

**Political Roles of Presidential Children:**

**FDR through Clinton**

**by**

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**Thesis submitted to the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State  
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts**

**in**

**Political Science**

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**April 21, 1998**

**Blacksburg, Virginia**

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## **Abstract**

There are many facets of the institution of the presidency that warrant examination. Individual presidents, cabinets, staffs, wives...have all been studied in depth but one aspect of the presidency still remains fundamentally unexplored: the presidents' children and the political roles that each has had or has the potential to have.

This thesis is based upon role analysis and the basic assumption that all presidential children from FDR through Clinton have performed political roles. Among the 32 presidential children studied, four roles were designated. First is the role of symbol. Symbols serve to display the presidential candidate or president as a person that is a good family man, loving father, and someone with high moral integrity. Surrogates serve to stand in for the president when the president cannot be present. The bulk of a surrogate's role takes place on the campaign trail. Informal advisors/confidant(e)s provide opinions and advice to the president. Lastly, skeletons tend to embarrass the president. If an individual presidential child performs several of these roles equally, they have been labeled as hybrids. Each of the 32 children from FDR through Clinton have been categorized in one of the above roles and their actions are analyzed in depth.

Through the course of the thesis, three hypotheses are tested. The first two are whether or not the political roles of presidential children vary by age and by sex. The third hypothesis is whether or not there is an increased need for symbols and surrogates as 1960 as opposed to before.

## **Acknowledgements**

Over the past year, from the conception, to the last bit of editing, there have been many individuals who contributed to this research. First, to my committee members, Dr. Charles Walcott, Dr. Karen Hult, and Dr. Glenn Richardson. I am very grateful for their guidance throughout this whole process. I am also grateful to the daily support of DJ Hansen, Kerst ter Weele and the rest of the graduate students in the Political Science Department at Virginia Tech. Lastly, I am eternally grateful to my parents, Don and Martha Warters, to my brother, Nathan Warters, and to my sister and brother-in-law, Beth and Scott Williams.

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## **Chapter One:**

### **Introduction**

Ever since President Clinton was elected in 1992, there has been an uproar over the role of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Does she have too much power? Is she influencing the President's political decisions? The questions go on and on. This is not the first time, though, that a first lady has played a significant political role. In fact, all first ladies have political roles. The problem is that not a lot of academic related research and writing focuses on the political roles of first ladies. Rather, first ladies are often examined as anecdotal backdrops to what their husbands are doing in the Oval Office.

If first ladies are treated in this manner in academic research, then it will be no surprise that presidential children<sup>1</sup> are rarely thought of at all. When presidential children are discussed, they are often used for their entertainment value only. But presidential children, just as first ladies, do play political roles. The roles presidential children have performed in the past and their potential roles in the future, remain an unexplored area in presidential studies. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the political roles that presidential children have performed in the past as well as theorize about future roles.

The term "role" can and has been defined in a variety of ways. For the purpose of this thesis, role is defined as "the recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome" (Katz and Kahn 189). Bruce Biddle, in his book Role Theory, states that when studying roles, four conditions apply. To begin with, roles are behavioral. This means that within the definition of a role are "only those overt actions or performances that may be observed and that characterize the persons observed" (58). Secondly, roles are performed by a person or persons. Thirdly, roles "are normally limited in some way by contextual specification and do not represent the total set of all behaviors exhibited by those persons

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that when the term "children" is used, it is to denote that each individual being studied is a direct offspring of the president in office at the time. It does not necessarily mean that the individual is under the age of eighteen.

being studied...” (58). Lastly, roles “consist of those behaviors that are *characteristic* of a set of persons and a context” (58).

Here, I begin with the assumption that all presidential children perform roles based upon their repetitive or characteristic behaviors toward or on behalf of the president. In examining the characteristic behaviors of presidential children from FDR to Clinton, each separate role will be delineated and explored in terms of its significance from a political standpoint<sup>2</sup>. Portraying a presidential candidate as a good family man worthy to lead the country (symbolic role), actively seeking out votes during a campaign by stumping from state to state in the name of the candidate (surrogate role), or giving the president advice on a matter of political consequence (informal advisor role) are just a few examples of roles that presidential children can perform. Each of these carries with it a form of political weight, thus, fashioning these roles into “political” roles. Each of these roles will be discussed in detail.

Role analysis in presidential studies has been used before, specifically with regard to family members. The idea for this thesis came from the research of Barbara Kellerman in her book, All the President’s Kin. Kellerman explores the political significance of all family members from aunts and uncles of the president to family pets. Although Kellerman’s work only focuses on Kennedy through Carter and does not focus specifically on the children of the presidents, her study is a valuable asset to the further study of the political role and impact of presidential children. As Kellerman points out:

For better or worse, the candidates’ (and presidents’) kin have an impact on how executive power is exercised. At its best-large, active, colorful and, variegated- the family is an irreplaceable political plus. And at his or her most powerful, the individual family member(for this study, children) cannot be dismissed lightly. Stripped of gossipy anecdotes, the president’s kin are seen here for what they are: significant players performing important roles in the non-stop drama that is presidential politics(Kellerman, xii).

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<sup>2</sup> The term “political” is used here to denote that each of these roles is instrumental in the fact that they provide a means to an end for presidential candidates and presidents themselves. From this point on political roles will only be referred to as “roles.”

Kellerman asserts that all family members of the president have political significance. The question then remains for this study: do the children of presidents indeed exert any political significance through political roles.

The value of this research comes in several forms. First, as mentioned earlier, the subject of presidential children is really an unexplored field. There is little, if any, academic literature that aims to explore the political significance of presidential children. Thus, this thesis will help flesh out some of the yet unrevealed roles that presidential children have performed.

This thesis is exploratory rather than explanatory. As such, it contributes to the foundation of descriptive information about presidents and thus will potentially evolve into providing a basis for descriptive inference (King et.al.) The hope is that, once each role has been explained and each presidential child's significance in each role has been explored, there will be a greater understanding of the roles presidential children have performed. In order to accomplish this, history must be retraced to give examples of how each presidential child from FDR to Clinton acted in a political manner.

Before discussing the hypotheses, a discussion of what the political roles of presidential children are that are necessary. The first political role is that of individuals serving as "symbols." They are symbols in that they serve to "frame" who the president is. John Aldrich and Thomas Woko, in "The Presidency and the Election Campaign: Framing the Choice in 1992," state that "the campaign strategies of presidential candidates are designed to frame the context of choice for voters" (Aldrich and Woko 253). For Aldrich and Woko, framing is used in the context of the presidential candidate utilizing the campaign process as a means to "frame a meaningful vision of what the nation should be and what is wrong with it" (Aldrich and Woko 251).

Although not adapted in the same manner as Aldrich and Woko, the concept of "framing" can be used in the context of presidential children as well. The children of the president can easily serve the purpose of framing not an agenda but rather the individual. By this I mean who the children serve to display the presidential candidate or president as a person that is a good family man and loving father, someone with high moral integrity as well as someone with responsibilities just like the "average American." They serve as

“windows on the soul” (200 Years 96-97) or shine a light on the presidential candidates’ “heartbeat” (or character) as George Bush called it during his run for reelection in 1992 (20/20 August 1992). This role as symbol can and has easily been transformed from the campaign period to the days in the White House. Children that play the role of symbol is well documented. The main qualification for this role is age. Most of the children that fit into this category are under the age of eighteen. (This fact will be explored further below.) John Roosevelt; Margaret Truman; the Kennedy children; Caroline and John; Amy Carter; and Chelsea Clinton have all executed the political role of symbol.

The second role that seems to be present is that of “Surrogate.” This role is the most common. As will be discussed later, there has been an increase in primaries since the 1960s as well as an increase in electronic media which have made it more essential for presidents to have as many people on the campaign trail as possible. Presidential candidates are pressed for time and cannot be in several locations making campaign appearances and speeches at one time. Thus, the presidential candidates need their family members to travel with the campaign and make speeches in the candidate’s name. As Lady Bird Johnson has stated, “Well, the man can’t be everywhere and meet everybody. An interpreter-somebody close to him, his wife or members of his family-can do something to explain him, his aims, his character, his hopes...”(Kellerman PSQ 246).

As with the role of symbol, the role of surrogate also carries over into the White House. As has been documented in many different biographies and autobiographies of the first family members, memoirs of White House staffers, journalists, and those in the administrations at the time, as well as news and historical accounts, presidential children such as Lynda and Luci Johnson, Tricia Nixon, and Susan Ford all have served in one capacity or another as a surrogate for either their father or their mother when the President or First Lady is not available. Some of the duties that these children have executed have been to meet and greet visitors to the White House, give speeches, and host luncheons. Although these duties do not seem to be much, they are serving a political purpose in that each of these children has taken on the role of the President or First Lady in their absence.



Among those surrogates just mentioned could be added John, Elliott and Franklin Jr. Roosevelt; Michael and Steve Ford; Jack, Chip, and Jeff Carter; Michael and Ron Reagan; and Jeb, Marvin and Dorothy Bush. All of these individuals served their main political role as surrogates in the campaigns. It is important to point out that each of the surrogates, either in the campaigns or in the White House or both, tends to be over the age of eighteen, and most are well into adulthood.

A third role that can be seen among the first children is what will be called here “informal advisors/confidant(e)s.” The first children that fit into this political role are Anna Roosevelt, John Eisenhower, Maureen Reagan, and George W. Bush. The political roles each of these has played goes beyond a mere confidant, although this is part of the role as well. Instead of merely listening, these individuals provide opinions and advice to the president. These individuals determine their roles from their own interests and occupational goals. Each has held, in one form or another, a political job that has provided them the means to be able to provide advice to the presidents. They serve as a check upon the institution of the presidency. Each president has many advisors, many of whom may have their own agendas, and an outside informal advisor could be beneficial to the president. These presidential children have an intimate knowledge of the political system as well as of the president’s goals and needs. These children are able then to advise the president as well as provide loyalty that a president needs.

In the roles that have been discussed to this point, most of the children mentioned have had a positive political impact, but not all of the presidential children can claim to have had positive effects. Two in particular have had substantial negative impact: Patti Davis and Neil Bush.<sup>3</sup> Patti Davis had a negative effect because of her ill feelings for her parents and her willingness to share these with the public. Neil Bush’s involvement in the savings and loan scandal not only created a negative image of himself but shone a negative light on his father as well.

The last role that has been derived from the research belong to Jimmy Roosevelt and to Julie Nixon Eisenhower ( and to a certain extent her husband David Eisenhower).

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<sup>3</sup> Several other first children from time to time performed the role of skeleton but were dominant in other roles. In Patti and Neil’s case, their performance in any other role was overshadowed by their dominance as a skeleton.

Jimmy Roosevelt stands out among the rest of the population of children because he served many different roles. He was a surrogate during each of the campaigns, especially in 1932 when he accompanied his father on the whistle stop campaign and was used as a “prop” to steady his father when FDR was giving speeches (Roosevelt, 184). Jimmy Roosevelt also served as an informal advisor and confidant when Roosevelt was first elected and in 1937 he was made an Administrative Assistant to the President, thus making him a formal White House staffer. In this role of administrative assistant Jimmy Roosevelt gained a negative reaction from the press. “Public reaction to the son’s advising the father was loud and negative...” (Quinn-Musgrove, Kanter 181). Jimmy Roosevelt also was a staunch believer in his father, and one of his father’s greatest moral supporters during the White House years.

Julie Nixon Eisenhower also performed several roles. Like her father, Julie has a great political instinct and because of this she became a confidante and an informal advisor to her father. What makes her different from the presidential children already marked as informal advisors is that she went far beyond just this role. She was also Richard Nixon’s chief moral supporter throughout his political career and after he had resigned. Barbara Kellerman states that being a moral supporter entails not “questioning why...[and] accept(ing) on blind faith if need be, the word of the president” (Kellerman, 151). Julie Nixon fulfilled this part of her role with exemplary style. She was her father’s main champion during the Watergate years (as well as before and after), and this is something that Richard Nixon truly needed during this time period. Kellerman hypothesizes that “without Julie Nixon Eisenhower to provide the family’s only public defense of him during the Watergate crisis of 1973 and ’74, Richard Nixon would have suffered a complete mental breakdown.” (Kellerman 150). During these hard times for the family, Julie and David took it upon themselves to talk to the press publicly even when the White House was not giving any official statements. They did not have to take this role upon themselves but Julie believed in her father and met the press, gave speeches, and answered questions, all in order to defend her father’s name. “...She (stuck) to her guns as his(Richard Nixon) chief defender with an endearing display of sincerity, doggedness,

charm and simple love that (made) the White House press corps call her ‘the only credible Nixon’”(Newsweek, 39).

The roles of Julie and David had significance during the campaigns of Richard Nixon as well as during his presidency. To begin with, their marriage created a definite political impact. Here were two of America’s premiere political families marrying into each other, and this created a stir. It of course did not hurt Richard Nixon that all of this took place in 1968 at the same time that he was making another run for the presidency. Julie and David garnered a large following, especially among baby boomers and became “tireless in their campaigning” (Ambrose 189). Nixon viewed them as such a political advantage that “Nixon made up their schedule for them...(so they) didn’t miss a single opportunity to employ them to advantage” (Ambrose 190). Both Julie and David made speeches but it was Julie who made the most.

Julie Nixon Eisenhower’s role continued on into the White House even before the Watergate years. She enjoyed making speeches all across the nation for causes such as health care, the environment, and educational programs for the young and elderly (Eisenhower, 408). She continued her speeches in her spare time even while continuing her undergraduate and graduate work. Thus, it seems that Julie Nixon Eisenhower’s role was a combination of surrogate, informal advisor, and confidante.

In the chapters that follow, I will explore each of these different political roles in detail. To reach this end, Chapter Two exhibits the theory behind the analysis of this thesis as well as presents the hypotheses that will be tested throughout. Chapter Three explains the methodology used during the process of researching and drawing conclusions from the information given in the thesis. Chapter Four explores “Symbols.” There are five presidential children that are discussed in this chapter: Margaret Truman; Caroline and John Kennedy; Amy Carter; and Chelsea Clinton. Chapter Five displays the actions of “Surrogates.” Lynda Robb; Michael, Jack, Steve, and Susan Ford; and Jeb. Marvin, and Doro Bush are the surrogates that are discussed in this chapter. Chapter Six discusses the role of “Informal Advisors/Confidant(e)s.” Those discussed are Anna Roosevelt; John Eisenhower; and George W. Bush. Chapter Seven explores the role of “Skeletons.” There are only two presidential children discussed in this chapter: Patti Davis and Neil

Bush. Chapter Eight exhibits a role that is a combination of all four of the above roles. There are three presidential children that performed a combination of roles: Jimmy Roosevelt; Julie Nixon Eisenhower and David Eisenhower. Chapter Nine is a final discussion of the findings as well as an analysis of each hypotheses and whether the data drawn out within the thesis supports or defeats each.

My preliminary research on the subject of presidential children and the roles that they have performed, has generated a series of propositions. It is necessary before moving on to the data chapters that each of these propositions be explained in detail. Doing so will provide a “road map” for what I am seeking to find during the course of the research. In order to be able to fully understand the hypotheses offered, it is also necessary to understand the theoretical context in which they originated.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Theory and Hypotheses**

In order to provide a clear and concise understanding of the political roles presidential children have performed, it is necessary to elaborate upon the underlying theoretical foundations that the thesis is centered upon. The theoretical notions are outlined in the following chapter. From this foundation, a series of three hypotheses relating to the political roles of presidential children will be discussed as well. The hypotheses will help with the examination of past presidential roles and also provide a basis for potential political roles that may be performed in the future.

The first hypothesis is that the political role of a presidential child will vary with the child's age. The introduction mentioned that symbols were often below the age of eighteen and that the other roles were usually performed by presidential children older than eighteen. Another age dividing line appears in the role of informal advisor/confidant(e). Those who have performed this role have tended to be much older and have had established careers.

The nature of the role of symbol almost precludes that the individual be under the age of eighteen. This is not to say that a presidential child over the age of eighteen cannot perform in a symbolic manner, but that they would not do it as a dominant role. The symbol is used to create an image of the president's character or "heart beat," as George Bush termed it. A symbol usually is not vocal but is present for appearances sake only. Therefore, the perfect symbol would be a small child. The Kennedy siblings are prime examples of how children can be used as symbols to create a positive image of the president, which is either suffering, lacking, or needs to be reinforced.

Surrogates on the other hand have moved beyond the image game and are actually out representing the president. The activities of a surrogate usually come in three different forms. They normally travel in the name of the candidate or president. They also make speeches in support of (or in the name of ) the candidate or president. Lastly, surrogates

can fill in for the president or first lady at events that need a first family member present. (These events are usually receptions that are held at the White House.)

The duties that surrogates perform require that they be vocal and articulate. This is why there tends to be an age categorization for surrogates as well. The cut off does not have to be at exactly eighteen years. As will be seen, Luci Johnson and Steve and Susan Ford were all between the ages of sixteen and seventeen when their fathers entered office and are all categorized as surrogates. They were just old enough to participate as surrogates. It may be, in these cases, a subjective matter as to the skills that each of these had as individuals that would make them comfortable and effective in the role of surrogate instead of symbol.

Being an informal advisor/confidant(e) may also be contingent upon age. Having the ability to advise a president on the important political matters of the day tends to require more education and more experience with the political process. In order to perform this role, with these criteria, one must assume that the individual will be older than eighteen years of age and in most instances, well over the age of eighteen. A small child is definitely not going to be able to give their father apt political advice or be a sounding board for their father on political issues. The person that can do this best is probably older and has more political experience.

It is hard to say conclusively that a small child could not perform the role of skeleton but it seems that for an individual to really embarrass the president to the extent that it has negative political consequence, they must be older. Adults, over the age of eighteen, seem to be the ones who would create a situation that would embarrass the president. This could happen through bad decisions in business matters, illegal activity, or vocalization of differences.

It is important to note that this hypothesis could be developmental. This is to say that the roles available to presidential children expands with age. This means that a child could start out as a symbol as evolve over time into a surrogate or any of the other roles.

The second hypothesis is that political roles will vary by sex of the presidential child. The role that will probably be affected the most by this division is that of surrogate. It does not stand to reason that symbols would vary by sex. It seems plausible that no

matter if the child is male or female their use as image builders and shapers would be the same. But the issue of sex may become more apparent when considering surrogates.

At first glance, it appears that most of the surrogates have been females. This seems to be especially true for those who act as stand-ins for the president and first lady at receptions and luncheons at the White House. There are a couple of potential reasons for this. The first is that it seems mostly by chance that more young females were living at the White House with their parents. Luci and Lynda Johnson, Tricia Nixon, and Susan Ford all lived at the White House, all or part of the time their fathers were president. Three of these (Luci, Lynda, and Susan) attended either high school or college. The fact that they were living at the White House at the time is the most probable reason that they were called on the most often to fill in for the president or first lady (and in most instances for the latter).

