuable to me, learning the people and learning the state.

Interviewer: When you were in Plains I guess you never imagined you would be a Governor's wife, did you? Much less President's wife?

Mrs. Carter: No, and when we got married, of course, Jimmy had just graduated from the Naval Academy and had planned to make the Navy a career. He was on the second nuclear submarine at the time his father died; they were building the reactor and we were living in Schenectady, New York. He was a Senior Officer attached to the submarine and I don't think it was a hard decision for him, though; he never hesitated about it; he felt he had to come home. His only brother was still in high school; there was nobody at home to take care of business and family situations. We never have regretted it.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy being a Navy officers wife?

Mrs. Carter: I enjoyed it. We traveled and got to see the country, and

Jimmy had good duty. He only had one cruise that lasted about three months when we were in the navy. The rest of the time he was maybe gone three or four days to sea and back in for weekends. He just had real good duty. And we enjoyed it. We lived, for instance, for two years in Hawaii, and he worked tropical hours from 7 until 1. One of our children was born out there. Jack, the first boy was born when we lived in Norfolk, Virginia. Chip was born in Hawaii, and Jeffery was born when we lived in New London, Conn. Amy was born in Georgia; we lived at home.

Interviewer: Were you disappointed when you had to leave the Navy and come back to Plains or were you looking forward to it?

Mrs. Carter: Jimmy was never disappointed. I was a little bit disappointed. I didn't think I wanted to come home. I had traveled over the country (laugh) but I never have regretted it; I was glad after we got home. And I loved Plains and I loved being at home. And I always worked with Jimmy in the business and that was kind of fulfilling to us because we started with so little and built it up. I started helping keep his...he kept his books; he loaded every bag of fertilizer for the first few years. I remember we hired our first fulltime employee (laugh) and that was exciting. But I kept the books and I ...first he said come down and help him one day a week and then it got to be two days a week, then three and four times a week, and then it got to be a full time job. I studied accounting; I took a correspondence course. Well, it was not really a correspondence course; I had a friend who taught accounting at the Vocational Technical school in Americus and she gave me the books and I studied them on my own. We had somebody set them up...very complicated books because we had three businesses-liquid nitrogen business, our peanut business, and the regular warehouse business-so it was a challenge to me to learn to keep it and I always enjoyed that. I always thought that I would get my CPA license or whatever you call it

(laugh), but of course I never did. Jimmy started running for the Senate and I just never did do that.

Interviewer: When you went to Georgia Southwestern, what was your main area of interest in school, academically?

Mrs. Carter: I just took a regular junior college course. Because I had thought that I wanted to be an interior designer, and I was going on to school to major in that. But then I got married.

Interviewer: You probably don't regret it, do you? (laugh)

Mrs. Carter: No (laugh)

Interviewer: Seems like you have had an exciting life since then.

Mrs. Carter: I have, it really has been interesting. When you, for instance, when we moved from Plains and traveled in the Navy, it opened up a whole new world to me. We met Navy people who had traveled all over the world, and then we came back home and met the farmers in the warehouse, and those were people we never had known before. In 1962, the same year Jimmy ran for the Senate, we built a cotton gin and Jimmy traveled over all the surrounding counties, maybe seven or eight counties, meeting everybody that lived in those counties. You don't know how many people live around you that you don't know. It opened up a whole 'nother world of people to us. That was the spring; then in the fall of that year he ran for the Senate, and there were more friends and more people and it just...everytime we go into a new venture it just opens a completely new world to you. Things go on right around you that you are unaware of; that's really exciting to me.

Interviewer: That's a continual growth process, meeting people and learning other viewpoints, feelings and thoughts. I imagine politics has been a really effective way of doing that?

Mrs. Carter: It really is. When you meet people all over the state and when you learn to love them...they walk up and down the streets with you when pass out brochures and, like I say, it is hard work... on the factory shift in the

morning and I just love those people that help me. That work with me and I'll be grateful to them all my life.

Interviewer: I'm sure you will. Were you prepared for the governorship when you or when Jimmy decided that he was going to run?

