

The original documents are located in Box 37, folder “Ford, Betty - Biography” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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NOTES ON MRS. FORD

March 18, 1975

FML BACKGROUND

Mrs. Ford's father died when she was 16 years old. When she was 21 her mother married Arthur M. Godwin. Mr. Godwin had been a friend of both Mrs. Ford's mother and father. In 1948 Mrs. Ford's mother had a heart attack and died. Mr. Godwin married a woman by the name of Lil in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mr. Godwin had been married prior to his marriage to Mrs. Ford's mother. His first wife was killed in Mexico in 1936 in an automobile accident. Mr. Godwin was with her.

Mrs. Ford's first husband was William C. Warren, a local furniture salesman. They were married in 1942 and the marriage lasted 5 years. Mrs. Ford cannot remember either the day or month they were married. They were divorced in the fall of 1947.

Mrs. Ford worked at Herpolsheimer's Department Store where she was employed as a fashion coordinator. The store name has not been shortened to "Herps."



MRS. GERALD R. FORD



When Elizabeth (Betty) Bloomer Ford was 16 she and a group of high school friends visited a tea leaf reader.

"You will be meeting kings and queens and people of great prominence. You will have an extraordinary life," she was told.

Today as the wife of the 38th President of the United States Mrs. Ford does indeed lead an extraordinary life combining her roles as wife, mother and public figure with the grace and discipline she developed as a member of the famed Martha Graham dance troupe.

First and foremost a devoted family woman, Mrs. Ford has, as First Lady, spoken out firmly in support of the arts, help for the handicapped and equal opportunities for women.

"I feel strongly that ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment is the single most important step our nation can take to insure equal opportunity for all Americans," she said.

"I've had an active career, and the great advantage of being a mother and raising four children. Now I have another fulltime job seven days a week, 24 hours a day. I've had the best of both worlds."

In her present role as First Lady, Mrs. Ford has already begun to focus attention on American-made crafts and products. Centerpieces at state dinners have featured a wide range of American-made handiwork from wooden decoys to

handmade crystal. Wine grown in American vineyards is served at these functions.

A product of the American midwest, Mrs. Ford was born Elizabeth Anne Bloomer on April 8, 1918, in Chicago, Illinois, to William and Hortense Bloomer. The family moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, when Mrs. Ford was three and she graduated from high school there in 1936.

After two years as a modern dance major at the Bennington School of Dance in Vermont, Mrs. Ford moved to New York where she continued her dance training under Martha Graham, becoming a member of the Martha Graham Concert Group. She also did part-time modelling.

In 1941 she returned to Grand Rapids taking a job as fashion coordinator for a department store and teaching movement and dance to crippled and handicapped children.

She married Gerald R. Ford on Oct. 15, 1948, one month before he was elected to Congress for the first time. She has since devoted herself to their growing family, Mike, Jack, Steve and Susan, while providing loving support for her husband as he rose through the Republican ranks to Minority Leader, Vice President and President.

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Mrs. Gerald R. Ford

Elizabeth Anne Bloomer was born in Chicago, Illinois, on April 8, 1918, the youngest child and only daughter of Hortense and William Stephenson Bloomer. The family moved their three children to Grand Rapids, Michigan, when their daughter was three.

At the age of eight, Betty Bloomer began a ~~lifet~~ lifelong interest by studying dance. After graduation from Central High School in 1936, she attended two summer sessions of Bennington School of Dance, where she first met Martha Graham. She continued her dance career ^{with Miss Graham} in New York City, ~~where she joined~~ ~~one~~ of ~~Miss Graham's~~ ~~troupes~~ and modeled with the John Powers Agency.

Persuaded by her ^{mother} ~~mother~~ to return to Grand Rapids, Betty Bloomer became a fashion ~~coord~~ coordinator for a local ~~department~~ department store. She also formed her own dance group and ~~ta~~ taught dance to handicapped children.

On October 14, 1948, Betty married Gerald R. Ford, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Michigan's ~~fifteenth~~ Fifth District only weeks after their wedding.