A second reason that females tended to fill in more as hostesses at receptions and luncheons is that in the White House, by precedent, this job is that of the first lady. When the first lady cannot attend, the most “natural” replacement would be the daughter of the president instead of the son of the president. This expounds upon the gender expectations of males and females. In this instance, the gender expectations for females would be for them to serve as hostesses while the males would be performing more of an informal advisor/confidant role. Thus, it could also be hypothesized that males are more likely to be informal advisors/confidants.

The last hypothesis states that with the political trends advancing toward the more advanced use of television and other forms of electronic media, presidential children between 1933 and 1960 will be less active as surrogates and symbols, while children from 1961 to 1996 are more apt to be called on as symbols and surrogates (especially in the campaign process).

Theodore White “pins the moment of change on 1960: The campaign of John F. Kennedy ‘was more beginning than end,’ something, somehow, altogether new in our political life” (Kellerman, PSQ 244). Since 1960 there has been a marked decline in party strength in the electorate, an increase in the importance of primaries, a personalization of the presidency, and the dawn of television (including the more recent advances in cable

and satellite technologies). Due to these factors, “candidates (and the elected presidents) have had to depend more than ever before on resources that they alone can command”(Kellerman PSQ 244). Due to these facts, Roosevelt’s, Truman’s, and Eisenhower’s children can be used as examples of the roles played before this demarcation line and be used to study the differences that appear between the roles they played and the roles of those children that have followed them.

First, 1960 seems to mark a change in the parties’ electoral strength. “Kennedy was the first president in our modern history to demonstrate that it is possible to be a winner...without hardline party support” (Kellerman 8). Party machines were breaking down and the cast of characters for a successful campaign was also changing. Presidential candidates had to look to their own organizations for resources. Since this time, presidential candidates have chosen to activate their family members, especially their wives and children. The decline of party strength thus has created a greater need for surrogates on the campaign trail.

An increase demand for symbols and surrogates is also the result of the increase in the number of primaries and the importance of these primaries. “[S]uccess in campaign politics depends on the public image of the man”(Kellerman 12). These changes in turn produced a greater need for symbols to create an image of the candidate on the campaign trail. And, with so many primaries, it is hard for a presidential candidate to be at all places at one time. Therefore, he needs to rely on those who can spread his message to the voters, and this call often goes to the children of presidents.

Over the past thirty years or so, there has been an increase in the personalization of the presidency, due in part to the greater use of television and new trends in electronic media. “ ‘Personalization of the office’ simply means that more than ever we elect a president on the basis of his personal attributes rather than, for example, ideology, or party label”(Kellerman 13). Image, again, is everything. If the American public is looking to see if the candidate or president is caring, devoted to his family, or a good father, then the images placed across their television screens are key. Children as symbols are a wonderful way to create a positive image of a candidate.



Meanwhile, the dawn of television created a situation in which the president can be seen at all hours of the day, right in the homes of every American. There is no need any longer to go to train stations to see the whistle-stop train come through, in order to hear a presidential message. Again, with the information on the television being so accessible, emphasis tends to be placed upon the images that are seen. And, once again, the need for symbols is increased.

It needs to be noted that television use in campaigns has been around since 1952. The differences in the period after 1960 and that before is the fact that politicians running for office were beginning to realize the benefits of television. Once these benefits had been identified, they began to seize upon these new trends in electronic media and use them to their advantage.

It is also important to note that each individual president places their own amount of emphasis on these changes and how they should adapt to them. Some presidents, such as Kennedy and Reagan, were very comfortable with the television as a mode of communication and knew how to control the images being seen. The opposite could be said for George Bush, he seemed to be extremely uncomfortable with electronic media. Looking toward the future of the presidency, we are now in an age in which the presidents are all going to have been born in this advanced media age. Bill Clinton grew up with television and is more comfortable with that medium than Eisenhower probably was.

Yet another phenomenon has affected the increase need for surrogates. This is what Samuel Kernell has termed “going public.” Kernell asserts that with the breakdown of the party system that the members of Congress are becoming more and more “free agents.” They are able to get elected to office with little help from the president and party. Therefore, this creates a situation in which it is harder for the president to bargain with congressmen and women. Since this is the case, the president has had to seek out alternative means of influence. The prime manner in which to do this is by “going public.” Kernell defines this “as a class of activities that presidents engage in as they promote themselves and their policies before the American public”(ix) in an attempt to bypass Congress. Ways in which this can be done include making more public appearances, making more speeches, and traveling more. Surrogates can come in very handy in

attempts to “go public.” Since their main role is to be a substitute for the president, especially in speech making, they can be used in this attempt to bring the president’s message directly to the people.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter the underlying theory of the thesis generated three distinct hypotheses to be tested for. First, is the hypothesis that the political role of a presidential child will vary with the child’s age. Secondly, is the hypothesis that the political role will vary by the sex of the presidential child. Lastly, is the hypothesis that presidential children between 1933 and 1960 will be less active as surrogates and symbols, while children from 1961 to 1996 are more apt to be called on as symbols and surrogates.

Before explaining the data and testing these hypotheses, it is necessary to explain the methodology that was used. The next chapter seeks to show how each of the roles was delineated, how each presidential child was categorized, and why I chose to only study the presidential children from FDR to Clinton.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Methodology**

When any research is being executed, methodological decisions need to be made. In the case of this thesis, several methodological issues that need to be discussed before the data is presented. First, is why were the presidential children from FDR to Clinton chosen to be studied instead of all presidential children throughout the existence of the presidency? Secondly, how each individual presidential child was categorized into a specific role needs to be discussed. Third, different data sources used in the research are examined. Lastly, the limitations of this research will be elaborated.

### **The Presidential Children**

I decided to limit this research to the “modern presidency,” or FDR to Clinton. The main reason for limiting the research in this manner was due to time restraints. The time given to finish a thesis is limited and thus only a segment of presidential children could be studied.

The roles performed by the children of FDR, Truman, and Eisenhower can be compared to the roles of the children from Kennedy through Clinton. Before Kennedy, the use of television media was limited and parties were stronger electorally. Thus, comparing those presidential children before 1960 to those after 1960 still provides useful information. An understanding of whether and how political roles have evolved are displayed as well. It also can be seen how new roles (or variations of the old roles) developed over time. Thus, it is still beneficial to only study the modern presidency.

### **Categorizations**

There are 32 different presidential children (including David Eisenhower, Dwight Eisenhower’s grandson and Richard Nixon’s son-in-law) from FDR through Clinton. From these 32, four distinct roles were delineated that were performed. Each presidential

child was placed in one of these categorization. The exceptions were Jimmy Roosevelt and Julie Nixon Eisenhower and David Eisenhower, who performed all, or a variety of all, of the four roles.

The categories used were created from a variety of methods. All of the categories are variations of the seven roles that Kellerman uses in her book, All the President's Kin. The role of symbol that is used here is a modification of the role Kellerman calls "decorations." Kellerman defines decorations as those family members who "make the president more attractive. They enhance the man, make him and his administration at the most more glamorous and at the least more appealing"(36). Kellerman's definition of a decoration is removed from the role of symbol that I am using but the basic premise for the creation of the role of "symbol" derived from Kellerman's "decorations."

Kellerman's second role is "extension." Extensions are "the president when the president cannot be there"(59). For Kellerman, extensions are mouthpieces for the president. For this thesis, the name has simply been changed to "surrogate" but the notion is the same.

What I have termed as "informal advisor/confidant(e)" was derived from collapsing four of Kellerman's other roles. Kellerman has designated the roles of "humanizers," "helpmeets," "moral supporters," and "alter egos." These four roles were collapsed so as to provide for one role that encompasses all four of these. Kellerman's need to break these roles down into four categorizations was due to the fact that she was dealing with many more relatives than just the children. By collapsing these four roles into one, I was able to display a wide array of actions that informal advisors/confidant(e)s performed.

Kellerman also has a role that she terms "skeleton." Kellerman states that skeletons "embarrass the president"(209). The term is used in the same manner in this thesis thus the name of the role was kept the same.

Kellerman does not have a hybrid role that appears in this study. This role was created specifically for Jimmy Roosevelt, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, and David Eisenhower. After research was done on each of these, it became apparent that it was impossible to

categorize any of the three into only one category. Thus, a separate role was created which encompassed all of the previous four roles in one.

It is important to note that none of the roles is mutually exclusive. Presidential children can perform more than one role at a time or they can move from one role to another over time. Although this may be true, each presidential child has performed one of these role more dominantly than the others thus explaining there categorization into the role they appear in within this study.

One concern is how each individual was placed in a particular category. Once, I determined that the population of the study was 32, a detailed analysis began on each presidential child and their involvement in their father's campaigns and administrations. All 32 were researched in detail. Through this research, a larger understanding of how they participated politically was acquired. The more I came to understand them, the more it became clearer which role they participated in the most often. A couple of examples of how this was done will probably be beneficial.

The first example is that of Margaret Truman. While reading her autobiography, the biographies that she wrote about each of her parents, and transcripts of correspondence between Margaret and her father, I found direct evidence that she should not be considered an informal advisor. When President Truman was deciding to run for office in 1948, Margaret states in her autobiography that: "He did not consult me on this matter, any more than he consulted me in 1952 when he decided not to run. He didn't think it was my department" (Truman Souvenir 211). This supports conclusively that Margaret herself did not see as an informal advisor. Instead, Margaret strongly emphasizes her role on the whistle-stop campaign. In her long descriptions of what her role was, it becomes obvious that she was there for image only, and thus can be considered a symbol.

Like Margaret Truman, in a telephone interview with Lynda Johnson Robb, she repeatedly emphasized that she was not an informal advisor/confidante and that she avoided at all costs becoming a skeleton to her father. She did acknowledge that she performed the role of symbol from time to time but that overall she was a surrogate.

From these two examples, it can be seen how, through extensive research, I found how each child revealed themselves as a participant in one role over another and thus could be categorized as such.

### **Who Was Discussed**

Once each was categorized into a role (see Table 1), it was then necessary to choose which would be discussed at length within the data chapters. With the time constraints, it was impossible to write about all 32 of these presidential children. Thus, a sample had to be taken. This created yet another methodological problem.

In sampling, I decided to discuss those presidential children that seemed to best exemplify the roles. There was a need to sample because of a lack of the lack of time for the project therefore I chose a manner of selection in which it seemed the individual children would chose their own categories by what they did while their father was president. Again, this was done through careful research using as many different resources as possible. Once the research had been completed on all of the presidential children, those children that performed the roles in a clearly defined fashion were chosen to be discussed. Nonetheless, all 32 are at least mentioned within the data chapters and 22 of these are discussed in detail.

### **Data Sources**

The data used to test the hypotheses presented earlier came from a wide variety of sources. As has been stated, there is little academic literature on the subject; therefore sources had to come from other areas. To begin with, some sources came from the literature on first ladies. Although a lot of this literature only mentions the children in passing, a few sources give them due time, and those are the ones I used most.

The most helpful resources were largest biographies and autobiographies of presidential children or of presidents and first ladies. I was amazed to find how many first children have written autobiographies of either their own experiences in the White House

or of their parents. In some cases, the presidential children themselves had not written a book but another family member had, and this became a source of information as well.

**Table 1: Political Roles of Presidential Children**

<b>Symbol</b>	John Eisenhower, Margaret Truman; Caroline and John Kennedy; Amy Carter; and Chelsea Clinton
<b>Surrogates</b>	Elliott, and Franklin Jr. Roosevelt; Lynda and Luci Johnson; Tricia Nixon; Michael, Jack, Steve, and Susan Ford; Jack, Chip, and Jeff Carter; Michael and Ron Reagan; Jeb, Marvin, and Dorothy Bush
<b>Informal Advisors/ Confidant(e)s</b>	Anna Roosevelt; John Eisenhower; Maureen Reagan; and George W. Bush
<b>Skeletons</b>	Patti Davis and Neil Bush
<b>Hybrids</b>	James Roosevelt; Julie Nixon; and David Eisenhower

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Beyond these sources, evidence was pieced together by reading and analyzing historical accounts of each administration. These included biographies and autobiographies of those who worked in the White House (these range of accounts from press secretaries to accounts of nannies) as well as accounts from journalists. The more general historical accounts were also used.

Newspaper articles from each administration about a particular presidential child were also put to use. These were utilized in combination with newsmagazine articles. Another main source of information came from magazines targeted toward female readers, such as Harper's Bazaar and Family Circle.

I also attempted to interview several of the former first children but was only successful on one count. I interviewed Lynda Johnson Robb via the telephone and was able to gain a first hand perspective as to the role(s) she performed. I also was able to come to a better understanding of the pressures that each of the presidential children are under and that they are aware of the fact that their lives are being viewed under a microscope by the media and the public.

### **Limitations**

Before displaying the data, it is necessary to bring to light several potential limitations in the thesis. First, is the sample size. The use of a larger sample size could have imparted a better understanding of roles and the ability to generalize to a larger population of presidential children; both in the past and in the future. This limitation stems from a second limitation, which is the fact that the presidential children studied were only from the "modern presidency." By only using the presidencies from FDR through Clinton, it may be harder to generalize to those children that came before FDR.

A third limitation is that several of the presidential children were not discussed in detail as others were. As explained above, it was impossible with the time constraints to discuss all 32 of the presidential children, therefore sampling had to take place. Through this process some of the presidential children had to be cut from discussion thus leaving a



gap in the data. Although this is true, I believe that even with a discussion of the presidential children that were left out, the conclusions would still be the same.

The last limitation is the use of second hand accounts for data sources. I use a few primary sources as well as first hand accounts in developing the data but the bulk comes from second hand accounts. The concern is whether or not these second hand accounts can be trusted as being accurate. One can be more confident in the authority of primary sources and first hand accounts than second hand accounts and thus must choose wisely which second hand accounts to use. In a lot of cases, accounts from official biographers were used as well as biographies written by family members. I tended to trust these accounts, especially those that use direct information from the presidential child. An example would be John Boettiger. John is the son of Anna Roosevelt and wrote a biography of his mother which relied heavily upon first hand accounts by his mother that he reprinted in book form. Although second hand accounts do leave room for argumentation over accuracy, there are also ways of being able to tell if they can be trusted, such as in the case of John Boettiger's biography of his mother.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to clarify the methodology used in this thesis. To begin with, was a discussion of why only the presidential children of the "modern presidency" were studied. The chapter also tried to convey why sampling was needed and how each presidential child was chosen to be discussed in detail. Further, how each role was created and how each presidential child was categorized was displayed. Lastly, the limitations of the research were shown.

Now that a clearer picture of the methodology used has been mapped out, the data can be displayed by way of a detailed analysis of the individuals that personify each role. The following chapters will proceed by role and provide analysis of each of the presidential children that exemplify the instrumental nature of each of these roles. To begin with is a look at the presidential children that performed as symbols.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Symbols**

In order to examine the research question and hypotheses the thesis has proposed, it is necessary to explain in as much depth as possible each role and the individuals who have typified each of them. By tracing the actions of each of these presidential children, a clearer picture will be gained as to what it means to act in a political manner and how these actions can be placed apart into categories. To begin this task, this chapter looks at presidential children whose dominant role was that of symbol. Several presidential children have performed the role of symbol, and their actions within this role are political in nature.

The American presidency is unique in that it combines head of government and head of state into one office. In doing so “the American Presidency has its symbolic as well as its executive aspects” (Schlesinger, Jr. 554). Presidential children are an integral component of the symbolic aspects that mark the head of state. “[T]hey add nothing to the substance of the presidency (at least nothing we can point to with certainty). But they do add to the style of an administration; they do temper the climate in which it is received; and they do adorn the president himself” (Kellerman 37).

As has been mentioned, six (five of whom are discussed below) presidential children in particular display these symbolic aspects: John Roosevelt, Margaret Truman, Caroline and John Kennedy, Amy Carter, and Chelsea Clinton. This chapter will not only showcase the actions of these presidential children but will also provide a partial test of the first hypothesis.

## **Margaret Truman**

The case of Margaret Truman is an interesting one. Earlier, it was hypothesized that symbols would all be eighteen years and younger, thus making the different political roles contingent upon age. It is easy to assume that this would be the case considering the fact that it is harder for children under the age of 18 to be articulate enough to participate as surrogates, informal advisors, or confidant(e)s, or to create enough controversy to be considered skeletons. But Margaret Truman defies this hypothesis and displays that a presidential child over the age of eighteen also can be a symbol.

Among all of the presidential children discussed in this thesis who are 18 years and older, Margaret Truman is the only one categorized as a symbol. This does not mean that none of the other children played symbolic roles at all, but none was a symbol as their primary role. Margaret Truman shows characteristics of a surrogate at times but the dominant role that she exemplifies is that of symbol. There are several possible reasons for this. As has been discussed, there is a dividing line that begins at approximately 1960 at which there was a growth in the media(especially the electronic media) as well as a shift in the presidential nomination system. Truman ran for election in 1948 twelve years before this dividing line. Even so, not all children before 1960 played symbolic roles; other options were available to them even then. For instance, only one(John) of the five Roosevelt children's dominant role was as a symbol for FDR. Anna, FDR's only daughter was not primarily used as a symbol. There could be several explanations for this. The fact that Anna was older and married probably accounts for why Anna was not used as a symbol. As will be seen, Margaret Truman was used as a surrogate. The reason for this could have been because of sex role stereotypes that suggested that young, unmarried women were not expected to be anything more than silent displays.

Margaret Truman was young and unmarried and she exemplified the role of symbol. Margaret was raised around politics but her mother sheltered her from its impact as a child. Bess Truman did not like the business that her husband chose for a living. Bess Truman was not at all satisfied with the demands that politics brought into her household; she shied away from too much involvement and thus created an environment in which her

daughter Margaret was also cut out of most of her father's political world. Thus, her baptism into the political world was vast and immediate.

When her father ascended to the presidency after FDR's death on April 12, 1945, Margaret was still attending college at George Washington University. The attention Margaret received during this time was minimal except for instances when she chose to appear in public with either her father or mother. In these situations she was not participating as a surrogate because she was with her parents instead of instead of appearing for her parents.

Later on in her father's administration, Margaret was pursuing a singer career of her own, thus making her a point of interest for many in the public as well as the press. Margaret was also the only child of Harry Truman, which also made her a point of interest because Truman treated his daughter as the center of his universe, thus displaying him as a family man who dearly loved and was devoted to his wife and only child. During this time Margaret served as a symbol of the type of human being Harry Truman was. As will be shown, this symbolism was not only present during the campaign of 1948 but also during the White House years.