Mrs. Carter: No. I never never have been so suprised. I remember that night in 1966, the last night of the session, and Jimmy was going to run for Congress; he was not coming back to the Senate. We were in the Senate chambers and it was the last night, always a lot of fun, a lot of toasting people. Peter Zack Geer was going to run for something and they were toasting Peter Zack Geer and it was bedlam. We were standing in the back of the Senate chamber and Jimmy, like I said, was going to run for Congress, and he said, "Do you know what I would really like to be," and he said, "I would like to be lieutenant governor--I would turn this Senate around." He said, "It would be a businesslike body and it would work." laugh). That was the last night in March, and in June he decided to run for governor. He had never thought about it either until ah...he was running against Bo Callaway for Congress and Bo decided to run for governor. But I don't know whether he decided to run first or Jimmy decided to run first. But anyway one of the candidates dropped our of the race and he got in in late June. He had a lot of calls, a lot of people asking him to run, but the decision was his; he decided to do it. I don't think he has ever regretted it. But I know that he never had...I know that that spring he never thought about (laugh) running. And that was just a few months before he decided to do it.

Interviewer: He just decided on the spur of the moment. But he didn't decide to take the lieutenant governor. It would have been nice to see someone turn the House and Senate around (laugh).

Mrs. Carter: Uh huh. No, he just...we were standing back there looking at all that going on in the Senate that night and that is what he said.

Interviewer: Did he give a lot more thought to his decision to run for President--I'm sure he must have. He didn't just turn around one day and say I think I'll run for President? (laugh)

Mrs. Carter: No, he really has been thinking about that for about two years. He thought about it a long time before he ever said it, in fact, I think. But I know when he first started telling people that he was going to do it, it really is overwhelming. When he first approached me with it, I couldn't think about it. It was just awesome to me that he could, he could run for President and I might be out campaigning over the country. I just... it was not that I didn't look forward to campaigning but just the fact that Jimmy might be President was just awesome to me. I didn't really...it took me awhile to get used to it in my mind. But then you meet people that are running and you get to know these people, and I know that Jimmy can do as good a job as they can. I really think he can and, well, I know he can. He has got abilities that I think our country needs. So after I got over that first kind of shock...Well, I remember the first day he told me he was going to run for governor. People were calling him to Atlanta, and he had come to Atlanta just to see what the situation was. I was walking home from the warehouse just about 1/2 mile from our house in Plains to the warehouse, right in front of Jimmy's mother's house, and she called me and said, "Jimmy's trying to findyou." And I went in her house...I had on my dungarees cause I was working... I went in and answered the telephone, and he said, "I think I've decided to run for governor" (laugh). And I remember walking the rest of the way home... just unbelievable to me that Jimmy could be governor. Of course, I never doubted that he could do a good job. But the state is so big. And I had campaigned for the Senate and I just...ah, of course, it was exciting to me. I just kind of walked on air all the way home, that Jimmy might be governor someday. But then even when Jimmy started talking about running for President, he'd say, "I'm going to run for (gulp) for President," he could hardly say it (laugh) at first. But ah, like I say, when you think about it and you meet the people that running for President, I know Jimmy can do as good a job as they can. And he feels confident and he has worked hard.

He has planned...he already has his plans for what he is going to be doing in the next year. He has laid ground work in a lot of states and he's just very confident.

Interviewer: Well, when you finally made governor's wife, were you really excited?

Mrs. Carter: I was, of course; we had worked so long and hard, four years. I had done all of Jimmy's correspondence. I worked in the warehouse all day and then I would do his correspondence at night, for two or three years, and then the last year I campaigned too. But we had worked so hard and we didn't have any money-we had to do it on a shoestring. And we had just planned, and didn't have endorsements from any of the major political figures or the newspapers. I think we had two newspapers in the state that endorsed us. And, ah, so just... we felt like, on our own we had done this. Of course, we couldn't have done this without the help of alot of friends, but it was just exciting to work hard and then have your dreams fulfilled.

