

The original documents are located in Box 40, folder “Living White House, The - Forward (National Geographic)” of the Betty Ford White House Papers, 1973-1977 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 24, 1975

TO: Mrs. Ford

FROM: Sheila

Attached is a copy of the proposed forward for The Living White House, the White House guide book done by National Geographic.

The National Geographic deadline is now and I would like your approval or any comments and suggestions you may have.

I've also attached a copy of the text and picture caption on you for the First Lady's Book. Are you happy with it?

Thanks.



1 IN THIS BOOK, the President and I are happy to share with you some
2 intimate glimpses of life in the White House since John and Abigail
3 Adams became its first residents in 1800.

4 Since then the President's House has been added to and renovated,
5 torn out and painstakingly reconstructed. But in a sense it will
6 never be finished, for each President and his family leave on it the
7 imprint of their individual taste and style.

8 In our turn, we hope the character of life in the White House to-
9 day reflects our own personal beliefs about America--pride in its
10 past accomplishments and confidence in its people and its future.

11 For the many hundreds of official guests who come here every year
12 from the United States and abroad, we try to recreate the relaxed
13 hospitality of a welcoming home. With ^{great} pride we share with them
14 American foods and wines, the work of American craftsmen, the arts
15 of American entertainers, and the pleasure of using historic china,
16 glass, and silver from the White House collections.

17 At the same time, the White House has become a real home to us,
18 as it was to other Presidents and their families. Its beautiful
19 lawns and gardens have provided a place for ^{our} children to grow and
20 entertain their friends, a place for pets to romp and bands to play,
21 a place not only for gaiety and laughter but one of peace and tran-
22 quility for ^{the} President to make decisions that affect the world.

23 Yet the mansion is only the temporary home of its residents. It
24 really belongs to all the American people--to the visitors who tour
25 the house and the grounds, to our official guests and our friends,



1 and to ^{you} the reader of this book. We hope you will feel the same
2 sense of history that has touched us as we live here.

3 For producing The Living White House, I wish to express my appre-
4 ciation to the National Geographic's President, Melvin M. Payne; to
5 Editor-in-Chief Melville Bell Grosvenor; to Editor Gilbert ^{M.}Grosvenor;
6 to Robert L. Breeden, Chief of Special Publications and his staff;
7 and to the book's author, Lonelle Aikman.

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Elizabeth Bloomer Ford

1918-

In 25 years of political life, Betty Bloomer Ford did not expect to become First Lady. As wife of Representative Gerald R. Ford, she looked forward to his retirement and more time together. In late 1973 his selection as Vice President was a surprise to her. She was just becoming accustomed to their new roles when he became President upon Mr. Nixon's resignation in August 1974.

Born Elizabeth Anne Bloomer in Chicago, she grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and graduated from high school there. She studied modern dance at Bennington College in Vermont, decided to make it a career, and became a member of Martha Graham's noted concert group in New York City, supporting herself as a fashion model for the John Robert Powers firm.

Close ties with her family and her home town took her back to Grand Rapids, where she became fashion coordinator for a department store. She also organized her own dance group, and taught dance to handicapped children.

Her first marriage, at age 24, ended in divorce on the grounds of incompatibility five years later. Soon afterward she met Jerry Ford, football hero, graduate of the University of Michigan and Yale Law School, and candidate for Congress. They were married during the 1948 campaign; he won his election; and the Fords have lived in the Washington area ever since.

Their four children—Michael Gerald, John Gardner, Steven Meigs, and Susan Elizabeth—were born in the next ~~ten~~ years, and Betty Ford found herself having to shoulder much of the responsibility of bringing up the family because of her husband's involvement in politics. She supervised the home, did the cooking, took part in the activities of "House wives" for Congressional and Republican clubs, and campaigned for her husband as well.

Betty Ford has faced her new life as First Lady with dignity and serenity. She accepted it as a challenge, and in her own words, "I like challenges very much." Her experience in the business of fashion and as a professional dancer is apparent in the style of her wardrobe and the grace with which she walks. She has the self-confidence to express herself with humor and forthrightness whether she speaks to friends, to the press, or to a multitude.

Forced to undergo radical surgery for breast cancer on September 28, 1974, she reassured many troubled women by discussing her ordeal openly. She explained that "maybe if I as First Lady could talk about it candidly and without embarrassment, many other people would be able to as well." As soon as possible, she resumed her duties as hostess and public-spirited citizen. She has not hesitated to state her views on controversial issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment, which she strongly supports.

She has described her role as "much more of a 24-hour job than anyone would guess," and says of her predecessors: "now that I realize what they've had to put up with, I have new respect and admiration for every one of them."





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BETTY FORD LIBRARY

Betty Ford in her early twenties taught modern dance to underprivileged youngsters of Grand Rapids, Michigan. As First Lady, the former dancer still devotes time to poor and physically or mentally handicapped children.