### **No Longer a Free Agent**

Margaret Truman was born on February 17, 1924 to Harry S and Bess Truman. By the time Margaret arrived, her parents were nearly forty years old and Margaret would remain the only child. Margaret was thrown into the realm of politics early on in life when her father uprooted the family and moved to Washington, D.C. when he became a Senator for the state of Missouri. Margaret was eleven. From the age of eleven to the age of 21, Margaret led a life of relative obscurity even through her father's vice-presidency. As has been mentioned, Bess Truman was a very private person who shied away from a lot of publicity and tried her best to shelter Margaret as well. But all those efforts would be in vain after April 12, 1945.

Margaret was at home with her mother when Harry called home to inform them of FDR's death and Harry's impending swearing in as President. As Margaret recounts, within seconds she heard a knock at the door of their apartment and when she proceeded

to answer it the press had already gathered waiting for a statement. Margaret has stated that “It was at that moment that I ceased to be a free agent” (Truman Souvenirs 85). Within days the Truman family would move into Blair House while Eleanor Roosevelt still occupied the White House. Their lives would never be the same.

Margaret at the age of 21 continued her studies at George Washington University, majoring in history and government. While finishing up her degree she continued to live with her parents in Blair House and then moved with them into the White House (and eventually when the realization hit that the structure of the White House was too weak, back to Blair House and then back to the White House after its renovation). Margaret was now a First Daughter and in effect belonged to the American public.

### **“The Accidental Belle”**

Margaret Truman became an instant celebrity when her father became president. The press had a field day with stories about the daughter of the president. The press monitored the First Family around the clock...The Roosevelt family’s antics, and the politicization of private life during the war, had expanded the definition of news. The White House became “America’s most ornate, complex and inescapable gold fish bowl.” Bess happily yielded the spotlight to her daughter...They (the press) bombarded the Trumans with names of potential suitors and requests for a White House wedding. “We have watched with keen interest your lovely family circle, and admire the fatherly relationship existing between you and your charming daughter, Margaret,” said a typical letter to Truman. “We...feel that it is about time our ‘first daughter of the land’ should treat us to a romance that would be of ‘particular’ interest to the citizens of the United States.” Such requests prompted the *Saturday Evening Post* to describe Miss Truman as “an item of public property looking for a little privacy” (Troy 35).

Margaret herself would not argue with the latter comment. She became an item of national interest. Everything she did was put forth for public scrutiny. She herself recounts her reaction to the attention that she garnered after her father became president:

I never wanted and certainly never expected to be a belle in any sense of that word, and yet, as the months wore on, it became apparent that my situation as the first girl in the history of the United States to be the only child of the President was going to have an irresistible influence on the course of my life, at least for a while. I began to be the recipient of much undue attention on the part not only of the press but of diplomats, hostesses, and people of commerce (who were

reasonably looking for an angle), simply because I was twenty-one years old and I was *there*(her emphasis).

I can claim no credit for this popularity, which accrued to me as a *symbol*(emphasis mine) of something, and not because I was prettier or more charming or witty or desirable than any other girl. I did not encourage it, past trying to please(as I had been brought up to do), and exerting a determined effort to make everybody happy, at the expense of sleep, physical health, and peace of mind...I think I might have resisted...more strongly if I had not felt that my willingness to appear at public functions might ease the burdens of my father and mother...(Truman Souvenir 121-122).

Thus was Margaret's path in life for the next eight years. In essence she was a symbol of the youth of America as well as of the family closeness of the Trumans. While finishing her work at George Washington and afterwards as she planned her singing career, Margaret often attended luncheons with her mother and would from time to time accompany her father and mother on trips across the country and abroad. Again, in these instances she was not serving as a surrogate. She did not travel by herself in the name of her father or mother, and she made no public addresses.

The Truman family nicknamed themselves the Three Musketeers because they would frequently travel together. Margaret also came up with a nickname for all of the traveling adventures she went on with her father. Margaret called it the Truman Traveling Troupe. "This was the nickname I conjured up for the inevitable 'circus' that Dad took with him on his trips to Mexico, Canada, and Brazil" (Truman HST 372). Margaret began going on these diplomatic trips with her father even though she "was excess baggage on any diplomatic mission, but other countries like a chance to look over the youthful members, just as we loved it when foreign diplomats brought their sons and daughters to the White House" (Truman Souvenir 176). Here again, Margaret was acting as a symbol and in this instance she was acting as a symbol not only in America but also across the world.

Unlike many presidential children of Margaret's age, she was never asked for her opinion of decisions that her father was making. Thus, Margaret was definitely not acting as an informal advisor. "The Trumans did not...talk politics...When he sat with his family, Harry wanted a break. 'Besides,' Margaret(said), 'a President's family is not his Cabinet'" (Troy 39). This was true in all things including the decision to run for President in 1948.

In mulling over why her father ran in 1948, Margaret states that: “He did not consult me on this matter, any more than he consulted me in 1952 when he decided *not* to run. He didn’t think it was my department” (Truman Souvenir 211). “My father made...decisions alone-on his knees , I imagine” (308). There is no doubt from these statements that Margaret was not an informal advisor to her father.

### **Whistle-stop**

The year was 1948 and Harry S. Truman was running for president. If Margaret felt herself to be a celebrity up to this point she was in for a shock. The reaction to Margaret on the campaign trail was tremendous. In all, Margaret’s role was to go along with her father and mother on the campaign trail and present a picture of the perfect family. Margaret did her job with superb grace.

The whistle-stop tour of the Truman campaign in 1948 traveled over 30,000 miles across the country in 35 days of campaigning, and Harry Truman made over 350 speeches from the caboose of the train, The Ferdinand Magellan. “It was a forgone conclusion that I would be going campaigning with him. He didn’t ask me or tell me- it was just an accepted fact. Like the Three Musketeers, the Trumans had always been one for all and all for one” (Truman Souvenir 221).

Margaret, who was in the midst of trying to propel her singing career into stardom, shelved her thoughts of a concert tour and began her work on the whistle-stop full time. Margaret at first was unsure what her role on the campaign was. “I knew my father liked to have me around, but it wasn’t until we got to Detroit that I realized he considered me as an integral part of his program. He didn’t tell *me*. He introduced me to the audience as his best campaigner and a real asset to him. As you can imagine, this was a heady thing for me” (Truman Souvenir 222). Margaret never made any campaign speeches as a surrogate. She was only to be a symbolic presence on the campaign train.

The routine at every stop along the rails was the same:

At the close, he(Harry) would ask if they (the audience) would like to meet his family and the crowd never failed in its response. The routine became standard. He would first introduce Bess—“Miz Truman”—who would step out from behind the blue curtain, looking pleased and motherly. He would take her hand and she would stand at his right, saying nothing...Then, proudly, he would

present “Miss Margaret,” whose appearance nearly always brought the biggest cheer of all, and to the obvious delight of her father. She would be carrying an armful of roses, a few of which she would throw to the crowd (McCullough 664).

The hope was that, when the train left the station with the family waving from the railing of the caboose, the audience would leave with a better sense of who Truman was as a politician but more importantly what he was as a man, husband, and father.

Margaret has been described as an “essential prop” (Troy 42) on the whistle-stop campaign. Reporter Richard H. Rovere traveled with the Trumans on the campaign train and recorded his experiences for The New Yorker. Rovere stated then that “the part of the act that involves the President’s daughter is invariably the most effective part, and Truman’s management of it displays a good deal of canniness and trouping instinct...It will be a picture to cherish, and it will stand Harry Truman in good stead for the rest of his life” (The New Yorker). Author Jhan Robbins has commented on Margaret’s presence on the whistle-stop, saying “This scene had dignity, it had warmth, and it put the nation’s First Family on a comfortable footing with millions of Americans whose own home family life was reflected there” (Robbins 122-123). The whole scene seemed to suggest to the American public that Harry Truman was just like them and that he was someone they could trust, which was politically imperative.

Margaret herself has stated that “It never occurred to us (Bess and Margaret) that we provided any political capital. We had just come along to look after Dad” (Truman Souvenir 215). Even if this is how she perceived her presence on the campaign trail, it was being perceived by the audiences much differently. Her presence held much more meaning than she realized at the time. Symbolically, Margaret’s presence was of great political capital for her father.

### **The Constitution Hall Incident**

After the successful election in 1948, Margaret fell back into her search for a singing career. Margaret had been trying to arrange a concert tour, and finally by 1950 she was successful. Margaret has defended herself from comments at the time which



accused her of using her status of First Daughter to garner concert engagements and notoriety.

Yes, because of my father, I was more easily able to obtain important engagements. But I also received more attention by first-string critics and more demanding audiences, who felt that because my father was President, I had to be not better than average but better than best in order to justify my appearing on stage (Truman LFF 21).

It was one of these reviews that created an uproar and propelled President Truman to “show his true colors.” Margaret was slated to perform at Constitution Hall on the same day that Charles Ross, Truman’s best friend and White House press secretary, had passed away. Margaret was not told the news until after her performance, thus leaving her unaware. The next morning the papers were full of reviews of her performance. Some were kind but others were not. As Truman opened his morning *Washington Post*, he was confronted with a review from music critic Paul Hume (for an excerpt of the review see Appendix A). After reading the unpleasant comments, Truman exploded in rage. His reaction was probably due in large part to the stresses he was under especially considering the death of such a dear friend. Truman immediately wrote a letter to Paul Hume (see Appendix A) which was somehow copied and was front page news of the tabloid *Washington News*.

This, of course, was not Truman’s only emotional outburst over the course of his administration. Since he was defending his only daughter, the President’s response was much more personal in nature and thus hard hitting. “Privately, Truman agreed he should never have written the letter, but now that he had, he would stand by it. To Margaret he said he had the right to be two people, the President and himself. It was Harry S Truman the human being who wrote the letter, he told her” (McCullough 829). Whether Truman was only being human or not did not stop the public backlash that he received for his comments.

The Chicago *Tribune* put the American people on notice that their President’s “mental competence and emotional stability” were in question. A flood of letter-to-the-editor in papers across the country expressed shock over the President’s “uncouthness,” his lack of self-control. “It cuts to the quick to realize that we have a President who isn’t even a gentleman,” read one of hundreds of letters to the White House, and this from an “out-and out” Democrat. “Truly

we have chosen a ‘common’ man President. Yes—very common.” There were suggestions also that Truman might begin to take himself and his daughter a bit less seriously. “My sympathy is with you about Margaret,” wrote one man. “My four children cannot sing either” (McCullough 830).

This incident was small compared to the other crises the President was facing at the time especially in Korea. But here again was Margaret serving as a symbolic instrument to display an image of her father, whether it was positive or not.

With all of the difficulties Harry S Truman faced during his presidency (bringing an end to World War II, the beginning of the Cold War, the steel strikes, the growing angst in Korea), his image of a good hearted family man, dedicated to his wife and daughter, remained intact. The credit for this, no doubt, mostly goes to Bess and Margaret.

During Harry’s final speech one lady cried, “I don’t care what they say about Mr. Truman, but everyone loves Mrs. Truman and Margaret.” The family’s non-partisan popularity allowed citizens to find common ground during tumultuous times.

Bess and Margaret gave disaffected Americans a benign address in the White House. Patriots could disagree with Truman, but like his family.

Some of this popularity did reflect, and reflect on, important personal characteristics of the President. If Bess and Margaret were distinguished by their “humaness,” as B.C. Forbes wrote in *Forbes*, that was also one of Harry’s most appealing traits. Even his loudest critics conceded that he was a nice guy. A White House stenographer said, “He’s the only man I’ve ever known or ever met that didn’t have a mean bone in his body.”

Bess and Margaret, like all wives and children, provided glimpses into the husband’s character. If that was not enough to keep his party in power, it did help detoxify the atmosphere (Troy 51).

### **Caroline and John Kennedy**

Even before entering the White House, Caroline Kennedy had begun to leave her mark on the American public (and hopefully for the Kennedys, the American *voting* public). Caroline Bouvier Kennedy was born November 27, 1957 just as her father’s campaign for president began to take shape.

She was christened at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, probably for the media exposure it would give her father, Massachusetts senator and presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy. Photos of baby Caroline peering from her crib appeared in women's magazines, charming potential voters. Her very first spoken words- 'plane,' 'good-bye,' 'New Hampshire,' and 'West Virginia'- betrayed the political environment into which she was born(O'Brian 44).

Kennedy knew that Caroline was a political asset from the beginning. Whenever Kennedy would entertain potential voters in his home, he would always make sure that Caroline was brought in to visit with the houseguests. The guests were thoroughly taken with her every time she made an appearance. Kennedy recognized this and commented to the children's nannie that "Caroline is a great hit with everyone. I think she could be the greatest vote getter of all!" (Shaw 65). Others referred to Caroline as Kennedy's "secret campaign weapon" (Lincoln 133). Fascination with little Caroline became front and center not only because she was so visible but also because her father could not resist talking about his family and showing them off to the American public. By doing so, he was giving a symbolic message that he was a family man who cared about his children. It also did not hurt that the Kennedy family was young and virile as opposed to the previous occupants of the White House, the Eisenhowers. John Kennedy was no doubt proud of his daughter but also knew that she was a political asset and was more than happy to put her on public display if it was going to help his public image.

Caroline's first real experience with the press and the public was several days after her father was elected president. Helen Thomas has stated that she

had a field day with Caroline stories and so did other reporters. She captured national attention during President-elect days when she wandered out onto the patio of Kennedy's Palm Beach villa during a news conference, wearing her pajamas, a robe, and her mother's high heels. 'Where's my Daddy,' she asked a television technician. 'He's over there, honey,' the technician told her, pointing at Kennedy, who joined in the laughter(Thomas 18).

This and other antics that were to follow made Caroline the "darling of the nation" (Quinn and Kanter 199) . Maud Shaw, Caroline and John's nannie, has stated that these scenarios created, "a lovely picture of the President as a family man, to whom his children were

terribly important” (Shaw 134). Caroline along with her brother John, who was born shortly after the election on November 25, 1960, “presented to the public an image of the ideal family...The antics of the child and the obvious loving warmth between father and daughter further endeared both to the nation” (Quinn and Kanter 199). Caroline became a star with the American public without even trying and became at four years old the youngest politician in Washington, soliciting more supporters with her smile than days spent on the campaign trail by her father.

Caroline’s appeal did not end once inside the iron gates surrounding the White House. Instead, now with her partner in crime, her brother John, they were going to leave a lasting impression behind not only for the American public but the world at large.

Jacqueline Kennedy was very concerned about the media exposure that her two children were getting and took every step available to her to shield them from the ever present clicking of cameras. Her attempts were successful most of the time but “Jack Kennedy... allowed photographers into the White House while his wife was away. He saw the family pictures as a way to shore up his political image damaged after fiascoes like the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961” (Biography A&E). And for the most part it seemed his attempts at media exposure of himself and his children were successful. The American public was captivated with the images of a young family in the White House for the first time since Theodore Roosevelt. “...The nation had been charmed and delighted by the image of love between Jack Kennedy and his son “John-John” when the press photographed the young president tossing the little boy into the air; the obvious glee of the child captured the nation, as did the relationship of his sister Caroline and her father”(Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 201).

Images were key with the Kennedy children. Even the most insignificant photo of the children was in high demand. The documented capers of these two children(whether planned or not) displayed two very happy children who obviously loved and looked up to their father who just happened to be the President of the United States. This was an absolute benefit to John Kennedy because his public image could no doubt be bolstered when he had two children at his side who had captured the hearts of the American public.

Barbara Kellerman has stated appropriately that:

The cuteness of these two leapt out of the simplest snapshot, and their innocent appeal separated them from the stolidly adult world of presidential politics-of which they were nonetheless a part. Like most young children, they could be shown off or kept from public view at the discretion of their parents. And when they were on display, they could usually be counted on to do something unpredictable and, given the setting, really quite funny(38).

In all, the two Kennedy children did “frame” the character and personal image of John F. Kennedy. They served the political purpose of showing him to be a family man dedicated to his two small children. The images of this young family captured the hearts and minds of the American public.

### **Amy Carter**

Amy Carter was born on October 19, 1967 in her father’s hometown of Plains, Georgia. Amy was the youngest of the Carters’ four children. She was the only daughter and was separated in age from her youngest brother by fifteen years. Once again, we have a child who was born into the political scene. In Amy’s case, she practically was born campaigning. “Amy Carter was born into a family already embroiled in the 1970 race (for governor of Georgia). When Rosalynn went into labor, Jimmy was doing some early campaigning eighty miles away. When Amy was two, her mother was campaigning full-time” (Troy 242-243). By the time Amy was three, Jimmy Carter had been elected Governor of Georgia, and Amy moved with her parents to the governor’s mansion in Atlanta.

Amy Carter was very special to the Carters. Due to a medical condition, Rosalynn was unable to conceive any more children until a surgery in 1966 made it possible for the Carters to have Amy. She was treated as a miracle by her family. Jimmy Carter’s response to Amy exemplifies what she meant to him and to Rosalynn:

It was after twenty-one years of marriage...Amy has made us young again, rebound our family together, and been a source of joy, pride, and delight. Her three brothers are so much older that it is almost as though she has four fathers, and we have had to stand in line to spoil her.

Amy was three years old when we moved into the governor’s mansion in early 1971, and she has had a rapidly developing life among adults. She is probably the most photographed member of our family, being interviewed and photographed continually at a young age and being actively involved in all sorts

of state activities(Kellerman 52).

Thus, from an early age, Amy was highly visible to the media, and her parents allowed her to be. This made her fascinating to the media in 1976 when her father ran for and won the presidency. Amy also stood out in another fashion. She became a focal point because “she was extraordinary within the family [and known to have brought it extraordinary joy]” (Kellerman 53).

## 1976

The attention Amy garnered during her few years in the governors mansion in Georgia made for an easy transfer of attention to the campaign trail in 1976. Amy was eight years old in 1976 and provided a great amount of symbolism during this campaign. Amy’s main assets for Jimmy Carter at the time were her age (in comparison to her brothers) and her visual image. The young age of Amy brought the image of the Carters as still a young family that had been revitalized by her youth. She helped paint an image of a loving family and of a devoted father to an only daughter who had been prayed for so many years.

Amy also presented the image of the typical American girl. At the time she was described as “ A female Huckleberry Finn, her waist-length, strawberry-blond hair stream(ing) behind her” (Stroud 67). Even further, she was described as a duplicate of her father in both mind and body with the exception of her extroversion and her sense of humor (Stroud 70). Remembering the antics of the Kennedy children, it seemed as if it were about time that the press and the public had a young, spry child to pay attention to. “...[O]n countless occasions Amy...provided the public with the ‘simple delight that comes from seeing something nice’—a delight that was derived from the mere fact that she was a young child” (Kellerman 53).