The Fords settled in Alexandria, Virginia, and within seven years, had four children. Betty Ford's activities during the 1950s and 1960s centered on her husband and children. Scouting, the PTA and keeping up with three sons Mike, Jack, Steven and ~~a~~ daughter Susan left time only for ^{extensive} involvement with the Republican

ELIZABETH B. FORD
(Mrs. Gerald R. Ford)

August 20, 1965

Mrs. Gerald R. Ford, known to her friends as Betty, was born Elizabeth Bloomer in Chicago, Illinois. However, since she moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan at the age of three, she has always claimed that city as her home.

Betty attended the Fountain Street Elementary School and graduated from Central High School in 1936. After finishing high school she went on to study modern dance at the Bennington College in Vermont under the direction of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm. Before returning to her home in Grand Rapids where for several years she did modeling and was a fashion coordinator for one of the Grand Rapids stores, Mrs. Ford continued a more intensive dance course with Martha Graham in New York where she became a member of the Martha Graham Concert Group.

On October 15, 1948 Elizabeth Bloomer married Gerald R. Ford, who a few weeks later was elected United States Representative in Congress from the Fifth District of Michigan and is now Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. The Fords have four children: Michael Gerald (March 15, 1950), John Gardner (March 16, 1952), Steven Meigs (May 19, 1956), and Susan Elizabeth, born July 6, 1957.

Although the care of the four children prevents frequent visits to her home in Grand Rapids except during vacations and holidays, Mrs. Ford does maintain close ties with her friends there through the organization to which she belongs. She is a member of the Grand Rapids Junior League, the Republican Womens Club of Grand Rapids, and Grace Episcopal Church.

In Washington where she resides the greater part of the year because of her husband's office, Betty is active in the International Wives Group, the 81st Congressional Wives Club, the Congressional Club (Republicans and Democrats), is Program Chairman for the Republican Wives Club, and has recently been elected to the Board of Directors of the League of Republican Women in the District of Columbia. She was also program chairman for the Cancer Society Benefit campaign for 1965 in Alexandria, Virginia. Hobbies are skiing and gardening.

MRS. GERALD R. FORD

The wife of the 38th President of the United States is first a wife and mother, a woman with a strong belief in the importance of a strong family unit. But she is also a woman with a great many personal interests as well, ranging from the Arts and mentally retarded children to womens rights.

Elizabeth (Betty) Bloomer Ford is 57 years old, a petite woman with carefully groomed auburn hair and a sense of style. She has been married to Gerald R. Ford since 1948, the year he first ran and won the seat as congressman from Grand Rapids, Mich. The President and Mrs. Ford are the parents of four children: Mike, 25; Jack, 23; Steve, 18; and Susan, 17.

During her husband's administration, Mrs. Ford hopes to focus on American-made handcrafts and goods. Christmas at the White House this year, for example, centered around a handmade crafts and quilts theme, emphasizing goods by craftsmen across the country and focusing on natural woods, pine cones and greens.

Already, entertaining at the White House emphasizes American-made products, starting with the purchase of American wines for official dinners. Centerpieces at these dinners for foreign dignitaries utilize some aspect of American handcrafts, from the use of handmade antique wooden decoys to the borrowing of collections of handmade American crystals and porcelains to use as centerpieces.

Mrs. Ford was born Elizabeth Anne Bloomer in Chicago, Ill., and moved to Grand Rapids at the age of three. After graduating from a Grand Rapids high school in 1936, Mrs. Ford attended the Bennington School of Dance in Vermont for two years. She majored in modern dance there, studying under Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm.

Her early professional career was spent in New York, also studying in a more intensive dance course under Martha Graham and eventually as a member of the Martha Graham Concert Group. She also modeled part-time during this period.

She returned to Grand Rapids in 1941, organizing her own dance group and taking a job as a model and fashion coordinator for a department store. As a volunteer, she became involved with teaching movement and dance to crippled and handicapped children.

After her marriage to Gerald Ford and subsequent move to Alexandria, Va., Mrs. Ford concentrated on raising the family and being wife and helpmate to congressman and eventual Minority Leader Ford. And in 1973, with only one child left in high school, she was thinking seriously of going back to work, if she could find something part-time. December came, and the job found her -- wife of the Vice President. And August, 1974 brought the more-than-full-time job: First Lady of the United States.

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MRS. GERALD R. FORD

Elizabeth Anne Bloomer was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 18, 1918, the youngest child and only daughter of Hortense and William Stephenson Bloomer. The Bloomers moved their three children to Grand Rapids, Michigan, when their daughter was three.