Interviewer: Were you apprehensive?

Mrs. Carter: Well, I never had-I don't think I had ever really thought about what would happen after he was elected. We had always worked for that day and I kind of put it out of my mind what I would have to do afterwards. And suddenly Jimmy was governor, and I was scared to death (laugh). I really kind of panicked. We were at the conference in North Carolina for governors-elect and they had some of the governors, some of the men who were presently governors and all of the newly elected governors, and they talked to us a lot about what to expect and we met with some of the governors wives and they helped me a lot. Then I came...I remember the first day I came to the mansion, I never had seen the mansion; I had passed here in the campaign in 1966, when the columns were still wrapped, when it was being built, but I had never seen the mansion and I called Mrs. Maddox and asked her if I could come by. She told me that she

had stood at the door everyday, I think...she said it was just like a job; you get up and go to work at 9:30 in the morning (laugh). She told me that she couldn't find a cook, so if she ever had company she did the cooking. I remember I went home and asked Jimmy why I worked so hard to help him get elected (laugh). And then the day that we moved in, I just really worked... well, the first day that I came a trooper... you know, we had to get the trooper to let us in the gate, and then a trooper met me at the front door and I was scared of the troopers (laugh). I couldn't...it was overwhelming to me how...who would keep the mansion? Who would keep it clean? And how would you entertain guests? It was frightening to me at first. But I've had so much good help. And no matter who you call on, you have a problem and you call on somebody to help you, and they help you. And so it has all worked out well; I've had very few problems.

Interviewer: I'm sure it was a shock trying to figure out who does what. How does it all run? It is such a massive, magnificent place, it would be overwhelming.

Mrs. Carter: And the first day we were in the troopers kept calling us: "What time do you want the fountain turned on? What time do you want the fountain turned off? What time do you want the light?...Well, at night when we got ready to go to bed, it took us about 45 minutes to turn the lights out. They are everywhere. So we got the troopers to turn them out. And when they make the rounds anyway and check all the doors and windows about every hour/ every two hours and so they started to turn the lights out for us when they did that. And they wanted to know what time. And you know all these things I never had thought of, and all of a sudden I had to make all kinds of decisions. But I found out one thing in politics--well, I think just in life--because Jimmy brought home people for four years...we averaged 12 people a weekend coming to Plains to talk about the campaign, spend the night--I fed them, I worked in the warehouse all day. Pretty soon I found out that you can do what you

have to do, but you have to have a relaxed attitude about it or...At first, I felt at home my house had to be perfect, the food had to be perfect, you know, when you relax and enjoy people you can do it. And that is what I found at the mansion. If you just relax and make your decisions and enjoy it, you can do it. You can do what you have to do. I think when you develop the attitude that you...or Jimmy has sat me down so many times said, just do what you can do and don't worry about what you can't do because you can never do everything that needs to be done at a certain time, not living here, not being involved in politics. All the letters I have to write, he says, "Just do what you can do, and don't worry about the other." And you can do it and you can do all of it over a period of time--you can't maybe do it all when you want to or as you would like to, but you can do it.

Interviewer: Do you think that is the key to being a politicians wife?

Mrs. Carter: I think that is the key to anything, accept what you can do and relax. And I think with the guests that we have...we've had so many guests... celebrities, foreign dignitaries, and if you relax with...and if you have to go into the kitchen to eat a sandwich because there is no help on Saturday night...they love, they enjoy it, they feel at home. And so I think that is one reason we had a good time in the mansion.

Interviewer: What do you perceive to be one of your most important roles as First Lady of Georgia?