The campaign of 1976 provided an opportunity for the Carters to show off their young daughter to the American public. Amy was interviewed quite frequently. Although the topics covered during these interviews did not vary too far from what her favorite pastimes were, the fact that she was being quoted in national newspapers on a daily basis was overwhelming for such a young girl. She captivated the media that was assigned to

cover the Carter home in Plains. She began a lemonade stand and charged the media members for each glass. By the time the election was finally over, she was charging them for sandwiches and a renter's fee for her frisbee. Amy reveled in the attention that she was getting. "A campaign was clearly on to transform Amy from the village darling into the nation's darling..." (Kellerman 54). And it seemed that this would be the case when Jimmy Carter beat Gerald Ford for the presidency.

### **Political Messages**

No matter how much the Carters hoped that Amy would be a distraction in 1976, she quickly became a topic of bad press and "press barbs really directed at her father" (Quinn and Kanter 224). The problems began shortly after the election when it was announced that Amy would be attending an integrated public school near the White House. The media went wild for several weeks until Amy started school in January 1977. The objective of the decision to send her to public school was to provide a modicum of normalcy for Amy. Amy, though, was not "normal"; instead she drew so much press attention to herself, the school, her teachers, and fellow students that she had to withdraw.

The next big news story concerning Amy came when she was baptized at First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. Some of the reaction from the press at the time was skeptical about the motives behind Amy's baptism. Questions such as "Was it necessary to wait until the family moved to Washington? Was it done then deliberately, for propaganda purposes or maybe for political reasons?" (Norton 78) The Carters took offense and vehemently rejected these notions but they still lingered in the air.

The media also picked up on a practice that the Carters began early on in his administration. The Carters would allow Amy to come to state dinners.

People...criticized the Carters for taking Amy along to state dinners, and seeing the child's picture in the next morning's papers, sleepily slumped in a chair between her parents, wearing a long, lacy robe and reading a book.

"Amy attends some state dinners because we like her to be with us," Rosalynn explain(ed) simply. "She reads books on those occasions because she's fidgety and can't sit still. If you were going to that kind of a party, wouldn't you take a book?" (Norton79)

Even though the press chose these moments to pick on Amy (or her father through her), they also lavished her with praise. Pictures of her were in high demand. She was pictured yawning at the inauguration, going off to her first day back at school, and playing with her dog Grits. In early 1977, she was on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Stories such as those about Amy's attending an integrated public school...have *symbolic* (emphasis mine) functions. Whatever the Carters' real motivations, the net effect of decisions like these was to make Amy serve a political end...We never had a passionate interest in what she—who was, after all, only a child—said, or even specifically what she did. The appeal was in her little-girlishness. And the fascination was with the juxtaposition between this girlishness and the hectic political environment in which it was being displayed. But just a Jacqueline Kennedy's style could not help but come to stand for the style of the Kennedy administration itself, so the would-be liberalism and modernism with which Amy was promptly enveloped was taken to be an indicator of the intended direction and mood of the Carter presidency. By 1977 Amy's blond hair and freckled young face evoked instant recognition. They had only to be momentarily glimpsed in a shot of her holding hands with a black classmate as they were paired to take a tour of the National Portrait Gallery for the point to be made (Kellerman 56).

Therefore, Amy Carter's role as symbol went well beyond giving a glimpse into the type of person Jimmy Carter was personally; she also gave us a measuring stick with which to assess Jimmy Carter's political intentions for his presidency.

## 1980

Amy Carter's usefulness as a symbol came crashing to the ground as she grew older. Instead of a cute little girl, 1980 brought a thirteen year old. "...the fact that this child became a victim of increasing age had to be seen as a considerable loss by all who counted themselves in the Carter camp" (Kellerman 58). In the end, Amy Carter became politically disastrous to her father through no fault of her own. In Carter's preelection debate with Ronald Reagan, Carter said that he had asked Amy her opinion on the most important political question of the day, and she had supposedly stated that it was the control of nuclear arms. Carter was obviously well meaning in his mentioning Amy's concerns because he knew they were also concerns of the nation at the time, but he had



only provided fodder for many around the nation including comedians and especially Ronald Reagan. “At rallies, Reagan asked,--‘Who’s running the country?’ and his supporters shouted back: ‘Amy Carter!’” (Troy 271).

Any political success has to end at some point and for Amy this was the ultimate end of her positive political influence as a symbol. Amy remained a symbol but she began to have negative influence instead of positive influence.

### **Chelsea Clinton**

Chelsea Clinton was born on February 27, 1980 in Little Rock, Arkansas where her father was highly involved in state politics and would eventually strive and win the governor’s mansion. When her father ran for the presidency in 1992 she was only 12 years old but she was not new to the political arena. With her father’s win Chelsea was going to continue her “childhood in a fishbowl” (Time ) for at least four more years, as long as her family resided at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Overall, Chelsea has performed a similar task to the other four presidential children discussed in this chapter. In both the 1992 and 1996 elections as well as the years in the White House, Chelsea has performed a symbolic role. For Chelsea, it is political in nature because of her role in reshaping Bill Clinton’s image.

### **1992**

There is no doubt that Chelsea’s political role was that of symbol during the 1992 campaign. So far she has continued to typify this role while in the White House. Although she was not as visible as Amy Carter was in 1976, Chelsea was a part of the campaign in 1992. A good example of Chelsea’s role is the reworking of Bill Clinton’s image in early 1992. In April of 1992 polls showed that the American voters were not impressed with Bill Clinton and even less so with his wife Hillary Rodham Clinton. “They saw him as a “ ‘wishy-washy,’ fast-talking-career politician who did not ‘talk straight.’

They liked Hillary Clinton even less, regarding her as ‘being in the race for herself,’ as ‘going for the power,’ and as a wife intent on ‘running the show’”(New York Times). To combat these opinions the Clinton campaign team “proposed the construction of a new image of (the Clintons): an honest, plain-folks idealist and his warm and loving wife” (*New York Times*). The bottom line was that the Clintons needed to portray themselves as a loving family, not cutthroat politicians and lawyers. This softening of their image was deemed necessary if there was a chance to win the election. Thus entered Chelsea Clinton. Politically she was used as a tool to help soften her parents’ image with the American voters.

The Clinton campaign began work on how this should be accomplished, and the result can be seen in a memo that was sent throughout the Clinton campaign organization, suggesting that “Bill and Hillary need to talk much more of their own family, including Chelsea, and their affection for each other” (NYT). The memo also suggested such staged events as Bill and Chelsea surprising Mrs. Clinton on Mother’s Day in order to show their family togetherness. Thus, Chelsea was being used as a symbol to display to the American public that the Clintons were a normal happy family and that Bill Clinton was a loving husband and father.

### **Isolation**

Chelsea’s role in 1992 was limited to situations such as the one mentioned above in which she was used for symbolic purposes only. She did not make speeches and/or have her own campaign stops. She was always with her parents and always in the background. This was to continue once the Clintons entered the White House. As has been seen in the cases of the Kennedy children and Amy Carter, the young children of presidents do become media targets. But “the potential for this first young girl in the White House since Amy Carter (1977-1981) to become constantly targeted by the press was short-circuited when her parents, as well as others, objected when some very unflattering images dominated the news” (Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 239). Overall, Chelsea has been rarely photographed and interviewed in comparison to other first children who have lived in the White House. This was mainly a choice of her parents to

let their daughter have as normal a life as possible within the confines of the presidency of the United States. At this stage in her life, Chelsea was also at an awkward age, just as Amy Carter was during the 1980 campaign. Chelsea was a teenager who had less potential for being cute and thus took a lot of attacks for this.

Other first daughters have supported of Chelsea Clinton and the choice that her parents made to keep her isolated. Margaret Truman in a letter to the editor of the New York Times Magazine chastised those who picked up the ball as Chelsea watchers and criticizers. Margaret wrote that “My sympathy is with Chelsea, since I too was hauled off to Washington-at the age of 11, when my father was elected to the Senate, and incarcerated in the White House when he became President.” In an article written about Chelsea Clinton, former first daughter Patti Davis stated that “once you enter the world of the White House, privacy becomes a rare, precious thing” ( Bazaar).

### **Beyond 1996**

Thus has been the role of Chelsea Clinton since her father became president. She has stayed out of the lenses of photographers as much as possible while finishing her high school years and now as she has begun her college career at Stanford. It is impossible, though, not to be seen at all during these years, and the cameras have followed Chelsea wherever she has gone. She has had many opportunities to travel with her parents in the United States and abroad, thus bringing media attention and reinforcing the family togetherness of the Clintons. The media attention is very intense at times. This is often credited to the attacks on her father as a philanderer. The public is getting mixed messages. One is of a good family man and the other is of a bad husband and potentially immoral person. Chelsea helps emphasize the former.

The largest amount of media attention came in the spring of 1997 when she was deciding which college to attend. This decision for most people is a personal matter, “but for the First Daughter, just choosing a college becomes a major news story- before Chelsea reached the decision in April (1997) to go to Stanford , rumors and speculation about her choice made the evening news for months (Bazaar). The decision made front page news and in September when Chelsea left the Clintons with an empty nest the news

coverage lasted for days. The fronts of all the major newspapers around the nation carried photos of Chelsea flanked by both of her parents holding hands and joining other parents as they settled their children in for their first extended period of time away from their parents. The images were of a mother and father saying good bye to their only daughter and leaving her 3,000 miles away from home. These images once again reinforced the idea that the Clintons were a loving family and that the President was a devoted father who was sending his daughter off to college just as so many other parents have done.

So far Chelsea has maintained a low key image while at college. Even though she is now 18 years old and very capable of speaking out on political matters or in support of her father in a surrogate role, Chelsea has chosen not to take this road as so many other presidential children have done. It is still to be seen what lies ahead for Chelsea. She may decide to begin to speak out more within the next two years and become more of a surrogate. It seems that the only reason that she would do this at this stage would be in defense of her father. That is yet to be seen. But it can be said that she has acted as a symbol now for six years and that will probably overshadow any activity that she does in the next two years.

### **Conclusion**

The role of symbol is one that can be very important politically. In all five of the cases discussed here, the message was that image is everything. These five presidential children were part of a tapestry. They were used as backdrops designed to display to the American public that their fathers were not ruthless politicians but rather family men who were no different from the average American family man who loves and is dedicated to his family.

All but one of the presidential children discussed were below the age of 18. Margaret Truman though was above the age of 18 when she was First Daughter. She exemplified the role of symbol just like the other four did and thus draws the conclusion that the first hypothesis is supported. That age does seem to be a determinant for who will perform the role of symbol. But from the example of Margaret Truman, we found that symbols do not have to be 18 years and younger. It is true though that the majority of

the symbols are all under the age of 18. Margaret stands out as an outlier but as has been discussed, the political and social times of the 1940s as well as her own personality traits and ambitions probably dictated that she perform her dominant role as a symbol.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Surrogates**

Most commonly, children of presidents are used as surrogates. The need for surrogates has increased with the expansion of the electronic media as well as the change in the nomination process. With the increase in the number of direct primaries since the 1960s there has been a greater demand for the time of each candidate. With so much territory to cover in such a short period of time, it is imperative that the candidates seek out others to make appearances and give speeches in their behalf. The most obvious person for this responsibility is the spouse of a candidate but even then the demands are overwhelming. The clear answer then is to use the children of candidates. They are what has been described as a candidate's "trusted mouthpiece" (Kellerman 63).

Presidential children of presidents are often called upon for their evident connection to the president. They are called upon to travel with the president but more often on their own, stumping for the candidate and representing the president. This may entail them making public appearances, granting interviews, and delivering speeches around the country. On the campaign trail as a mouthpiece for the candidate, their only goal is to get their father elected. They act to convey to the voter the type of human being their father is as well as his agenda and goals for the future of the United States. They are in essence called upon to paint by numbers on the tapestry of a well drawn campaign. They are not to tread any new waters but to stick close to the shore with well scripted campaign rhetoric and to present their father in the best possible light.

Although surrogates "have their peak effect during the presidential campaigns" (Kellerman 63), the need for surrogates in the White House is also high. Children of presidents have been called on to represent either the president or first lady as stand-ins when neither is able to be present. These duties could include meeting and greeting visitors to the White House, giving speeches, and hosting functions where a member of the

first family is in demand. The duties of a surrogate are just as important after the election as they were on the campaign trail.

In the next few pages, a look will be taken at a several individuals who embodied this task. This chapter covers Lynda Johnson Robb; Michael, Jack, Steve, and Susan Ford; and Jeb, Marvin, and Doro Bush.

### **Lynda Johnson Robb**

At first glance it would be easy to always link siblings together who performed the same role, as was in the case with Caroline and John Kennedy (and as will be done with the Ford and the Bush families) but in the case of the Johnson sisters, one seemed to be more dominant in the surrogate role than the other. Both of the Johnson sisters did act as surrogates during the campaign in 1964 but Luci Johnson left the White House earlier and at a younger age than her sister Lynda, thus giving Lynda greater opportunities to act as a surrogate.

Both Lynda and Luci presented a categorization problem. I have stated that none of the political roles discussed here is mutually exclusive; thus a child of a president can perform more than one role but one is typically more dominant than the others. For both Lynda and Luci there was question as to which role was the most dominant. Upon first inspection it seems as if both would be surrogates because of the role they played in the 1964 campaign, but in the following years events bring this categorization into question.

To begin with, Luci Johnson met the age requirements to be a symbol. It was initially hypothesized that all children eighteen years and younger would act as symbols. Luci Johnson, though, was sixteen years old in 1963 when her father became president and seventeen in 1964 during the campaign for president. But her work traveling the country giving stump speeches as well as traveling on the Lady Bird Special during the campaign seem to place Luci as a surrogate.

Luci left the White House when she was nineteen after she married and moved to Texas with her then husband, Patrick Nugent. Thus, Luci was removed from much opportunity to act in a surrogate capacity within the White House, considering that she

was no longer living there. The event that draws into question whether Luci played a symbolic role or not was her wedding to Patrick Nugent on August 6, 1966. Although the wedding was symbolic because of the family togetherness it portrayed, it was not the core of Luci's role while her father was president. Thus, Luci has been categorized as a surrogate.

The discussion that follows, though, is about her sister Lynda. As has been stated before, Lynda was older and lived in the White House longer than her sister, thus making a discussion of her surrogate role much more useful for analysis.

### **Instant First Daughter**

The elder daughter of Lyndon Johnson and Claudia Alta (Lady Bird) Johnson, Lynda Johnson was born on March 19, 1944 in Washington, D.C. where her father was a Congressman from Texas. Lynda grew up around politics but with all the training imaginable she was not prepared for the news that she received on November 22, 1963. President Kennedy had been shot and killed and her father was the new President of the United States, making her an instant First Daughter. Lynda was removed from her family at the time. When she received the news she was in the middle of her sophomore year's fall term at the University of Texas at Austin where she was working on a major in History. At the age of nineteen she had been catapulted from almost obscurity as the daughter of the Vice President to national fame and notoriety as one of the new first daughters.

Although events happened fast, Lynda took them in stride. Still she has called the years of her father's presidency as "my five year confinement" (LHJ). As the elder daughter of Lyndon Baines Johnson, she has been described as "truly her father's daughter" (Hall 219) when it comes to how she behaved in the political mine field. She had a great intellect and strength of character, both trademarks of her very influential father. It has been said that she was "bookish, political, steady..." (Troy 135). Lynda moved back to Washington, D.C. to be closer to her parents during the difficult years of her father's presidency. She finished her course work at George Washington University and received her degree from the University of Texas in the spring of 1966.



Upon her arrival at the White House, Lynda became an instant surrogate to both the President and the First Lady. In a personal interview I did with Mrs. Robb, she stated that the initial reason for coming back to stay at the White House was to be a supportive link for her father and mother, which she was. Soon she also began hosting receptions and making speeches to civic clubs when she could afford the time. A prime example of what both of the Johnson sisters were called upon to do has been recounted in their mother's diary. While Lady Bird was in Greece in March 1964 she wrote "...I gave a thought to Lynda Bird, who, clear across the world, was being hostess tonight to the last of the six groups of members of the House of Representatives and their wives who were coming to the reception for briefing, upstairs tours, and dancing" (Johnson 89). This example seems to be typical of what White House duties Lynda was called on to perform. When Lynda made speeches in support of her father, Lynda herself admits that most of the time her speeches were mostly "fluff," but she was an adamant supporter of her father's Civil Rights programs and a strong proponent of the Head Start program and enjoyed giving speeches on these two topics (Robb).

## **1964**

Although she had gone out several times with her father (including a five-state poverty tour in May of 1964) Lynda's first solo official speechmaking appearance was in the summer of 1964 when she took a trip to Hawaii. From her first public performance the press began to feel that this was just the beginning and that she was going to be a force in the 1964 election. Visiting 26 different states during the 1964 election, Lynda was called upon to "urge people to vote for Daddy"(Robb) as well as meet with supporters, provide entertainment, and garner positive press. Lynda and Luci were sent to small towns around the nation to show that the President really did care about them as well. During the 1964 campaign, Lynda and Luci were undoubtedly called upon to represent the youth vote of the United States and they were able to do this comfortably because it is what they knew. "With her campaign efforts focused upon youth, Lynda Bird hit the trail with Luci on what was described as a 'coast-to-coast program of barbecues'" (Hall 40).

When not making speeches on her own in 1964, Lynda was aboard the Lady Bird Special, which was a whirlwind whistle stop tour through the south during the campaign. The whistle stop train covered close to 1,700 miles during the months of the campaign. She was out every weekend campaigning with her mother, and Lynda and Luci made sure that one of them was with their mother at all times. Although the whistle stop campaigning was no doubt a great learning experience, the time spent campaigning on the Lady Bird Special was not always pleasant. They met with a lot of resistance at times from hecklers who met the train from town to town protesting President Johnson's civil rights stances. No matter how much resistance they received, the Johnson women continued the work they had set out to perform and that was to get as many votes as possible. UPI reporter Helen Thomas recounted that the press "silently cheered them (Lynda and Luci). Unbiased reporters we were, but we saw their courage and felt they deserved the respect to be heard" (Thomas 54). Although difficult at times, the ultimate goal was more valuable than a few unpleasant moments and the Johnson sisters threw themselves into campaigning with all the verve and energy that they had.

Seeing how closely the family worked together at presenting a united family front during the campaign and in the White House prompted one observer to note that "Probably no other modern President has so family-ized his career for political purposes" (New York Times Magazine). But why not?, asks Lady Bird: "I think people can assess a man a little in relation to what kind of wife and family he has. They are interested in the total man, and that includes his family" (NYTM). And if that family is made of good campaign surrogates, then all the better for President Johnson.