At the age of eight, Betty Bloomer began a lifelong enthusiasm by studying dance at the Calla Travis School. After graduation from Central High School in 1936, she attended two summer sessions of the Bennington School of Dance, where she first met Martha Graham. Her dance career continued in New York City, where she joined one of Miss Graham's troupes and modeled with the John Powers Agency.

Persuaded by her mother to return to Grand Rapids, Betty Bloomer became a fashion coordinator for a local department store. She also formed her own dance group and taught dance to handicapped children.

On October 15, 1948, Betty married Gerald R. Ford, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Michigan's Fifth District only weeks after their wedding.

The Fords settled in Alexandria, Virginia, and within seven years, had four children. Betty Ford's activities during the 1950s and 60s centered on her husband and children. Scouting, the PTA and keeping up with three sons Mike, Jack, Steve and daughter Susan left time for few other activities. Mrs. Ford chose to focus on the Episcopal Church and the Republican Party in her spare moments.

In 1973, with Susan the only child left in high school, Mrs. Ford seriously considered going back to work part-time. But her husband's confirmation as Vice-President in December, 1973, interrupted that thought. His new job brought new official responsibilities, which increased when he became President in August, 1974.

Official entertaining, a lively interest in the arts and concern about women's issues are part of her life now, but her most important duties remain those of a wife and mother.

One writer described Betty Ford this way: "Perhaps she is no different from a lot of good, strong, courageous women--that she represents the best of us--and that is what cheers us most--that we know there are a lot of Betty Fords in America that help to keep us together and give us strength as individuals, as families, as communities and as a Nation." That thought pleases Betty Ford very much.

Revised Copy

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ELIZABETH ANNE BLOOMER FORD

(F) (R) (C) ELIZABETH ANNE BLOOMER FORD (C)

FIRST LADY (C)

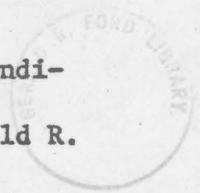
~~Born - 1918~~

Betty Ford was born on April 8, 1918, the youngest daughter of Hortense Neehr and William Stephenson Bloomer (a name of English origin meaning "bloom of the iron"). She attended Fountain Street School and started dancing training at eight years of age. At fourteen she had become assistant dance instructor at the Calla Travis School. Her interest in the handicapped probably started at this age when she taught a blind man ballroom dancing.

After her graduation from Central High School in 1936, Betty attended Bennington School of the Dance in Vermont for two years, majoring in modern dance under the direction of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm. She credits these exceptional teachers with a great deal of influence on her life. She continued her study with Martha Graham in New York City becoming a member of the Martha Graham Concert Group and working as a professional model for the John Robert Powers Agency.

She returned to Grand Rapids in 1942 to become a model and fashion coordinator for a large department store, organizing fashion shows, coordinating window displays and selecting clothes from New York designers. She formed her own dance group and taught black and handicapped children evenings. On October 15, 1948, Betty married Gerald R. Ford, Attorney, who a few weeks later was elected United States Representative to Congress from the Fifth Michigan District.

The Fords have four children - Michael Gerald, John Gardner, Steven Meigs and Susan Elizabeth. Betty Ford's activities have centered around her family. In Grand Rapids she was a member of the Junior



League, Republican Women's Club and Grace Episcopal Church. In Washington she is a member of the International Wives Club, 81st Congress Wives Club, Congress Club, Republican Women's Club, on the Board of Directors of the Washington, D. C. League of Republican Women and President of the Red Cross Senate Wives Club. She taught Sunday School at Immanuel-on-the Hill Episcopal Church in Alexandria, was a Cub Scout Den Mother and the Alexandria Cancer Society Benefit Campaign Chairman.

Her interests are primarily in the problems of the handicapped and in the Fine Arts. She was Guest of Honor at the launching of the Southeastern United States tour of "Artrain" - a project of the Michigan Arts Council, partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

She was Commencement Speaker at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey, in 1975 and active participant in the Washington Heart Association's Heart Sunday, Salvation Army Auxiliary's Annual Fashion Show luncheon and in benefits for Washington's Hospital for Sick Children.