Mrs. Carter: The thing that has been most gratifying to me is my work with the mental health program. Um, Jimmy appointed me to the commission when it was the first winter, a few months after he had been elected. He appointed a commission to improve services to the mentally and emotionally handicapped. And he put me on the committee. And we traveled...I traveled...My job was to travel to all the facilities in the state, not to find fault, but just to let them know we were interested, and see what we could do. And at that time our whole program was oriented to institutions and treating people in institutions

We...the commission made a report back to him in the fall: the situation now... at that time in Georgia, 1971...and then, what a good mental health program could be. And he incorporated nearly every single thing in his reorganization of state government. And we now have one of the greatest programs...we, of course, have a long way to go, but we have one of the best programs in the States. We have people coming to us to see how we do it in Georgia. In 1971, we had 23 community mental health centers, day care centers, training centers; now we have 135. And that is what I have done more than anything else--is go into the communities, help them raise their local funds toward establishing day care or community health, mental health training programs. And now we have one accessible to every county in the state. And I've really been excited. I worked with the special olympics, which is in Gainesville, Ga. That's one of the greatest programs I've ever been involved in. It takes...well, most mentally handicapped people, whether they are mentally ill or mentally retarded, we have to give a lot of love and attention. And, we get these people out of institutions and into community centers where they can get attention--where they can live with parents that love them, but have a place to go in the day-time, because so many parents that I've seen are so completely tied down to a child or relative or somebody in their home who is mentally retarded or mentally afflicted. It not only helps the person afflicted but it helps the parents, ah, to be able to get jobs and work for a living. So many many have been on welfare and they are no longer on welfare because they have somewhere to put their child and they can get out and make a living. Oh...but to see retarded children or mentally handicapped children react to games and races just thrills me. And in my opinion, most of these people can function in an ordinary home environment. They can work, they can have jobs, they have got to know that they can. And to win a race in a special olympics gives them more confidence than anything possibly could. And so that has been exciting

to me, to work with that. Another thing that has been really gratifying to me is to see all the good things that go on in our state. As First Lady I have an opportunity to be involved in almost every cause, because people will call me to help and I can help, because I've never asked anybody to do anything that they have refused to do. And, um, but just to be involved and just to see things that go on over the state. People work every day unselfishly, they don't get a lot of credit for it because people don't know it. I've had the opportunity to know it. And um...its really exciting and um...but if I ever write a book, that is what it will be about(laugh).

Interviewer: I wish you would.

Mrs. Carter: People I've met over the state that work just day in and day out for other people. It's exciting to me.

Interviewer: I wish you would maybe start a newspaper (laugh) I think we need a newspaper that has a little more optimism as opposed to...or let people know that good things are happening. Because you never hear about these people that give their whole lives to something that they believe in or feel about really deeply, you never hear about them and those are the people I think more than ever we need to hear about.

Mrs. Carter: I know it. It is really sad that it doesn't make news because it's...it's just unbelievable when you stop and see a...when you realize what goes on. I never had. And I've been at home and I worked for the Cancer drive and the Red Cross drive and the March of Dimes, but until you go see people who just go every day to help one child...I was talking to a man the other day who was telling about a women who went every single day for about 8 or 9 months to talk to a boy who had mental depression. He lay in a bed with his face to the wall and never looked at anybody, never talked to anybody, never said a word. And she read him stories to his back. And one day she couldn't

get a babysitter so she took the baby with her, a little baby crawling... and she let the baby crawl around on the floor. And this boy who was maybe 19, heard the baby cooing on the floor and he turned over, got out of the bed, fell on the floor, and started making noises to the baby. And that changed his life. He is now a functioning person. And she got no pay for it, but she wanted to do it. And those are the kinds of things I see on a daily basis (inaudible)

Interviewer: How did you get interested in mental health...the mentally exceptional children?

Mrs. Carter: Well, Jimmy had two first cousins who are mentally ill and one is mentally retarded. And they have both spent most of their lives in state institutions. One is at Gracewood now, and one is at Central State... Georgia Regional Hospital in Milledgeville(laugh). And so he had been very interested in mental health programs and had worked with it some in the Senate. And then during the campaign people approach you all the time, and people would ask me very very personal questions and I'd come home and ask Jimmy why people approach me with these problems. And he said that they think that you might be the only person they will ever see who might be a governor's wife or might be close to state government and might be able to help them. But I was campaigning one day--I had this happen to me more than once, but one particular day a woman walking down the street, came up to me and said, "I have a retarded child at home; do you think you can help me?" Well, that night...I went from that town to Swainsboro, Ga.,and I had a reception and my reception was over at six o'clock and I was through campaigning for the day and found out that Jimmy was going to be in Swainsboro that night. That was very unusual, because we went in different directions. Every sunday afternoon we would plan where we were going and we had a map, and ah, we put pins in it. I had one color pin for Chip because he travelled on his own with a friend,