### **1965-1969**

Johnson, of course, won his campaign for the presidency in 1964 and the Johnson family returned to the White House. Lynda stated that she continued to host receptions as well as from time to time travel with her father. When she did travel with her father she has said that most often once they arrived at their destination, he would go one way and she would be taken to her own "meet and greets" in the same city where she would give a short speech and then meet with those in attendance. Once again she was serving as a

surrogate. Due to her school work she was not asked to do this traveling on a regular basis but when needed she would always make herself available.

When it came to the press Lynda had to become accustomed to always being barraged for comments and the need for the White House press corps to always know what she was doing at all times and with whom. Helen Thomas has stated that “Lynda Bird gave the press fits most of the time she was in the White House. She was so much like her father that the First Lady’s staff called her ‘Lyndon Jr.,’ but later on, Lynda mellowed and took us in her stride”(Thomas 103). In a personal interview with the author, Mrs. Robb stated that she was very aware of the media presence especially the print media. She said that she knew that she could change what the press reported and was also very aware of the fact that if she did something that had a negative effect that that would look bad for her father.

As has been stated, none of these roles is mutually exclusive and although Lynda’s political role was mainly that of a surrogate, she did perform acts of one or more of the other roles. Lynda Robb is very quick to make it perfectly clear that she never was in a position to make decisions or greatly influence her father but she did serve in the capacity of a confidante from time to time. She has stated that her father would ask her about particular issues; not particularly what she thought about them but what she was hearing from others in her travels. Mrs. Robb has also stated that she helped the President on a speech or two. “No idle flatterer, Johnson was so convinced of her abilities that he often consulted Lynda about his drafts of speeches. Lynda would reply by awarding the president’s work an ‘A’, ‘B’, or ‘C’ [there is no record of ‘D’ or ‘F’ papers]” (Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 205).

Lynda also played a symbolic role from time to time as well. The greatest example of this would be her wedding to Charles Robb on December 9, 1967. In a personal interview Mrs. Robb said she wanted to emphasize the fact that the wedding was not meant to create a political storm but in the end it did display symbolic overtones of the President’s elder daughter getting married to a young Marine set to leave for Vietnam within the next couple of months. Johnson was portrayed as a loving father and father-in-

law having to suffer along with his daughter the impending service in Vietnam of a family member.

As it turned out both Lynda and Luci's husbands were fighting in Vietnam at the same time. Lynda had moved back into the White House (after spending a year working in New York) to be nearer her family while her husband was overseas. Luci had already had one child, a grandson for the Johnsons, and Lynda was pregnant with her first. Both of the Johnson daughters brought the war into the White House for the first time and made it a constant reality for Johnson. An example of the stress the family was under is narrated by Carl Anthony in his book First Ladies Volume II:

On March 31, 1968 she(Lady Bird) greeted a 'detached' Lynda, who'd just gone through the ordeal of saying good-bye to Chuck as he left for combat in Vietnam. Tired, she flatly asked her father, 'Dad, why do they have to go to Vietnam?' Lynda was to have a child the next fall. She later recalled, 'I was a big pregnant reminder that it was his policy that was separating husbands from wives, children from parents.'(153-154).

Although Lynda did perform several different roles from time to time the most prominent role she played was that of surrogate. The speeches made in and out of campaign season, her travels abroad as a representative of the White House, and her role as hostess as the White House made her a surrogate for not only the President but the First Lady as well. Through these surrogate efforts, she was able to carry her father's political message and presence across the country.

### **Michael, Jack, Steve, and Susan Ford**

The rest of this chapter on surrogates will discuss two families as units instead of as individuals. There are multiple reasons for doing so. First, there are the time and page constraints of this project. Second, the theory can be displayed adequately through a few illustrations, instead of discussing each individual in length. Finally, each of these individuals worked within a family unit. Yes, they did their jobs as surrogates and most often times apart from each other, but they presented themselves as a team, thus making it acceptable to discuss them as a unit. It is necessary to keep in mind that while these individuals are being treated as a group it does not mean that they all participated as surrogates to the same degree as the others in the group. Instead, several were more

visible than others and this will be addressed. In the cases that follow, each president created a persona of himself as a strong family man for whom family always came first and was the foundation of his existence.

The first family unit that will be discussed is the Ford family. When Gerald Ford suddenly became president in 1974, all four of his children were well past the age of symbolism except for Susan who was still in high school at the time. (This is not to say that they never performed a symbolic role as will be discussed later.) Michael was 23 years old and attending Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary working on his master's degree. Jack was 21 and still working on his forestry degree at Utah State University. Steve was 17 and finishing up his senior year of high school and was set on ranching for a career afterwards. Lastly, Susan was 16 and a junior in high school.

The four Ford children at times made for very good copy. Each was very distinct in their personality and created moments when the press went wild (Was or was Jack not smoking marijuana? Was or was Susan not having an affair? Will Steve stay in college? Can Michael quell his mother's tongue?). Although there were moments when the media took a story and ran with it, making it seem that the Ford children might be skeletons at times, in the end they all came out as predominately surrogates. This especially became the case when 1976 rolled around and the race was on for the presidency once again.

When Gerald Ford moved into the White House, only two of his children came with him and in a short period of time there was only Susan. Upon the occasion of her father entering the White House, Susan remarked that she was scared:

Really, really scared. I was afraid of what was going to happen to our family, afraid Daddy's being President would tear us apart. I knew it was a privilege for him to have this position, but the boys were all dispersed- even Steve was about to leave- and I'd be the only one left home, and I knew I would have to be very very cautious because anything I did in the White House could reflect on my parents (Ford 158).

This sounds exactly like the sentiments Lynda Robb professed when she entered the White House. They were both aware that politically they could be a positive influence or a liability for their fathers. In the end Lynda became a great help to her parents instead of a hindrance, and the same happened for Susan Ford.

The fact that Susan was the only Ford child living in the White House accounts for her greater amount of opportunities to participate as a surrogate outside of the campaign process. She was called on often to fill in for her mother (especially during Mrs. Ford's bout with breast cancer early in the administration). Susan would host luncheons and attend White House receptions as her father's escort when her mother was unavailable.

Before the campaign in 1976, Susan was the only Ford child who was actively participating as a surrogate. But in 1976 all four of the Ford children lent a hand to their father in order to get him elected to the office.

### **Campaign Ford**

As the campaign began to take shape so did the participation of the Ford children. At the beginning, though, not all of the children were as visible as the rest. "At first, Mike and Steve laid low. The latter was quoted as having said, 'Politics is not for me, it's my old man's game'" (Kellerman 85). Michael had always declined the spotlight, and Steve more and more shied away from politics. They were not as visible during the primaries but came out in full force for the convention and the long haul to election day.

Instead of Michael and Steve during the primaries, it was Jack and Susan. Jack had been involved with the campaign early on. It was obvious to all involved that Jack had tremendous political potential if he would just apply himself (Weidenfeld 162). In late 1975 Jack began traveling the nation as a representative of Ford, speaking mostly in the West and to young Americans. In October of 1975 he was sent to represent Ford as a surrogate at the Republican Western Region Conference in Portland, Oregon. "The White House sent Jack with everyone's blessing. He is the Ford most closely attuned to the West, a Ford capable of giving a youthful viewpoint of what is happening in the administration..." (Weidenfeld 196). This was Jack's role until he hit a snag when he admitted that he had smoked marijuana, and the Ford campaign tried to curb Jack's involvement in the primaries although he would regain his place on the campaign in the general election.

A typical example of what Susan was called on to do during the primaries took place in New Hampshire. Susan too seemed to cater to the young. However, Susan was “simply not comfortable campaigning and the discomfort show(ed)” (Weidenfeld 258). Since this was the case, it was necessary to put Susan in situations in which she could shine. One of the options was to put her on ski slopes in New Hampshire. She was very comfortable skiing and the Fords desperately needed to win the New Hampshire primary. As Betty Ford recalls:

This was a family trip, and of course New Hampshire was our first primary. We all started together...then we split up. Susan went north and skied, to pacify any New Hampshire voters who might have been offended by Ron Nessen's (Gerald Ford's Press Secretary) saying the Fords found the state 'too icy' for their favorite sport...(Betty Ford 258).

This was typical of the work as a surrogate that Susan was called on to do during the primary season. Once through the primaries, it was then necessary for the whole family to band together to try and beat Carter.

### **Sometimes a Man's Family Can Say a Lot About the Man**

By the time the convention rolled around it was painfully obvious to Ford and those whom he had hired to improve his image that the American public was unaware of who Gerald Ford was as a person. The campaign knew it was necessary to get this message out, and the prime way in which to do this was to use the children. A group from New York had been called in to help produce a film for the Republican Convention and it was decided that this film would have to show who Ford was as a person instead of as a politician. The answer here was to use the family in order to show his human side. Therefore, the Ford children were going to be used as symbols. They were being used to cast a more “human” light on Ford.

The film was entitled “Ford the Man” and was shown to the conventions delegates and made into shorter television ads to be shown throughout the general campaign. Kathleen Hall Jamieson in her book Packaging the President recounts what these ads entailed:

When these ads (spot ads beginning to air after the first debate, September 23)

did begin to run, they concentrated, as Bailey/Deardourff(the production company) had planned, on showing Ford's "human dimension." The ads revealed him as his wife and children saw him, as he was seen by others, and as he saw himself. "Sometimes a man's family can tell a lot about a man. That's why we want you to meet the Fords." One by one the Ford children speak about their father. Steve tells a North Dakota audience that he asked his father what he could tell them and was told to assure them that there would be no embargo. Mike is the Republican's answer to Carter's appeal to born again Christians. "The religious feelings within our family are very strong," he says. "My mom and dad are very devout and serious believers in their Lord and they practice that in their daily lives. I received a great deal of affirmation and encouragement as I expressed and explained to them my interest in the ministry, Christian ministry." Ford notes that it gives him "a great deal of satisfaction to see a son who wants to give of himself through religion."

In response to Susan's testimony that she and her father are "very, very close," Ford observes that he assumed a protective attitude toward her "when she was growing up and had three pretty rugged brothers." An uninitiated observer might conclude that Ford is running not for president but for father of the year (348).

The Ford campaign felt that the American public wanted "traditional American values" and this commercial was supposed to show them off in the Ford family. The commercial was described as "five minutes of love, pride, respect, patriotism, and family unity set to music" (MacDougall 117). The overall message was to convey that "Sometimes a man's family can say a lot about the man" (117). The role of the Ford children in the film and the following commercials was definitely that of symbols. They were being used to display who their father really was as a man. Although the commercials seemed to be working, the Ford children's role in the campaign was not over yet. While their symbolic role was much needed in this instance, they were also needed as surrogates, and all of them hit the road to speak to the American public about their father and what he wanted to accomplish as president.

Sheila Weidenfeld, Mrs. Ford's Press Secretary, worked with the Ford children to get them booked on television shows across the nation. Some would do "Today" while others would do "Good Morning America." Each also began making speeches across the nation. Mrs. Ford recalls that:

In the two months left before the general election, Mike actually



took some speaking engagements, and he got a few of his friends, fellows who were also studying for the ministry, involved in the campaign.

Susan was a terrific asset because she put on no airs and refused to become embroiled in debates she didn't understand. One day, while exhorting a crowd of people to go to the polls and vote, she cried, "Be sure to get out there on November fourth!" then blushed. "I mean on November second. I'm having my wisdom teeth out on November fourth."

I thought that was nice; it showed she was a young girl with other things on her mind besides the election.

Jack, of course, being the only Ford child who was actively fascinated by politics, worked harder than any of the others...he was the best speaker in the family, and he took it upon himself to see that the "real message" about Jerry got out. Jack could really do it, talk about the economy, foreign policy, energy, conservation (262-263).

Jack also got a vote of confidence from his father. In Gerald Ford's autobiography, he recalled a time when he was unable to be at a meeting of the Colorado Republicans and sent Jack in his absence.

...[B]y appearing at Fort Collins, Jack was walking into a lion's den. It didn't faze him one bit. He was squaring off against the most skillful orator in the party's ranks, but he didn't hesitate. "My father was able to ramrod through Congress the largest defense budget in peacetime history," he told the more than 2,000 conventioners. Then Jack asked for "a vote of confidence" for the man who was healing the nation's wounds. When I heard how well he had done, I was very proud of him (Gerald Ford 391).

The Ford children also were called in periodically to fill in at functions that their mother was unable to attend. Sheila Weidenfeld has stated that "I sent the kids in as substitutes for their mother whenever I could, and they did beautifully"(347). When asked why it was that the Ford children took such an active role in the campaign as surrogates, Steve answered, "My father's done a lot for me in the last twenty years. This gives me a chance to pay him back in a small way" (Weidenfeld 256).

As a final note to the participation of the Ford children during the 1976 campaign, it is interesting to note how the media viewed their participation. With the four Ford children and the four Carter sons all participating, the media seemed to be uneasy. *Time* magazine actually spoke out against it:

Should a presidential election begin to sound like Book CXXXV of "One

Man's Family"?

In a sense, the trend is understandable. The family campaigners can extend the candidate's image far beyond what he could achieve alone...They can appeal to generations and interests groups by whom the candidate might not be welcomed or understood. They ensure constant exposure of the candidate's name...

Until recently, the political family had quite a different view of its proper function: it should be seen only occasionally and heard not at all...

Should families skulk back to the home and suppress their need(if it exists) to express themselves? That is one possibility. But even short of such drastic action, it might be useful to remember that it is the candidate who is running for the presidency (Kellerman 86).

By 1976, surrogates were more in demand than they were in the past. In all likelihood, there is no going back. The trend for a further use of surrogates has been established and is so useful, it is probably not going to be curtailed in the near future. This is due to factors presented earlier, an increase in the primaries, the decline of party strength, the increased use of television and other advanced media techniques, as well as the growing personalization of the presidency.

This trend toward the greater use of the family as surrogates has continued since the Fords. The Carters used their family as did the Reagans, and to an even greater extent the Bushes did as well.

### **Jeb, Marvin, and Dorothy Bush**

George and Barbara Bush had five children who were all well over the age of 18 when he made his run for the presidency. All five at one point or another acted as a surrogate but two of the five's dominant roles were not as surrogates. Of the five, Jeb, Marvin, and Dorothy all had the dominant roles as surrogates, while George W. and Neil were an informal advisor and skeleton, respectively.

### **1988**

When George Bush made his second run for the presidency in 1988, Jeb Bush was 35 years old and the secretary of commerce of Florida where he lived with his wife and

three children. Marvin was 32 years old and living in Alexandria, Virginia as a businessman, living with his wife and daughter. Dorothy (Doro), the youngest and only daughter (the Bushs' first daughter, Robin, died of acute leukemia at the age of four in 1949) was 29 years old and was living in Cape Elizabeth, Maine with her husband and two children. Needless to say, each of these three was settled into their own life and when their father ran for the presidency in 1988, each put their lives on hold to help him campaign. Some were better than others at making speeches (Doro would often break into tears when she would talk about her father) but each provided their own individual talents.

On the day of George Bush's inauguration, television news anchor Tom Brokaw praised the Bush children. "A big part of the success of George Bush is owed to his children who were out there campaigning very hard for him" (NBC News). The Bush children were actually almost written into the campaign script as early as 1986. All of the Bush family members convened at Camp David, and they were "sat down...and met the demographics guy and Lee Atwater and...(were)told...how this campaign would be packaged and the strategy, and...had charts and maps" (Grimes 192). It was obviously a family affair to begin with.

"All of the Bush children had put their lives on hold to join the presidential campaign" (Grimes 286). George W. moved from Midland, Texas to Washington, D.C. while Jeb resigned his position as secretary of commerce, and Neil and Marvin both took leaves of absence from their respective careers. Upon returning home from the campaign trail Doro took a job at the Maine Department of Tourism and by August of 1989 she had separated from her husband of seven years. Doro had once been a full time mother and bookkeeper for her husband's construction company. With her new job, she had finally found her niche, and she and her husband, Bill LeBlond, no longer had the same goals. She and Bill divorced in 1990 and in 1992 she remarried to Democratic lobbyist, Robert Koch. Doro received some bad press during the period that she was going through her divorce. George Bush had created a public image of his family as being perfect and one of them getting a divorce tended to tarnish this image. Thus, for this period of time, Doro was also acting as a skeleton.

The Bush children traveled the country during the primaries, spending most of their time in the states that had the earliest primaries. All of them campaigned quite a bit in Iowa. When Bush was defeated by Dole in the caucuses “the vice-president hightailed to New Hampshire before the caucus results were counted, leaving three grim-faced Bush children to concede his defeat: ...(They) make the obligatory appearances before the media, then headed to a hotel ballroom to thank discouraged supporters” (Grimes 70). In this situation, the Bush children were taking over as surrogates for their father, who should have been present to face his defeat but instead left that task to his children.

Each of the Bush children also participated as delegates at the national convention. They acted as representatives of their father among the other delegates and were able to cast their votes for their respective states. The convention itself turned into a family affair all the way around. “During the convention’s roll call his daughter, four sons, and Columba Bush, his Mexican-born daughter-in-law, who spoke Spanish, nominated him from five separate states. Columba’s son led the Pledge of Allegiance” (Grimes 125).

All of the children traveled the nation making speeches for their father. Doro was always a little reluctant to speak in public. She felt uncomfortable with speaking to groups at first but by the end of the campaign began to feel a little more comfortable with her surrounding; “but she does seem to relish talking about her father” (Family Circle). This is the fact that seemed to pull her through all of the campaigning in 1988 and in 1992.

George Bush has been quoted as saying that:

Doro is a “person who loves her privacy, and yet when thrust into the political arena, she grew enormously and talked to all kinds of groups,” he said. “One of the events that summed it up best for me was when she got the firefighters of New Jersey to endorse me. She kind of choked up talking about her dad, and they all understood, and they all stood up and clapped for her” (Family Circle).

Doro often traveled with her mother campaigning as well as sometimes with her father. She seemed to be a stabilizing factor for the both of them. She knew that no matter how stressful making speeches and traveling the country were, her parents were feeling the stress ten fold more than she:

“The campaign was horrendous. It was horrible,” Doro said bluntly after the election. “Everybody’s nervous around you. You have these people

around you who are just like...one false move and we are dead, you know. But Mom and Dad have such great senses of humor, it helps you through.

“I traveled with my dad the last five days of the campaign,” she continued. “It had nothing to do with me. I just think it had something to do with someone from his family being with him. Someone told me, Roger Ailes or whoever it was, ‘You cannot believe how much more relaxed your dad is when you are around.’ And I think he just meant having someone who is around him who is not going, ‘Your hair is wrong.’ ‘You can’t say that.’ Whatever it is. Dad never listens” (Grimes 204-205).