We can say with the writer of Proverbs, Chapter 31:

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her....she will do him good and not evil....she worketh diligently....she stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy....strength and honor are her clothing....she looketh well to the ways of her household....her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also and he praiseth her. (92)



Birthdate:
April 8, 1918

MRS. GERALD R. FORD

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Elizabeth (Betty) Bloomer Ford is 57 years old, a petite woman with carefully groomed auburn hair and a sense of style. She has been married to Gerald R. Ford since 1948, the year he first ran and won the seat as congressman from Grand Rapids, Mich. The President and Mrs. Ford are the parents of four children: Mike, 25; Jack, 23; Steve, 18; and Susan, 17.

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FOR NBC "TODAY"

PROGRAM TODAY SHOW

STATION WNBC/TV AND THE NBC
TELEVISION NETWORK

DATE August 15, 1974, 7 AM

CITY New York

A PROFILE OF MRS. GERALD FORD

BARBARA WALTERS: When Gerald Ford made his first speech as President last Friday he said, "I'm indebted to no man, and to only one woman, my dear wife."

The Fords have a close marriage. Like the Eisenhowers, they openly please it by continuing to share a double bed in the White House. We're beginning to know a good deal about our new President, and here is what we know now of our First Lady.

Betty Ford was born Betty Bloomer. She was the daughter of a U.S. Rubber salesman from Grand Rapids, Michigan. She says she never expected to find herself in the White House. She described herself as just a plain, normal girl who was happy that she married someone she thought was going to be a lawyer.

But Betty Ford is more than the plain country girl she calls herself. She started taking dance lessons as a child of eight, and she went on to study dance in New York at twenty. She earned a living as a John Powers model while she was with the Martha Graham troupe. And she was on the point of becoming a professional dancer when her parents asked her to come home and reconsider her decision. She did, and she stayed home.

In Grand Rapids she took a job as a fashion coordinator, she started an amateur dance group, and she got married. But not to Gerald Ford. That first marriage ended in divorce after five years. And at the age of thirty she married Ford just before his election to Congress. They have been married for twenty-six years.

Her divorce had been no secret in Grand Rapids, but word didn't reach Washington until last year. Asked why she kept it a secret, she said simply, "No one asked me about it." But that divorce will make her the second divorcee in the White House. The first was Florence Cling Harding.

Mrs. Ford is unusually candid. She talked openly about her twenty-six years of being a housewife, and the wife of a professional

politician. She says of her husband's hectic political schedule, she was left almost single-handed to raise their four children.

She developed pains and a pinched nerve, and for relief she turned to psychiatry and tranquilizers, sometimes taking as many as three valiums a day. She speaks openly of this, even though she has been criticized for doing so. Many people, it seems, feel that presidents' wives shouldn't need tranquilizers, and shouldn't have nerves.

She's open too in admitting that she smokes, and she doesn't intend to hide it because she's First Lady. Nor does she refrain from sipping an occasional vodka and tonic in front of reporters, nor admitting that she has a social drink with her husband when he comes home.

She likes clothes, she looks well in them, she has an extensive wardrobe. She's very thin, but curvy, a hundred and eight pounds, five foot six, a size six.

She's also greatly spiritual, devotes at least a half-hour a day to Biblical reading. She used to teach Sunday school, and the Fords belong to a prayer group.

None of the Fords' children is exactly a conformist. Michael, twenty-four, who married a schoolmate last month, attends a Massachusetts theological school, although he's not sure that he wants to be a minister. Twenty-two year old John majored in forestry at Utah State. He shaved off his beard last year when his father became Vice President.

That was eighteen year old Steven you were just looking at, and he's apparently taking the year off working out west after enrolling at Duke University. And seventeen year old Susan, who is the Fords' only daughter, and you see her on the right in our picture. We'll be seeing a great deal of her at the White House, because she's the only member of the family who will be living there. But she attends a board school in Bethesda, Maryland during the week.

Members of the Michigan delegation call Betty Ford intelligent and informed. When I interviewed her on Today right after her husband became Vice President, Mrs. Ford spoke out in favor of day care centers and abortion. As First Lady she says that her major areas of interest will be the performing arts and work with retarded children.