one for Jimmy, and one for me and Jeff. Jack at the time was in the navy. But we covered the map. But we would plan on Sunday afternoon where we were going. And the only time we saw each other was on Saturday night. We went home every Saturday night and went to Church on Sunday morning then came back to Atlanta. But he was coming to Swainsboro that night and so I stayed and listened to his speech and when it was over I got in line, he didn't know I was there (laugh). I got in line with everybody else going...and I shook hands with him, he was...he reached out for my hand before he saw who I was, and he said, "What in the world are you doing here?" and I said, "I want to know what you are going to do for the mental health program (laugh) in the state." He said, "We are going to have the best one in the United States, and I'm going to put you in charge of it." (laugh) Well, of course, he didn't, but it did give me that thought that that's what I would like to do. And so I became involved. I had volunteered out at Georgia Regional Hospital when I first got here because I knew nothing about the problems or the needs. And they let me work in every department so I could learn. I didn't know the terminology. I still don't know a lot of it, but I learned a lot. And, ah, that's how I got started.

Interviewer: It has really been a time-consuming avocation.

Mrs. Carter: It has, but I enjoyed it. And, um, I never have been one...I worked all my life, and I never have been one who was just content to sit and drink coffee or go to coffees and teas. Because you can do that all your life and not accomplish anything. And, ah, I think it would be very frustrating to live in a Governor's Mansion for four years and just go to be the guest of honor somewhere and go to coffees and teas and not do something meaningful. I couldn't do that, and so I was glad to have something. And, ahm, it will be something that I plan to pursue, 'cause I've become very involved with it.

Interviewer: Did...um...Do you plan to pursue it perhaps if you are the President's wife? Can you perceive that type of involvement?

Mrs. Carter: I plan to always pursue it (laugh) and I think if Jimmy is elected President, there is nothing that I would rather do than work with mental health programs in our country. I've been to the annual meetings of the National Association of Retarded Children and the Mental Health Associati ah...the National Mental Health Association. And, um, I know a lot of people that are involved in the country, and it would be very exciting to me to be able to maybe help.

Interviewer: Has being the governor's wife been a restraint on your family life? Has it created a strain? Has it affected raising your children?

Mrs. Carter: It really has not. Ah, I think for Jeffery it was a little bit of a problem. He was at the age...he was 18 when Jimmy was elected...and he reacted a little bitterly; he wanted people to like him because he was Jeffery not because he was the Governor's son. But ah, I think that just lasted a small time because people treat them like that; they don't feel that way about them. And they have gone on with their normal school duties and their lives. And uh...But, for us, it has drawn our family closer together because our whole family worked for Jimmy to be elected governor and it was a fulfilling thing when it happened. And then to you get...you're here in the mansion. I for instance have a driver with me everywhere I go; I have a guard. The children are not guarded. But it changes your life style, and you don't get to meet with your friends and visit, like I did before I came here. If I go to see somebody, which I never do, my friends--I see them at teas, receptions, or ah something, and I've missed that; you don't get to visit with your friend But instead we have turned to the family and we've become very close. Ah, an the mansion...when we moved in the mansion Amy was a baby; she was just three in October before we moved in January. Two of our boys have married. They lived here with their wives. Jack and Judy lived here a year before he went off to law school. And then Chip and Karen got married and they lived here um...well a little over a year, because they got married in 1973, and then