It is obvious from the above quote that even if one feels that their main role is one thing but that at any time they can be performing another role.

### **1989-1992**

The five Bush children had gone back to their own lives for a few years and then were called upon once again to campaign for their father. This time it was not to get their father into the White House but to keep him there. They were present in the 1992 campaign but were not as visibly important as they were in 1992. The reasons for this are debatable, but their lack of visibility may have hurt Bush in the long run. The campaign was family oriented to a degree. For example, Doro along with her mother, her aunt Nancy Ellis, her sister-in-law Margaret Bush and her niece Noelle all went on several bus trips together.

(They) each would give a short talk and then work the crowd. (Barbara) spoke first, introducing Nan(cy), who spoke as a sister and then introduced Margaret, who spoke as a teacher and daughter-in-law and then introduced Doro, who spoke as a daughter and then introduced Noelle, the cleanup hitter, who spoke as a granddaughter. (They) had crowds every place (they) went in Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey(Bush 490).

Even though the main political role of these three Bush children was that of surrogate, it is important to point out that the Bush family as a whole was being used for symbolic purposes as well. The Bush family went far beyond the five children to their spouses as well as their children (there were 10 grandchildren in 1988 and 13 when George Bush left office in 1993). Images of the children and grandchildren were all over the media. They were used in order to provide the image of George Bush as a supporter of family values and such a decent man that when his daughter tries to talk about him she

begins to weep. One of the most memorable uses of his grandchildren was one of Bush's campaign ads in 1988 in which one of his granddaughters, Ellie LeBlond, runs to Bush and he turns around and picks her up. The commercial had its intended effects, which was to emotionally grab the audience and display that Bush was a loving grandfather, and it also affected staunch Dukakis supporters. As George Bush recalls, "One of the Democrats said, 'If I see that little girl one more time, I might vote for the son of bitch'" (People 44). There is no doubt that the extended Bush family was used for symbolism purposes, but when it came down to the individual votes the experiences of the Bush children stumping from state to state as surrogates suggests that role was the most dominant.

The Bush family provides an interesting view on what a family can do politically in support of a candidate or incumbent president. In later chapters, George W. and Neil Bush will be talked about separately. Each of them played two distinct roles from the ones their three siblings played. But among the three Jeb, Marvin, and Doro the political role of surrogate can be extracted as the most dominant one. We can also see how the whole family can be used as a symbolic image builder for the candidate.

Something else, though, stands out about the Bushes that has not been mentioned thus far but might be a trend for the future. The Bush children also served as "conduits to the White House from the world beyond the Rose Garden" (Grimes 289). It is no secret that President and Mrs. Bush relied on varying forms of information and with their children being in so many different stages of life themselves it is not inconceivable that they were called upon for their opinions as to what they were hearing outside the White House gates. This sounds very similar to what was seen in the case of Lynda Johnson Robb as well.

But for Jeb, Marvin, and Doro, their main role was as a surrogate. In summing up it would be fitting to end with the words of Marvin Bush. When asked during the 1988 campaign about the Bush children's involvement in campaign activities, he replied:

I don't have any aspirations to get involved in politics myself, but you know, I really have been very fortunate, as have all of my siblings, to be able to get out and participate in this campaign. It's rare when you're the son of somebody or the daughter of somebody to be able to really feel like you have an opportunity to give something back to your parents and to say "thank

you” in some certain way. For us it’s been this opportunity. The greatest thing that you can possibly have is this sense...the ability to say, “Maybe in our own small ways, we’ve been able to help some.” So I’ve been actively involved in the campaign and have enjoyed it tremendously—traveling around the country as a *surrogate* (emphasis mine) speaker for my father (Saturday Evening Post).

### **Conclusion**

Surrogates are much needed on the campaign trail, and this is when their impact is felt the most. All of the surrogates mentioned, performed in the campaign arena. Others also spoke around the country outside of the campaign arena or filled in for their father or mother when needed. All of these tasks had political significance because the presidential children were able to carry a political message to a larger audience of people than could the president alone.

## **Chapter Six:**

### **Informal Advisors/Confidant(e)s**

#### **Introduction**

Some presidential children have unique talents that they can bring to a presidential candidate or to a president themselves. This chapter deals with those presidential children that are, like their father, politically versed and have a strong sense of what the right choices may be for a campaign, administration, or, in all three specific cases discussed below, for each president personally. They also feel comfortable listening to the president and offering themselves as a sounding board as he confronts the day to day struggles of the office. This is not to say that these presidential children are on staff at the White House but rather that they offer advice and support. In essence, they are part of what can be considered a president's "kitchen cabinet."

I have titled the role these individuals play "informal advisors." Within the process of advising, these individuals must also be available to lend an ear to the president and his opinions, worries, and questions. In essence, they must perform the role of a "confidant(e)." Some of the presidential children are both informal advisors and confidant(e)s, while some perform the role of one or the other. But often the lines between the two are hard to distinguish. Among the 32 presidential children discussed in this thesis, four have been placed in this role. They are Anna Roosevelt, John Eisenhower, Maureen Reagan, and George W. Bush; three of whom are discussed below.



## **Anna Roosevelt**

### **Coming to the White House**

Anna Roosevelt was the eldest of five children of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, the only daughter and Franklin's favorite child (Collier 363). Anna was born at Hyde Park in New York at the Roosevelt family home on May 3, 1906. Anna, like the other first children discussed, was no stranger to the world of politics. She was moved to Washington, D.C. at the age of seven where she had an education in private schools and was surrounded by the influences of national politics all of her childhood.

Anna was 25 years old when her father made his first run for the presidency in 1931. Anna, who had been married for close to six years to Curtis Dall, had just gotten divorced when the campaign began. Although Anna did not participate much (if at all) as a surrogate or symbol during the campaign, she did reap the rewards of her father winning the White House. When the Roosevelts moved into the White House in 1932, Anna also moved in with her two sons. The campaign also brought other benefits into Anna's life. She met and fell in love with a reporter from the *Chicago Tribune*, John Boettiger. In 1935, they married and Anna proceeded to move to Seattle with John where he was made editor of the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* by William Randolph Hearst, a Roosevelt enemy.

While Anna was removed from Washington and thus the White House, she had very little role to speak of. She was concerned with raising her family in Seattle. This was to change when Anna returned to the White House on December 5, 1943 for an extended vacation during the Christmas season. The vacation actually turned into a year and a half stay. Anna has stated that:

In December, 1943, Father returned to Washington from the Cairo-Teheran Conferences. With no preliminary talks or discussions, I found myself trying to take over little chores that I felt would relieve Father of some of the pressure under which he was constantly working.

After a couple of weeks I asked Father if he'd mind if I resigned my job on the newspaper (she too was working for the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*) and stayed on to help him (Boettiger 251).

In January of 1944, Anna's husband John (now a Major) was assigned to the Pentagon and thus cemented Anna's want be closer to her father again. Anna moved her family, now consisting of three sons, to Washington, D.C. and moved into the third floor guest quarters at the White House. "The move signaled Anna's commitment to stay with her father for the duration of the war, to serve as the hostess of the White House in her mother's absence..." (Goodwin 488). It seems that Anna's initial duties at the White House were to be those of a surrogate for her mother. She was asked to be a hostess at the White House in replace of her mother in Eleanor's absence. This is very similar to the surrogate roles that other first children (particularly first daughters) have performed.

Anna was very comfortable with her role of surrogate. But she also did not want to step on her mother's toes, which had happened in the past when others had been brought in to hostess in Eleanor's absence. Therefore, she made it very plain at the time that she was not an official hostess but would from time to time fill in for her mother. She actually told the State Department's protocol office, "...at White House guest dinners, 'Put me anywhere, I'm not official'" (Goodwin 491). Thus, Anna avoided dominantly acting as a surrogate. Rather, she sought out to be an informal advisor/confidante for her father.

### **Defining the Job**

Anna has stated that "In my work for him (FDR) I never had an official job or title or salary" (Boettiger 251). In actuality, Anna's position in the White House was nondescript. Anna's role blossomed from being an extra helping hand with little duties such as making sure that FDR was eating correctly to making sure that he got his nap every afternoon, into a full time job. Over the course of the year and a half that Anna worked for her father, she continued these everyday chores but also ended up taking on more demanding tasks. Anna helped plan the 1944 campaign<sup>1</sup>, as well as "talk(ed) to

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<sup>1</sup> Boettiger does not elaborate on his mother's role in the planning of the 1944 campaign. He does directly quote Anna saying that she was involved, but she does not elaborate either.

people whom Franklin was too busy to see and then gave him a digest of the conversations” (Boettiger 255). Anna also helped write some speeches for FDR. “The prayer in which he (FDR) led the nation in an evening broadcast on June 6, D Day arrived at last, was written by Anna and her husband...” (Roosevelt, Elliott 373). In all, Anna performed a variety of tasks that can all be placed under the umbrella of informal advisor/confidante.

From time to time (especially in the case of helping plan the 1944 election campaign) Anna was an informal political advisor. There is no doubt that these duties were political in nature. Helping plan a campaign was beyond a doubt political, as was taking notes of meetings so that they could be given to FDR in an abridged manner. Being a confidante to her father and helping her father with such things as naps and meals could also be termed political because it brought her closer to FDR and resulted in a lot of different tasks, some of which had political consequences.

In her capacity at the White House, Anna has been described as FDR’s “lifeline” during these last years of his presidency (Boettiger 255). It has also been suggested that the relationship between FDR and Anna and the duties that she performed were “shaped by the president—his needs, his weariness, his desire to be shielded from the one It has also been suggested that person [Eleanor] who knew him beyond all masquerade and stratagem” (Boettiger 254). She has also been described as FDR’s partisan and co-conspirator (Collier 364). Thus, for FDR, Anna made the perfect informal advisor/confidante. She was someone he could trust and rely on.

### **Father’s Protector**

Anna’s role became more and more important as time wore on and FDR’s health began to wane. Anna saw the signs that her father’s health was degrading rapidly and brought her concerns to her mother. “Eleanor refused to acknowledge that anything was seriously wrong. ‘I don’t think Mother saw it,’ Anna told writer Bernard Asbell years later. ‘She wasn’t looking for him to be any different’” (Goodwin 492). But Anna refused to ignore the signs and called Dr. Ross McIntire (the White House physician) to

her third floor quarters and “cross-examined” him (Goodwin 493). McIntire was reluctant to tell Anna any information about her father but she persuaded him to get her father to a hospital immediately for a checkup. The doctors found that FDR had severe damage to the heart caused by congestive heart failure.

The doctors decided that the President should be put on the drug digitalis, which was to help strengthen the heart muscle. The President was also put on a low-fat diet, visitors were to be kept at a minimum, and he was to cut down on his cigarette and alcohol consumption. Lastly, he was to get as much sleep as he possibly could. Anna brought it upon herself to make sure that her father followed all of these rules. Anna read as much information on cardiovascular disease as she could, so that she would know how to handle her father’s health problems. “She became his protector. It was Anna who enforced the new regime” (Goodwin 502). Essentially, Anna was in charge of lengthening her father’s life.

Anna became her father’s shadow. She was there when he woke up in the morning and was there when he went to bed at night. She watched what he ate and made sure that his work load did not get heavy. FDR found himself having to be alone quite a lot during these times because Anna kept a close watch on who was able to come and go and who was able to bend her father’s ear. Therefore, Anna became the one person that FDR spoke to the most during the last days in the White House. She became his confidante as well as his constant companion. This seemed to a political plus at the time because “Anna ha(d) the most political savvy of all the Roosevelt children” (Goodwin 589).

Anna also served the purpose of freeing up her mother’s schedule. “Anna’s continuing presence in the White House freed Eleanor to do what she wanted, and ‘what she wanted,’ Johnny Boettiger observed, ‘was to be out on her own. She had an opportunity to develop her character and to enjoy a range of experiences few women had’” (Goodwin 502). Although Anna did help free up her mother’s time, she and Eleanor seemed to have cross purposes when it came to FDR. Eleanor resented her daughter’s relationship with the President (Boettiger 255). Anna was being used as his primary confidante when Eleanor felt that she herself should be. “More and more

frequently Eleanor was heard to say, ‘Anna is the only one who would know about that’; ‘I’ll have to ask Anna’; ‘We’ll have to get Anna to ask the President’” (Lash 700). Anna’s brother Elliott has stated, “She (Anna) exercised far greater influence than Mother ever had, and she became what Mother never truly was—a conduit to the President” (Troy 10).

Anna also wanted to protect her father’s health, which meant not being pressed too often. But Eleanor, being such a driven person, naturally assumed that FDR should be working at the same pace that she was. Thus, Anna and Eleanor came to the situation with two different points of view, and they often crossed each other.

One particular incident that created even a further gap between Eleanor and Anna was the fact that FDR invited Anna to go to the Yalta Conference with Churchill and Stalin in early 1945, instead of inviting Eleanor to go along. Anna really wanted to go. As her father’s protector she knew that there was a need for “someone on the distaff side of the family to watch his health and be sure that he took it as easy as possible under the demands of the conference” (Tully 108-109). Besides having to serve as hostess at the formal dinners given during the conference, Anna’s main role was to be a confidante to her father. As Anna noted at the time, “Life is quickly assuming a definite pattern” (Goodwin 579). At the Yalta conference that pattern was as follows:

...In the mornings, while the president ate breakfast, worked on his pouch, and dictated responses to America’s domestic problems, Anna made the rounds (to FDR’s White House staff members that were traveling along)... ‘to pick up information on the day’s plans, what meetings are scheduled outside the big conference, gossip on meetings, etc.’

After making her morning rounds, she went into her father’s room ‘to get his version of events and fill him in with any gossip’ she had picked up that might be ‘amusing or interesting’ to him...(Goodwin 579).

There were times, though, when it seemed as if FDR was abusing his confidence with Anna. The most important of these breaches occurred when FDR asked Anna to invite Lucy Mercer Rutherford (his former mistress) to the White House. “Anna covered for him, serving as hostess sometimes when Lucy came” (Parks and Leighton 57). Afterwards, when Eleanor found out, she was furious with Anna. But as Anna’s brother Jimmy asked:

“...[W]hat was Anna to do? Should she have refused Father what he

wanted? She was not in a position to do so even had she wanted to. Accepting the confidence of Father, should she have betrayed him by running to report to Mother every move he made? A child caught between two parents can only pursue as honorable a course as possible. Anna could no more serve as Mother's spy than she could as Father's spy on Mother".

Yet Anna's son Curtis understood some of what Eleanor must have been feeling. "He was her husband," Curtis said. "She was his wife. He was president. She was first lady. And now Anna had walked into the picture and made it possible for Lucy to return to the president's life. It must have seemed an unforgivable act" (Goodwin 614).

Although at times Anna's role placed her in an awkward situation with her parents, she continued to be her father's constant confidante. Anna worked for her father right up to the time of his death on April 12, 1945.

### **John Eisenhower**

John Eisenhower was born August 3, 1923, two years after his brother, Dwight Doud Eisenhower passed away from scarlet fever. Thus, John Eisenhower was considered the only child of Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower. Like his father, John chose the military as a career and like his father, he made his career in the Army. Actually, when his father was first nominated for the presidency in the summer of 1952, John was preparing to leave for his tour of duty in Korea. John's role as informal advisor began early on when he advised his father on whether or not to run for president in the first place.

Eisenhower was uncertain as to whether he should run. "Ike had always said that if he had a clear call from the American people, he'd give consideration to running for president" (Eisenhower , Susan 264). When Eisenhower got to the point of seriously considering a run, John sat down and wrote his father a note in which he mapped out his own assessment of the situation:

My feeling is that this country is absolutely desperate for leadership—not dictatorship—but leadership. There is the gloomy possibility of the American people's having to choose in November between Taft and Truman or his successor. I think they deserve a better break...I think you can make your stand on what issues they wish known and get yourself squared away with the public

without stooping to real campaigning, attacking opponents etc.....

In many ways I feel remarkably aloof about it all. If I could think of a couple of men the country could choose between that I felt were really good choices, I would probably wish you bad political luck on the basis of the complications that your election would cause for us all. But I don't see any alternatives on the scene and feel that it is almost a duty for you to give your supporters at least the minimum help they feel necessary to get you nominated (Eisenhower, Susan 264).

Taking John's advice, Eisenhower decided to make a run for the presidency in 1952.

John did not participate very much in the campaign in 1952 (or in 1956). As he has stated, "The habit of employing the whole family as a political phalanx was not yet in vogue" (Eisenhower, John 187).

### **Never Far Away**

Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated while John was overseas in Korea. When John returned to the United States in September of 1953, he continued his career in the Army, first at Fort Benning, then at Fort Leavenworth and finally at Fort Belvoir before taking a job at the Pentagon. During all of these moves and his commands in the Army, John could not help but pay close attention to what was going on in the White House, since he and his father frequently discussed politics.

During the years between 1952 and 1958 I experienced the peculiar sensation of being drawn inexorably from straight military duties toward that awesome institution, the White House. I fought it as best I could, fighting to retain the identity of myself and my family. At first I met with moderate success; but as time went on, particularly after Dad's first serious illness in 1955, it became a losing battle. Almost imperceptibly my time and preoccupations were more and more sucked toward the whirlpool until eventually, while I never lost my basic loyalty to the Army, I abandoned thoughts of a lifetime military career (Eisenhower, John 169).

This pull toward the White House finally sucked him completely, if temporarily, in during the summer of 1954 when he spent a month on temporary duty in the White House. More than anything else, this was a learning experience for John. He was thrown his new position with very little forewarning and quickly had to adjust to his father's methods of

handling the job of president. John recounts the first time that he was told to edit a draft of a speech. It was actually a “greeting from the President” in observance of a patriotic occasion.

The draft was, I thought, too bland and general. I rewrote it, covering the details of the event being celebrated—a good piece of research, I thought, showing the audience how much the President knew about the subject. When the paper reached Dad’s desk, I was on the carpet instantly. “What the hell is this?” he roared. “Do you expect a President to sign a bunch of garbage like that? I’m supposed to set the tone; let the other fellows give the details!” I left a wiser young officer (Eisenhower, John 172).

John’s initial indoctrination complete, he then returned to his Army career until the White House came calling again in 1955. Ike invited John to accompany him to the 1955 summit conference in Geneva (consisting of representatives from Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France, and the United States). John, a person who “strove to learn what (he) could from (his) new opportunities” (172) that his father was providing him, accepted immediately. “As I was not a regular member of the staff, my functions were minimal. I spent some time with Colonel Andrew J. Goodpaster (staff secretary) at the Palace, observed the bulk of the plenary sessions...took Mother sight-seeing one day, and kept a diary” (175).