Betty Ford had looked forward to her husband's retiring after twenty-five years in Congress. She even made him promise to quit politics after the next election. But that's all in the past now. What kind of a First Lady will she make? Well, not an activist,

like Eleanor Roosevelt or Lady Bird Johnson. Perhaps a fashion influence, like Jaqueline Kennedy. As gracious as Pat Nixon. But more open, and it would appear more trusting, more willing to take a chance.

Being the First Lady will perhaps restrict her from being as candid as she has been in the past. I hope not. We met last week at a small informal party, and we talked a bit, and I thanked Mrs. Ford for being so open about her problems, and her marriage, and her children. She was honest and straight, and I thought meant a great deal to other women who also have day to day problems and fears. Like her husband, Mrs. Ford seems to be of the people, and that's very nice.

CBS MEMORANDUM

FROM: Suzanne St. Pierre
TO: DON HEWITT and MORLEY SAFER
DATE: July 2, 1975

Betty Bloomer Ford, as she appears today, is a strong, alive and intelligent woman. She is open and candid and has a sense of balance and humor about herself and her husband even though he is President of the United States. This is blended with obvious fondness and affection towards him.

She is an unusual First Lady. Not since Eleanor Roosevelt has there been one who has spoken with such candor on political issues. She has expressed her opinion about several controversial subjects - the Equal Rights Amendment (the White House mail ran heavily against her), abortion, marijuana, social mores, her relationship with her husband, her views on psychiatry and her own emotional condition. And no one can remember when a President's wife has given a full-fledged White House press conference such as the one Mrs. Ford gave last September.

She is also a traditional woman - in many ways the wife of a famous man. She has raised her children to be a credit to herself and her husband - who is still in love with her after all these years. One friend called that not only smart, but practically brilliant. A religious woman, she reads a scriptural passage every day.

She and her family are described again and again as normal, but in such a way that "normal" sounds exotic. Perhaps she is no different from a lot of good, strong, courageous American women - that she represents the best of us - and that is what cheers us most - that we know there are a lot of Betty Fords in America that help to keep us together and give us strength as individuals, as families, as communities and as a nation.

Reading about Betty Ford is very touching and inspiring - not for sad reasons - but because she is a courageous woman who has not only survived the role of First Lady, but thrived on it. She has controlled that role rather than it controlling her. One of our first glimpses of her strength and openness was at the time of her breast operation. By



DON HEWITT and MORLEY SAFER

July 2, 1975

Page 2

her behavior she took away the embarrassment and secrecy from what until then many had regarded as almost a shameful social disease.

Possibly she used to be more retiring and self-effacing and not as quick to be candid about controversial subjects. One senses this from some of the earlier publicity on her. It did not define her as easily or with such uniformity as the articles today do. Possibly that impression was because of her manner of speaking which is slow, hesitating and deliberate. Possibly we just didn't know her and were wrong in our judgment. And possibly she has changed - blossomed - felt more at ease to find herself and be herself. Betty Ford surprised us.

SSHP



MRS. GERALD R. FORD

The arts, the handicapped and equal opportunities for women remain among the top priorities of Elizabeth (Betty) Bloomer Ford as she begins her second year as First Lady.

First and foremost a devoted wife and mother, the wife of the nation's 38th President also plans to continue her policy of promoting American-made products in the White House and at all state functions.

Wine from American vineyards will continue to be served and native handicrafts, such as the wooden decoys and handmade crystal which have provided unusual centerpieces at recent state dinners will be featured.

Mrs. Ford recently summed up her own feelings about being First Lady.

"I've had an active career, and the great advantage of being a mother and raising four children. Now I have another fulltime job seven days a week, 24 hours a day. I've had the best of both worlds," she said.

Born Elizabeth Anne Bloomer on April 8, 1918, in Chicago, Illinois, the First Lady moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her parents William and Hortense Bloomer when she was three and graduated from high school there in 1936.

After two years as a modern dance major at the Bennington School of Dance in Vermont, Mrs. Ford moved to New York where she continued her dance training under Martha Graham, becoming a member of the Martha Graham Concert Group. She also did part-

John Gardner (Jack) was born March 16, 1952. Jack lives in the White House and has traveled extensively working for the President's election. He graduated from Utah State University at Logan, Utah, in 1975, with a major in forestry. He is a former member of the U.S. Forest Service fire fighting crew and a former park ranger with the National Park Service.