this summer they went home. Both of my daughters-in-law lived here and finished their masters' at Georgia State in early childhood education, both of them. And Chip and Karen went home in August and Karen is teaching junior first grade, which is, um, like kindergarten but the children are six-year olds not ready for the first grade. She is teaching in Plains, and Chip is working in our business down there. But, ah, the family became very close. And then you have criticisms too agianst Jimmy, people saying... that kind of binds you together sometimes because, ah, well... they really have not bothered me since Jimmy has been governor because he has been in politics so long. And all of it has been an open book since 196...well, we grew up in Plains where everybody knew what you were doing anyway...So (laugh) so that part of it never bothered me, but the criticisms did. And I think in local politics it is worse than in the state level because when Jimmy was in the Senate, I thought everybody at home ought to be for him, you know, and if they are not it really bothers you. And um, that...there is a difference with that. But the criticisms you just learnto take and that, and I feel like, um, when somebody criticizes Jimmy or what he is doing, it's just because they are uninformed. And that is usually true (laugh). And he sat...I know when he went to the Senate he used to tell me, "All right, if you think that I'm not doing the best job that I can possibly do, then worry about what people say, but if you feel that I'm doing a good job and that I couldn't do any better than just relax about it." And that is the attitude we take about it. But it does bring us together as a family.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you have had any loss of privacy in being Governor's wife?

Mrs. Carter: Well, not ah, like I say we grew up in Plains where everybody always knew what you were doing. Ah, the only thing is that I do like to be by myself. I miss it sometimes. I miss those times because I really do en-

joy being by myself. I know when we were at home in Plains I'd get the children off to school, and we had a screened in back porch and our back yard is woods, and I'd get me a cup of coffee and the newspaper and sit on the back porch for about maybe 45 minutes before I went to work and that was my quiet time for the day. And I miss having some times like that. There is no way to be by yourself in the Mansion. I have my office upstairs, and secretaries and ah, if I go out, I have to have a guard with me so...I do miss that sometimes.

Interviewer: Is that what you would say was one of the major things you had to give up to function in the role as governor's wife?

Mrs. Carter: I think so and it hasn't been that bad. I...

Interviewer: I guess that the times that you do get you take advantage of, those fleeting moments, those little moments...

Mrs. Carter: That's right. And I think that's when you enjoy the family. Because if you do have any free time you kind of gather your family around you and you just enjoy being together. I know I plan time to be with Amy; Jimmy even schedules time to be with Amy. Like Saturday I'm going to be with Amy. He will get Amy to list the things she wants to do, like if she wants to go to the library or to the zoo, or whatever she wants to do; that is Amy's day. I try to be here every day when she gets up, eat breakfast with her, and get her off to school, of course sometimes I can't, but most of the times I am. At night if we are going out I try to get her bath and get her ready for bed and then go out. She might have her pajamas on at five o'clock, but she doesn't mind (laugh). And, ah, but we make time to be with them because our lives are so hectic and we don't want to neglect them. Whereas, when our boys were little, I had three little boys at one time, and I worked at the warehouse. I think--I think I really I have spent more with Amy than I did with them. I give her more attention. They were always there and always kind of under foot and so you didn't take...have to plan time just to do things for them, I'm afraid

I feel like...I maybe I didn't take as much time with them as I should have. So we try not to make that mistake with Amy.

Interviewer: They seem to have come out all right though...

Mrs. Carter: They did. They are good boys.

Interviewer: Since your husband's announcement to run as President, what have been your greatest reservations concerning it?

Mrs. Carter: Oh, I have many reservations (laugh), but they are mostly all about me. I can't imagine being in the White House. But then I couldn't imagine being in the Mansion; that's been frightening(laugh). It has been exciting, when I thought it would be a lot of problems but it hasn't. Um, but I think my main reservation is whether I can do the job that I would be expected to do in the campaign and as First Lady. I don't ever worry about Jimmy because I think he is absolutely capabable. It hasn't been ...I just haven't...I really don't worry about...I worry I guess more about how we will raise the money. Practical things (laugh) instead of whether you're capable of something like that; I worry about the practical things more than anything else. But I do worry about me and whether I'll measure up. Because like I say, not about Jimmy.