But this is not all that John was used for while in Geneva. Much talk at the conference revolved around the Soviet contingent. The Soviets had sent the four “who were supposed to be sharing power” (175). President Eisenhower had a suspicion that Krushchev was the man in charge and sent John to find out.

Remembering that Marshal Zhukov had paid me a good deal of personal attention on the Moscow trip ten years earlier, Dad arranged for me to be in the marshal’s company as much as possible. He just might, Dad hoped, drop something to me that he would otherwise withhold (175).

Thus John was called on to perform a political role that has not been asked of most presidential children. He essentially became a spy for his father in order to gain information on the Soviets. It is easy to see why John was called on for this task and not the other presidential children. He was a career military man who in the past had contact



with many of these individuals. Thus, it made him a prime candidate for expanding the political role of a presidential child.

### **Another Term?**

Upon returning home from Geneva, John once again left the White House behind and moved with his family to Fort Belvoir. While away, events in his father's life began to progress quickly. On September 24, 1955, Eisenhower suffered a heart attack while vacationing in Denver, Colorado. Even during this period of recovery, Eisenhower was consumed by thoughts of whether to run for a second term. President Eisenhower's doctors asserted that he was fit to run for office. Actually, the White House physician, Major General Howard M. Snyder, suggested that running for a second term was probably more beneficial to Ike in the long run because it would keep him active instead of retreating to a retired life of inactivity (183).

Even with this reassurance, it seems as if Eisenhower himself was unsure about whether to run and waited a long time to make his decision. Eisenhower sought out views from his family (especially his brother Milton and son John). President Eisenhower also was consulted by some of his closest advisors, including Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff. In essence, all of Eisenhower's colleagues and advisors were telling him what he wanted to hear; which was that he should run. For John, on the other hand, the prospect of a second term was "startling" (184). John decided that he had to advise his father on the situation.

I decided to put my thoughts down on paper, as I find this device useful in avoiding a mental merry-go-round. I pecked out a long letter in the form of a staff study, giving facts bearing on the problem, reasons for running, and reasons for retiring. At the end of this rather prolix document I recommended his bowing out (184).

John knew that there was a potential threat to his father's health if he ran again. John even remembered his father stating once that "Hell, this job killed Wilson"(Neal 370). In the hope that his father would listen to him over his father's advisors, he ended his memo by stating that Ike should "tell all his well meaning advisors to 'go to hell'" (Lasby 174).

Even with John's advise, in the end President Eisenhower did decide to run for a second term. He made the announcement in early February 1956.

Once again, as in 1952, the role that the family played in the 1956 election campaign was minimal.

### **Aide to the President**

John did, though, have the opportunity to extend his role as an informal advisor in 1957 when he took a temporary post at the White House. Brigadier General Goodpaster was going on leave for three weeks and "a caretaker was needed" (Eisenhower, John 190). Therefore, Eisenhower arranged for John to take this position. Generally, John was involved with national security affairs. He provided daily briefings to his father and "ensur(ed) that national security actions were coordinated..." (190). There is not doubt that John was advising his father. Although he was not on the payroll as a formal advisor (he was actually "detailed" to the White House) and because of the temporary nature of the position, John was there in an "informal" capacity.

One particular area in which John advised his father was in the instance of press relations within the White House.

In August 1957, John Eisenhower wrote a lengthy memo to his father outlining the administration's 'political problems.' Among his criticisms was the 'failure to communicate important facts, issues to the people in general.' The younger Eisenhower's solution was to restructure the White House public-relations operation...The president chose not to follow his son's recommendations... (Walcott and Hult 67).

That his father did not take the advise given does not take away from the fact that John felt comfortable in the role of informal advisor.

After his three weeks were up, John moved to his new post at the Pentagon. "While this Pentagon assignment was not really a part of the White House experience, I think it can be considered indirectly so. The matters we dealt in, war planning, were of vital concern to the President, as Commander-in-Chief" (Eisenhower, John 193). John and his family were now living in Alexandria, Virginia and thus within closer proximity to the White House and potential advising opportunities for John.

On November 25, 1957, President Eisenhower suffered a stroke. Eisenhower's recovery was remarkable. Within only a couple of days he was able to get out of bed and move around as well as communicate slowly; even attending Thanksgiving services three days after his stroke. Eisenhower was determined to make it to the Heads of Governments Meeting at the NATO Conference in Paris at the beginning of December. John went with his father to Paris in an "aide capacity" (Eisenhower, John 197). In this situation, John was filling a role similar to that of Anna Roosevelt, which was more along the lines of a confidant.

John has stated that when he was thrown from his job back into the White House for these temporary positions, it was hard for him at times. It was almost impossible to accomplish much of substance and he made himself available in the best way that he knew how which was doing "odd jobs, a little editing, and expressing of opinions" (Eisenhower, John 197). This latter duty of expressing opinions is no doubt a part of the informal advising role.

When Eisenhower's Chief of Staff Sherman Adams resigned in 1958, the White House staff was reorganized and John was called to join the staff. John came in as one of two principal subordinates to Andrew Goodpaster who was staff secretary. John's duties were to assist Goodpaster in national security matters. Following the hierarchical chain of command that Eisenhower liked, John was to report to Goodpaster, who reported to General Persons, who took over Adam's position, and Persons would thus report to the President. But John's office was located only a few yards from the Oval Office thus; "the theory had little application in practice" (Eisenhower, John 204). John's main duty became to give the president his daily intelligence briefings. John "would select the items of greatest importance, make notes, and be prepared to give him (Eisenhower) a rundown whenever he was free. In other matters, I simply worked as Andy (Goodpaster's) understudy" (205).

Although John's duties at the White House were only in an aide capacity, there was one event that John was very heavily involved in the planning and aftermath. On May 1, 1960, an American reconnaissance aircraft U-2 was shot down over Soviet airspace. "As early as 1956 Ike had told John Eisenhower about the secret spy flights over the

Soviet Union and the detailed surveillance that they made possible...On that fateful morning in 1960, only four people at the White House—including Ike and John—were familiar with the U-2” (Neal 409). This situation exemplifies a president who had made his only son his confidant on a matter of national security.

John carried his work load at the White House for two years until the end of his father’s administration. “In the spring of 1960 (John) began (his) last major project in the White House, that of preparing for the Boss’s postpresidential years in Gettysburg. This entailed securing an office, finding secretarial help, and—most important—making sure that the presidential papers were in order” (Eisenhower, John 280).

By the end of Eisenhower’s eight years in office, John had moved from an informal advisor/confidant to a White House aide for the last two years of the administration. John was one of only two (the other being James Roosevelt) who had a formal position within the White House. But John’s dominant role was as an informal advisor/confidant.

## **George W. Bush**

### **The Family Watchdog**

In the previous chapter on surrogates, a glimpse was taken at three of the Bush children (Jeb, Marvin, and Doro) and how they participated in the campaigns of George Bush. George W. also from time to time performed the role of surrogate but his most dominant political role was that of informal advisor.

When talks of a run for the presidency by George Bush began to gather steam in 1986, George W. was a 40 year old businessman from Midland, Texas, where he lived there with his wife and twin daughters. As has been stated in the earlier chapter, the Bush family was called to Camp David in 1986 to discuss their roles during the campaign. It was here that George W.’s role became crystal clear. He was given a mandate from the rest of the family. The general description of George W.’s role was as a “political operative, bridging the potentially troublesome gap between family and staff...(He) acted

as a watchdog in an arena where political consultants ‘treat their candidates like red meat,’ to quote the youngest of Bush’s four sons, Marvin” (Grimes 15).

It was decided at the 1986 Camp David meeting that there was going to be a lot of Bush family involvement. The family also decided that their involvement was going to be in all aspects of the campaign. Since the Bush children really did not trust Lee Atwater, they decided that one of them needed to be present in the everyday process of decision making so that their father would not be taken advantage of. So it was decided that George W. would join the campaign to watch out for his father’s interests. George W. described the situation:

The way this came about, I challenged Lee Atwater at the meeting because he was Charles Black’s partner and Charles Black was Jack Kemp’s campaign manager. So I had real trouble understanding how loyalties would work. Who would he be loyal to? Charles Black, hence Jack Kemp, or George Bush? And I wanted him to explain that to us all. And so he did, you know, in fairly good fashion.

And Jeb chimed in with his famous quote: “If there’s a hand grenade rolling around George Bush, we want you diving on it first.”

So then we finished our discussion, and Lee Atwater walked up and said, “Are you guys really worried about my loyalty?”

And we said, “Absolutely.”

And he said, “Well, if you’re so worried about loyalties, then why doesn’t one of you come here in the office and watch me, and the first time I’m disloyal, see to it that I get run off.”

I happened to be the one who was able to come up here, and I did it... (Grimes 193).

So it was the task of George W. to, in essence, be Lee Atwater’s “keeper.”

George Bush at first was a little worried about having one of his children quit their job to be on the campaign trail full time.

When I told him I was moving from Midland to Washington, I don’t think he was real comfortable with the idea. He did not want his desire to be president of the United States to affect my life and what I was doing in any adverse way. He thought that pulling up stakes and moving my family to Washington was too big a sacrifice to make on his behalf. After I convinced him that this is what I wanted to do and it fit into my life nicely, simply because I had merged my business out of existence basically, then he finally came to terms with it. And then he was helpful in helping me forge a role that enabled me to be very useful to him (Grimes 287).

By the end of the campaign, George W. had found his niche not only as an advisor to his father and as a member of the Bush campaign team, but also as the preeminent Lee Atwater watchdog.

That was George W.'s main reason for joining the campaign, and he stuck to his task. Even though by the end of the campaign the younger Bush, whom Atwater nicknamed "Junior" (Bush 334), and Atwater had become friends, from time to time the two clashed when the political welfare of George Bush was involved. One example of several run-ins happened at the beginning of the campaign and is detailed in the book The Quest for the Presidency 1988:

Atwater pacified him(George W.) by making room for him at headquarters...it was better, he figured, to have the boss's son inside the tent pissing out than outside pissing in. But the day George J(unior) reported for work, he found himself jaw-to-jaw with Atwater again. *Esquire* had just done a long piece profiling Atwater as a self-seeker untroubled by conscience or scruples—"all grit," the story said, "all blood on the floor and don't look back," George J(unior) had discussed the story with his mother, and they had agreed that, to phrase it gently, Lee came off as something less than a mature political organizer. The story had, in their judgment, reflected badly on Atwater, the campaign and, by extension, the vice president, and there were to be no more like it.

'You need to earn your spurs through performance, not interviews,' George J(unior) scolded. The stories stopped, and peace was restored (Goldman and Mathew 183).

There was no doubt that George W. was in constant contact with his mother and the rest of the family about what was going on at campaign headquarters. He was most certainly a connection between the family and the campaign. George W. also had a direct connection to the vice president and presidential candidate that the other staff members did not have. He was one of George Bush's closest confidants during the campaign. This put George W. in a unique position. When trying to explain this part of his role in the campaign George W. has stated:

Access is power in Washington. OK? And I had more access than anybody to George Bush. And whether or not the gunslingers and inner-circle whatever you want to call them, whoever they thought they

were—I might be sitting there talking about how well the dog retrieved the ball—they don't know that. They think we are talking about how bad they are. How good somebody else is. So I ultimately became a conduit. Many people tried to take ideas to George Bush through me. Complaints and suggestions. Generally in a campaign, complaints. So I became a filter for a lot of news—most of which I never passed along to the man, because having run for office(House of Representatives from Texas in 1978) myself, I had some kind of an inkling of what he was going through.

I helped referee power struggles. I shielded people from Mother. If she were upset about something I would help vent it. She could vent to me and not therefore adversely affect some of the players. You know, I was the enforcer when I thought things were going wrong. Because of the access I had to George Bush, I had the ability—and I think I used it judiciously—I had the ability to go and lay down some behavioral modification. So as a result I had the confidence of...most of the top people in the campaign (Grimes 194).

This, of course, put George W. in a position of being used by other staffers to get to the candidate. But as has been shown, he was a confidant to not only the candidate but also to the candidate's wife, Barbara Bush. He did not want to see either of his parents hurt by the situation and performed his duties with this motive in mind. Barbara Bush commented at the time that "George junior, he's an enormous watchdog...he is wonderful...George calls a spade a spade" (Grimes 191).

### **Advising Outside the Iron Gates**

In all, George W. spent "18 months...labor(ing) in his father's campaign headquarters, acting as the family enforcer among the hired handlers..."(Time). After the campaign George moved back to Texas but not back to Midland; instead he and his family moved to Dallas where he bought a share of the Texas Rangers baseball team. It was from here that George W. would often call and talk to his father about what was going on in Washington; sometimes just listening, at other times giving advice. As the previous chapter pointed out, George Bush likes to seek out information from as many sources as possible, and his children were prime sources. And George W. proved to be just that.

One example of his advising his father was on the subject of George Bush's cabinet choices.

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, he warned his father that Texas developers were alarmed at the idea that James Schlesinger might become energy secretary. Young George conceded that he talked to no more than five oilmen about the appointment. "The message wasn't, 'Well, take him or don't take him,' it was: 'There's a rebellion down here. Be careful,'" he told the magazine. Schlesinger was never offered the job (Grimes 289).

Further into his father's administration George W. also gave some advice to his father of John Sununu. Sununu, Bush's chief of staff, "angered many in the White House and the press corps with his abrasive personality, then embarrassed the Presidency by abusing the transportation privileges" (Troy 338). George W. had also "soured"(338) on Sununu and along with his mother quietly made their opinions known. "Unlike her predecessor, though, Mrs. Bush did not want her fingerprints on any dramatic personnel changes. The result was that when Sununu finally resigned...the story had dragged on too long. Washington insiders whispered about the President's inability to discipline his staff"(Troy 338). Mrs. Bush may have kept her distance but George W. was dispatched right into the middle of the issue.

The Sununu problem crept into the planning stages of the 1992 campaign as well. The campaign was underway but George Bush was in no hurry to start stumping again and was very slow in his organization of the campaign team.

He...presumed there were enough experienced politicians around so that, when we did open up shop, we could do it overnight—that we were a turnkey operation.

What he didn't take into account was the strident opposition to Sununu. How was the campaign going to interface with the White House?...

In 1992, everybody in the Republican interplanetary system knew that was a model doomed to failure were Sununu to remain as chief of staff. So the issue that had been festering below the surface was forced to the top....But his(Sununu's) fate was foreshadowed by the ongoing bullying of his colleagues, and his own trials and tribulations—taking government planes to go buy stamps and go to the dentist, which had garnered endless press attacks.

Outside of the finance people, no one was directly confronting George Bush and saying, "We must start the campaign now," because that really meant, "You've got to figure out the Sununu problem." The President is above all a



loyal man, and we all knew it would take a lot for him to remove a trusted friend and ally. But finally the anti-Sununu drumbeat was deafening. Out of fairness the President dispatched his eldest son, George Bush, Jr., to quietly canvass the thoughts of the reelection campaign. There was nothing generic or unequivocal about their responses: Sununu had to go. Junior then went to Sununu and said, very diplomatically, no doubt, “Sorry, old bean, thanks for everything you’ve done but this isn’t going to work.” Or words to that effect; no one ever knew for sure. All we knew was that Sununu submitted his handwritten resignation.

Once that was resolved, the rest of the pieces fell into place (Matalin and Carville 82).

At this juncture, George W. had taken on a role not seen before. His father had brought him to the position of being chosen to ask a close staff member to resign. There is no doubt that George W. had advised his father on the situation and felt that Sununu’s resignation was best. George W. was heavily involved in a political decision that was very tough on his father, thus displaying the trust and confidence the President had in his son.

Barbara Bush has said that in 1992 George W. was “devoted almost full time to...(his) dad” (Bush 497). George W. was modifying his initial role as informal advisor. He had performed this duty well. As we have seen, he was an advisor on the campaign trail in 1988 and once again in 1992. He also advised on cabinet appointments and on staff problems. But in this latter example he took his advice to the next level and was actually dispatched to ask for the resignation of the President’s chief of staff. This attests to how close George W. was to the President’s staff and how far his conduit duties for the President actually went. Of all of the 32 children that have been studied, George W. is the only one who was so deeply involved in the everyday workings of the White House office that he would be trusted with personnel issues. This could speak for the evolution of the potential roles of presidential children or it could speak to the needs of President Bush. Whatever the cause, George W. Bush was the epitome of an informal advisor to the President and was also a confidant to the First Lady.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at three different ways to execute the same political role. Anna Roosevelt performed the role of informal advisor/confidante in a number of ways.

Her main purpose in being so close to the Oval Office, and thus her father, was as a protector of FDR. She was in essence filling the gaps that her mother left when Eleanor struck out across the country following her own political agenda. Whether this was Anna's initial intent or not does not cloud the fact that in the end Anna was one of FDR's closest confidantes. She also served the purpose of protecting her father's health.

John Eisenhower also served in the capacity of informal advisor/confidant. John went from talking with his father occasionally to stepping in at the White House when needed and in the end taking up a position as an aide in the White House. There is no doubt that President Eisenhower trusted his son and his son's opinions on matters of great political consequence (even though Ike did not always take John's advice).

George W. Bush is interesting in that he seemed to embody aspects of Anna Roosevelt's protectiveness and John Eisenhower's ability to provide apt political opinions. George W. initially became a part of the 1988 campaign in an attempt to watch over his father. He was there to make sure that his father was being taken care of and more importantly, was not being taken advantage of. This is very similar to Anna Roosevelt's need to protect her father. George W. also ended up being a close advisor to his father as John Eisenhower. These two presidential sons had very similar political tasks when they became advisors for their fathers on the topic of White House staff members.

All three presidential children were available to be listening posts for on their fathers. In the end, George W. seemed to play the combined role of Anna Roosevelt and John Eisenhower. The concern here, then, is the implications this might have on the analysis of whether or not presidential children before 1960 played as significant a role as they have since 1960. The initial hypothesis was that after 1960 there has been an increasing demand for symbols and surrogates. A question that leads from this is whether or not the other roles become more or less important over time. From the analysis of these three presidential children, it is obvious that no matter what the year, there has always been a need for informal advisors and confidant(e)s. It could be suggested that for some presidents the need for this political support from their children is more important than it is for others. With two of these presidents, FDR and Eisenhower, health problems were involved. In all three cases, the presidential children were all professionals in their

respective fields, which led to their ability to provide focused and applicable advice and to be able to be an extra ear for the president.

## **Chapter Seven:**

### **Skeletons**

The three previous political roles of presidential children are all positive roles. Overall, each of the previous three roles have some form of positive political effect. This is to say that in the longer run, it was better for the president to have children acting in these roles, that they performed. It was better for Kennedy politically to use his two young children as symbols of his administration's vibrancy and to bolster his image as a family man. It was also a political plus for Lyndon Johnson to have his daughter Lynda out on the campaign trail, acting as his surrogate, to gain more votes. Likewise, it was a positive for Dwight Eisenhower to have his son as an informal advisor/confidant to speak to about the pressing issues of the day. Each of these examples shows that, overall, most of the roles already discussed brought positive consequences. There is, however, one role that seems to bring with it negative connotations.