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July 1, 1976

Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

THE WHITE HOUSE

The First Family

President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford are the parents of three sons and a daughter. The Fords share an enthusiasm for sports, the outdoors, and each other. Separated by different pursuits and individual interests, the family gathers each Christmas for a skiing vacation in Colorado and maintains close touch through frequent calls and letters.

Michael Gerald (Mike) was born March 14, 1950. Mike and his wife, the former Gayle Brumbaugh, live in Essex, Massachusetts, where Mike is a student at Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary. Mike plans to work with young people after completing his theological studies. Gayle has a master's degree in social work and shares Mike's interest in youth, particularly in counseling young people and college students.

Steven Meigs (Steve) was born May 19, 1956. Steve is an animal science major at California Polytechnic University and works part-time on a ranch. Steve, who is learning how to raise horses, also has tried rodeo-riding.

July 8-10, he will represent the President at the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede in Alberta, Canada. Steve also worked three summers on a ranch in Alaska, studied grizzly bears and worked on a cattle ranch and dairy farm.

Susan Elizabeth (Susan) was born July 6, 1957. She just completed her first year at Mount Vernon college in Washington, D.C. She hopes to pursue her interest in photojournalism at the University of Kansas next January. This fall, she plans to return to college in Washington, D.C.

Susan has worked as a part-time photographer for the Associated Press. Last summer, she studied with photographer Ansel Adams and interned on the photographic staff of The Topeka Capital Journal in Topeka, Kansas. Like her brothers, Susan is a skiing enthusiast. She enjoys many other sports, including swimming and tennis.

Her husband's confirmation as Vice President in 1973 brought new responsibilities, which increased when he became President. As First Lady, Mrs. Ford has shown her interest in American handicrafts through unique centerpieces at State dinners and Christmas decorations. Items from antique weathervanes to dolls have been used as focal points for decorations.

Her commitment to equal rights has been demonstrated in her public remarks and her open lobbying for more women in her husband's administration. She has spoken with diverse groups from homemakers to economists about the need for the Equal Rights Amendment.

During 1976, the First Lady also has been involved in various Bicentennial events, including appearances in Philadelphia, Florida, Arizona and the opening last week of an exhibit on women during the Revolutionary era.

Mrs. Ford also has campaigned for her husband and recently attended two state conventions on his behalf.

During the Ford Administration, numerous state visitors have been entertained at the White House. Among recent guests were the President of France and the King of Spain.

Two of the Ford children, Jack and Susan, live at the White House with their parents.

Mrs. Ford was born on April 8, 1918, in Chicago, Illinois. Her parents, Hortense and William Stephenson Bloomer, moved the family to Grand Rapids, Michigan, when she was three.

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July 1, 1976

Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

THE WHITE HOUSE

Mrs. Gerald R. Ford

Since her husband became President in August, 1974, Mrs. Betty Ford has been involved in activities promoting the arts, securing passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and focusing attention on the problems of the handicapped.

Her strong interest in the arts comes from her own career as a dancer. Mrs. Ford began studying dance at age eight in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She studied and taught at a dance school there until her graduation from high school in 1936. In the summers of 1936 and 1937, she attended the Bennington School of Dance in Vermont. There she studied under Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, Charles Weidman and other well-known modern dance innovators. She continued her dance career with Miss Graham in New York City, eventually as a member of the Martha Graham Concert Group. (In May, 1976, she returned to Bennington to dedicate the college's arts center.)

In 1941, Mrs. Ford (then Betty Bloomer) returned to Grand Rapids and became fashion coordinator for a department store. (Her strong interest in American fashion was recognized by the Parsons School of Design in March of this year, when she received the school's annual award.) During her years as a fashion coordinator, she formed her own dance group and taught dance to handicapped children.

On October 15, 1948, she married Gerald R. Ford. His election to the U. S. House of Representatives from Michigan's 5th District only a few weeks later meant a move to the Nation's Capital. The Fords lived in Alexandria, Virginia from those first years until they moved into the White House.

The Fords are the parents of three sons and one daughter. Most of Mrs. Ford's energies during the 1950's and 1960's were focused on her family, her church (Episcopal) and the political duties of a Congressional wife.