Interviewer: Do you think that the responsibility for the President's wife will be overwhelming? I mean it is a great deal more demanding on you personally than of governor's wife. Do you think maybe more of your time gone... You seem to have gotten a knack for being a political wife now...

Mrs. Carter: I don't know whether it will be... I think it will be more demanding to me because I'll feel I have the whole country to represent than the state. But I think as President's wife you would have so much good help. I think it would be like it has been for me as governor's wife. There are so many people that are just willing to do anything for you. Everytime that I've had a problem here that I didn't know how to solve, or have needed help on in

any situation, I've always found somebody who just was an expert in that field (laugh) or that could help me. And so I think... well, when I think about it sometimes, it is awesome to me being First Lady and...but, um, having been governor's wife I feel like it would, like I say, we could solve... we could manage the situation. Solve the problems.

Interviewer: What do you think the role of the President's wife is and how do you view it or let me rephrase it perhaps. As a political wife, do you find yourself being more supportive to your husband or...obviously not, though, because you have gone off on your own and gotten involved in other areas. But maybe you could tell me a little bit about what you feel your role is as a political wife.

Mrs. Carter: Well, I of course think it is important to maintain a home because a governor has pressures on him...somany pressures and I think it is important for him to be able to come home and relax and have as normal as he can family life. I have tried to do that since I've been here and, like I say, we have tried to involve Amy and...I think it is important for a wife to be supportive of her husband's ambitions. A lot of my time at the mansion has been spent, for instance, in entertaining. When Jimmy was working on reorganization, there were so many people lath he had to get involved in, that he had to get supportive of his reorganization. We had 750 people to dinner every week for 7 weeks, maybe 250 a night 3 nights a week. And he would explain what he was trying to do to them. When he is ever faced with a difficult situation, for instance, the prison system situation in our state now...We had the judges and court officials out to dinner--those things are important because I think the things that I do of course are important, but his programs and his plans, I think, are more... I wouldn't say his are more important than my mental health, but I worked with him on the mental health program. He was supportive of what I did. And the things that he has tried to do for the

state, ah, when I have been able to help I've helped. But I think its important for a wife to help all she can. I've had other things that I've been interested in, like planting wild flowers on the highways, and then we did the book on the mansion, and we are doing the garden over there. But those are just things that I did on my own. But I, ah, I don't know. When I was in Washington the other day, one of the reporters asked me, "If I were planning, if I had been planning for a new job and finally got what I wanted and was about to take this new job and my husband told me that I was going to run for President, that he was going to run for President, would I give up my new job?" Well, that wouldn't happen in our family (laugh) because Jimmy and I plan things together. We worked in the warehouse together, we worked in the governor's race together, and I've been involved with his plans to run for President. And so I'm not faced with situations like that because the things that he does are important, but there is also a place for me to do the things that I'm interested in too.

Interviewer: That is good, you seem to function really well as a unit then. If you do become First Lady of the United States, what kind of programs would you like to see implemented?

Mrs. Carter: I really have not ever thought of that. I think I'll have to wait till I'm First Lady to decide. I think...I know that I'll work with the mental health program. But I haven't thought that out.

Interviewer: Since you have been campaigning around the state or around the nation have you noticed the affect of Watergate on the climate of the people and the country?

Mrs. Carter: I think so. I think in Georgia even, because I haven't been out of the country much but I've read, in Newsweek and Time and magazines, and of course Jimmy has travelled over the country, but I think people are just disenchanted with public officials in general. And they don't trust the

government any more. And I...that's the reason I think Jimmy is going to be a breath of fresh air, because he has no scandal in his background. When he was elected governor, we had none of the special interest groups, with no obligations. And he intends to be elected President that way with no obligations. And he really has the concern of the country at heart. I don't think in Georgia he has ever made a decision that was just on personal decisions, something that would be best for him; he has always had the concerns of the people of our state in mind and I think he would be the same way for the country and I think people can tell it, when I talk to them.

Interviewer: Do you think he is going to bring honesty back into politics?

Mrs. Carter: I do. I think he is, and I think that our people in the nation are ready for somebody who they can trust.