Those presidential children labeled as "skeletons" have tended to embarrass or shine an unwanted negative light on their fathers' administrations. For the purposes of this thesis, two presidential children that can be categorized as skeletons. This chapter will discuss both Patti Davis (Ronald Reagan's younger daughter) and Neil Bush and the embarrassment they brought to their fathers' administrations. Again, this is not to imply that they never performed another role or no other presidential child embarrassed their father. Already discussed, for example, was Jack Ford, whose dominant role was as a surrogate for his father but he was outspoken about his use of marijuana and was taken off the primary campaign trail for awhile to let the media fury calm down. The point to remember is that Patti and Neil both dominated in the role of skeleton, thereby overshadowing other roles they might have performed.

### **Patti Davis**

The Reagans are an interesting study. Here was a president who had been divorced and remarried and who was trying to keep this fact in the background as much as possible. Reagan wanted to paint a picture of himself as a man of family values. Publicly, he portrayed himself as a good father and grandfather. The Reagans were actually a family in turmoil. Each of Ronald Reagan's children, at one point or another, had serious struggles with their parents.

Of all four of Ronald Reagan's children, his relationship with Patti was the most volatile and from time to time they would go years without speaking to each other. The picture perfect life that Reagan was trying to portray for the public was hid the troubles underneath this public persona. But the troubles were not to remain private for long and were brought out in the open when Patti decided to make vocal her disagreements with her father and mother both personally and politically.

### **Coming to Terms**

All involved have recounted that when Ronald Reagan called his teenage daughter at Orme School in Arizona with the news that he had been elected governor of California in 1966, Patti reacted with total resentment. As Ronald Reagan recalls, "Patti...cried over the telephone when Nancy and I called her at school to tell her I'd been elected governor. 'Oh no,' she said, 'how could you do this to me?' She was only fourteen, but she was a child of the sixties who didn't want a member of the establishment in the family" (565-566).

Patti's disapproval of her father's political career started this early in her life and continued throughout his eight years as president. There is no doubt that other presidential children in the past did not agree with their father's political views. John Roosevelt (the youngest child of Franklin and Eleanor) was a Republican but he never publicly discussed his differences or ridiculed his father because of these differences.

### **Publicly Candid**

The opposite was true for Patti Davis. Unlike John Roosevelt, Patti took every opportunity available during her father's administration to let it be known that she had differences with her father. Some of the time she also publicly aired her personal problems with her father and mother that went well beyond politics. "[T]he family rebel...[d]uring Reagan's two terms in the White House, Patti herself made headlines, periodically expressing disdain for her parents and for the social standard normally expected from children of presidents..." (Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 229-230). Patti was shining a negative light on her father by vocalizing all of her differences with him.

Patti had actually actively been involved as a surrogate in Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign. Before 1980, Patti and her parents had had a parting of ways. "Patti expressed opposition to the Vietnam War and became part of the counterculture of the early 1970s..." (Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 229-230). As Ronald Reagan has put it: "...Patti came under the influence of people with similar views and, philosophically at least, I guess I lost her"(Reagan, Ronald 566). Patti reentered the family fold for her father's 1980 campaign and his inauguration in January 1981. But, "...the reunion was often heated and eventually dissolved, much to the glee of the press with the resultant headlines" (Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 230).

Larry Speakes, Ronald Reagan's press secretary, called Patti Davis a "problem child" (100). The difficulties between the Reagans and their youngest daughter were not just over political views. "There were long periods of estrangement between Patti and her parents, stretches of no contact at all" (100). There is no doubt that the whole Reagan family struggled over this situation. Both Ronald and Nancy wanted to keep the situation private and just within the family, but Patti could not help but vocalize the problems.

Years later, looking back on the situation, Patti stated that:

I voiced my political disagreements, mostly in press interviews or at huge antinuclear rallies before thousands of people, naively thinking that the public could separate the man holding office from the man who was my father. I don't regret the opinions; I ache over the way I expressed them. I wrote about the tumultuous aspects of my family life, first in a novel about the daughter of

a governor who has presidential ambitions, and years later in an autobiography that exposed private areas of our lives. I came off as strident and harsh, because I was. I didn't recognize that as part of a public family, I should have maintained a strict code of privacy. Even people who agreed with my politics were uncomfortable with how publicly I voiced my convictions (Bazaar).

The overall result of Patti's candor was that it "undermined the Reagans' masquerade as the all-American family..." (Troy 299). The media devoured this new message. The Reagans were imperfect and their daughter had a shaky relationship with them. The media ran with the message that the image that Ronald Reagan had created for himself had flaws. The media, then, was creating a new image of Ronald Reagan, that of a bad father, because of Patti's candor.

Nancy Reagan felt that through Patti's involvement in the antinuclear movement that she was being "used by people with their own political agenda" (165). This is highly probable but Patti did nothing to stop it. Because Patti was first daughter she was able to gain an audience with her father for Helen Caldicott, a leader in the antinuclear movement. President Reagan spoke with both Patti and Dr. Caldicott for over an hour about the nuclear freeze movement. This seemed to be a ploy on Reagan's part to show his daughter that he cared about her opinions but as Ronald Reagan recalls: "Patti had told me Dr. Caldicott had promised that if I spoke to her she would say nothing publicly about the conversation. But almost immediately she went public with the details of our meeting" (Reagan, Ronald 566). To Reagan, it seemed as if his daughter had just stabbed him in the back. This situation might confirm Nancy Reagan's suspicion that Patti was being used.

Patti, although she now blames herself for her vocalization, also points a finger at the media. "I put myself in the line of fire, and the media obligingly gunned me down" (Bazaar).

The Reagans themselves tried to keep as quiet as possible about what Patti was saying about them publicly. When Patti's novel came out in 1986 she also went on a book tour across the nation. Nancy Reagan recalls:

The book was bad enough, but then came the author's tour. On March 4, 1986, I began my day by watching Patti on *Good Morning America*, followed by Patti on *Donahue*...

Ronnie and I said very little publicly about it, and Ron was always

careful when he was asked about it. “It’s always difficult to talk to about someone in your family,” he said on *Good Morning America*, “but I think Patti’s book was wrong, and in bad taste.” In another interview, he said, “I think someday she’ll regret it” (Reagan, Nancy 167).

Ronald Reagan survived the negative press he received due to Patti’s airing the family’s problems. He ran and won a second term in office. It seemed as if the situation was only politically embarrassing for a short period of time. The political consequences were overcome but the personal consequences were not. Patti and her parents grew even further apart and deep resentments set in. Patti now regrets what she did and the manner in which she chose to do it. She knows that her vocalization during her father’s presidency “will always be my history. But after a while, the sequence doesn’t matter; the scar tissue does” (Bazaar).

In Patti Davis case, her role as skeleton seemed to be deliberate. She chose to openly criticize her father and to publicly discuss their personal lives. The opposite was true for Neil Bush. He involuntarily became an embarrassment for his father and actually tried to avoid it.

### **Neil Bush**

After George Bush was elected president in 1988, a report was compiled by his transition team. The report was “entitled, ‘All the President’s Children,’ and (was) a compendium of the private and not-so-private problems of presidential offspring through the years...” (Newsweek “A Crisis in the First Family”). This was a guide book for the Bush children on how they should act and what situations they should avoid so that they would not embarrass the President. One passage was of particular relevance for Neil Bush. It stated that: “The presidential child in business faces the pressure of enormous scrutiny...Two things the media and the public won’t allow? Success and failure. Keep the business mediocre, maintaining a personal low profile, and you will be left alone” (Newsweek “A Crisis in the First Family”). The problem for Neil was that he was already involved in a potential scandal with the savings and loan fiasco, even before his father was elected (or even nominated as the Republican candidate).

## **The Savings and Loan Debacle**

Neil Bush, the third child of George and Barbara Bush, like his other brothers and sister had served as a surrogate during the 1988 campaign. He traveled as much as he could, sweeping the nation speaking in the name of his father. When Bush was elected president, the whole family celebrated and then moved back into their respective lives. At this time all of the children received the same report from the transition team. Neil took these admonitions, which warned the Bush children to avoid any conflict-of-interest and to always be aware that they were being watched by both the public and the media, back to Denver, where he lived with his wife and children. Neil slipped back into his life as a businessman. But slipping back into obscurity was not an option for Neil. The warning in the transition team report might have come too late because by the time George Bush was elected president, Neil was already under investigation in the Silverado Savings and Loan failure and its involvement in the greater savings and loan government bailout.

In 1985 Neil Bush joined the board of Denver-based Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan Association after he failed in an oil business venture. By 1988 there was no doubt that Silverado was in trouble and on August 5, 1988 “the Colorado savings and loan commissioner issued a capital call, the first step in a government takeover”(Wilmsen 181). It was at this stage, when government takeover was inevitable, that Neil resigned from the board at Silverado. “ ‘The nomination process had reached a peak,’ he later told government investigators. ‘Dad was to become the nominee for the GOP, and that obviously raised the profile of Neil Bush’ ” (Wilmsen 181). In essence, Neil knew that this was a conflict of interest and would look terribly bad for his father if the public were to find out that he, the son of the soon-to-be president, was involved in the costly savings and loan bailout as well as in potential illegalities.

By the time Neil resigned he was already under investigation for a violat(ion) of conflict-of-interest rules while serving as a Silverado director...Neil was accused of failing to tell the Silverado board of his relationship with two Colorado developers, Bill Walters and Kenneth Good. The men had invested in Neil’s unsuccessful oil company, JNB, and later received approval for loans or lines of credit from Silverado. Neil abstained from voting on the loans (Kilian 75).



Neil resigned from the board at Silverado in order to keep his involvement as low key as possible.

At the time of Neil's resignation, his father was riding a crest of popularity in the 1988 presidential race, partly by painting Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis as a man whose inept policies encouraged crime. If the press—or the Dukakis campaign—had gotten hold of the fact that the Republican's candidate's son was in the thick of the greatest financial scandal in the nation's history, the Bush camp surely would have been dealt a crippling blow (Wilmsen 182).

With Neil's resignation, the Bush campaign was spared the potential consequences of the media and the public finding out Neil's involvement. The Bush presidency was not to be as lucky.

### **Consequences**

The problems for Neil came to a head in early 1990 when, after a long investigation, federal regulators offered Neil a deal. "They would reduce the charges stemming from his involvement in Silverado...All Bush had to do was sign an agreement pledging never again to violate S&L rules" (Newsweek "The S&L Firestorm"). Neil believed that he had done nothing wrong, and so he fought the allegations. Although President Bush's political advisers told Neil to try and stay out of the spotlight, Neil could not do that and began a campaign to clear his name by doing media interviews. The media started to really take notice and why not? There was now a face to attach to the savings and loan problems and the bailout by the federal government and that face just happened to be the son of the president of the United States.

"Suddenly, through the lens of one man's life, the larger saga of an industry gone corrupt snapped into sharp resolution. The grief that crossed the fresh, Boy Scout face of Neil Bush struck a human chord of sympathy. But it also created a moment of clarity, defining the situation" (Time). This clarity was that the directors of the savings and loans boards who were abusing the savings and loan system were not the stereotypical criminals but could be a neighbor down the street or the child of the leader of the nation.

In a fight over who was to blame for the savings and loan problems, "Neil Bush (was) the Velcro that Democrats...needed to attach blame...to the President" (Time).

While Democrats were trying to pin blame, “GOP operatives (were) worrying about the potential damage to Bush and to the party...” (Newsweek “A Crisis in the First Family”). A poll that was taken at the time found that a majority (51%) of those surveyed thought that Neil’s involvement in the Silverado case was damaging to President Bush, while 82% thought that the scandal would be an important issue in the 1992 campaign (Newsweek “The S&L Firestorm”). Therefore, it seemed as if at the time that the incident had some negative impact on the image of George Bush.

The Bushes, though, did not want to stand by and watch their son be attacked publicly. “The Bushes were outraged that their son was scapegoated from among thousands of directors of S&Ls. ‘To feel as a father that you’re letting down your son—and I will always feel that way—I hate it’” (Troy 338). George Bush felt that Neil was being attacked in the press and being investigated only because he was the son of the President (consistent with the warning in the transition team report), and he blamed himself for Neil’s trouble. Barbara Bush said at the time that: “I think he(Neil) feels this is hurting his father...One might think his father is hurting him...one of the prices children have to pay” (Kilian 76). This is especially true for children of presidents.

Even though George and Barbara Bush tried to place the blame elsewhere and pretend that it was not hurting George Bush politically, the topic would come back to haunt him again and again. As Barbara Bush recounts in her memoir:

Neil became the poster boy of the S&L scandal, despite the fact he was just one of literally hundreds of outside directors of failed savings and loans. He was investigated by the government and the press, who decided Neil was guilty before he even had his say. We particularly felt that NBC’s “Dateline,” hosted by Jane Pauley and Stone Phillips, took an unfair shot when they aired a piece on Neil in September 1992—long after Neil’s case was settled but right in the middle of George’s reelection bid (Bush 325).

In the end, Neil had to pay a \$50,000 fine, and as Barbara Bush has stated: “he lost all his savings, his business, his house, and most important, for awhile, his reputation”(Bush 326). And his involvement caused political embarrassment for his father well beyond the time that his being investigated was over.

## **Reflections**

What can be said about the scandal in which Neil Bush found himself? As a presidential child, each of these individuals (Neil included) is under a microscope and therefore more recognition will be given to any perceived short-coming. In Neil's case he was involved in one of the worst financial fiascos that the United States has seen. The amount of money that it cost the federal government (and thus the American taxpayers) was high profile. In the search for someone to blame, the finger often was pointed at Ronald Reagan and George Bush. Since this was the case, Neil became media fodder when it was announced that he was under investigation for his participation. It was much easier to place the blame on George Bush when his own son was involved.

George Bush was obviously upset as a father that this much attention was being drawn to his son. He also had to be upset as a politician that the scandal had hit so close to home and might or might not hurt him politically. While the scandal was at its height one could say that George Bush's administration was clouded temporarily. Yet in the long run it does not seem like Neil's involvement hurt George Bush too much. Still, it can be seen (especially in Barbara Bush's example of the NBC show "Dateline") that even when the Bush family felt that the situation was over, it still had the capability of creeping back into the media at inopportune times (the 1992 reelection campaign) to haunt them once again.

### **Conclusion**

Patti Davis and Neil Bush both worked as surrogates in their fathers' campaigns (Patti in 1980 and Neil in 1988 and 1992). Although they participated politically as surrogates, their dominant role was as skeletons.

Both Patti and Neil served to embarrass their fathers: Patti by airing her family's dirty laundry in the national media and Neil by his involvement in the savings and loan fiasco. What these two cases show us is that not all the political roles of presidential children have positive consequences. Rather, in the cases of Patti Davis and Neil Bush, they had negative political consequences. Patti's candor about her differences with her family helped shine a negative light on Ronald Reagan's image. Neil's involvement in the savings and loan debacle brought blame for the government bailout to focus on his father.

It may be encouraging for future presidents, that out of the 32 children from FDR to Clinton, only two can be marked as skeletons in their dominant role. Very few presidential children have left a large negative image on the presidencies of their fathers. Presidential children in the future can learn from the mistakes of Patti and Neil and hopefully avoid having a negative impact in the future.

## **Chapter Eight:**

### **Hybrids**

The preceding chapters have described four different political roles that presidential children have performed from FDR to Clinton, by providing data about the presidential children who executed these roles. Each of the presidential children discussed to this point has had one dominant role that they performed more often than the others. In the next two chapters a look will be taken at two presidential children (and one son-in-law) who seemed to embody several of these roles equally instead of just one dominant role. This chapter discusses the multiple political roles of James Roosevelt, while the next chapter examines the multiple political roles of Julie Nixon Eisenhower and her, husband David Eisenhower.

### **James Roosevelt**

James (Jimmy) Roosevelt, along with Julie Nixon Eisenhower and her husband, David Eisenhower, are presidential children who cannot be categorized in just one political role. Over the course of FDR's four campaigns for the presidency as well as the twelve years of his administration, Jimmy participated in all four of the political roles already discussed. Jimmy performed a symbolic role when he was in the Marines in World War II as well as on the campaign trail with his father in 1932. He performed surrogate roles by traveling and making speeches in the name of his father. He was an informal

advisor/confidant to his father off and on throughout the twelve years. He, like John Eisenhower, also took a formal position at the White House; in Jimmy's case, as an Administrative Assistant. Lastly, Jimmy performed a skeleton role when his business dealings were being investigated by the press and embarrassing the President.

Jimmy was the second child and oldest son of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. He was born on December 23, 1907 in Hyde Park, New York, and like his four siblings, was educated at private schools. He then attended Harvard University as an undergraduate and received his law degree from Boston University. When his father first ran for the presidency in 1932, Jimmy was 25 years old and had just begun work in the insurance business (which would come back to haunt him later). At his father's suggestion, Jimmy decided to work on his father's campaign. From that point on, he was caught by the political bug and as will be seen, would return time and time again to help his father.

### **Campaign '32**

Jimmy has been described as "the apple of his father's eye, and the son he leaned on most, figuratively and actually"(Parks 154). Franklin was very close to his eldest son and relied on him for both advice and companionship. Franklin also depended on Jimmy for yet another action. Jimmy was Franklin's "legs" (Roosevelt, J. My Parents 245). Once FDR was stricken by Polio in 1921, he often counted on his son for physical support. This became necessary on the campaign trail. FDR wore braces and also walked with a cane, but even then it was a struggle, at best, for him to walk. At speaking engagements, Jimmy would walk along side his father, propping FDR up as they walked, so that it appeared that FDR was walking on his own. Jimmy would perform this task often throughout the rest of his father's life.

Jimmy's duties on the campaign went even further, though. During the primary season, Jimmy was assigned the task of campaign manager in Massachusetts. As Jimmy recalls:

As Father's pre-convention activities got under way in 1932 I found myself considerably involved in his campaign. He had a serious problem in Massachusetts, where most of the important Democratic machine politicians... were for the defeated 1928 candidate, Al Smith...

Father appointed me as his official representative to work for him in

the Massachusetts delegation. I still regard it as a high compliment that he would entrust such a responsibility to me, a politically inexperienced youth just two years out of college (Roosevelt, J. Affectionately 201-202).

Roosevelt lost the primary in Massachusetts but won the state in the general election. The point to be made here is that Jimmy, like George W. Bush, was officially on the campaign team. Jimmy was acting as a surrogate for his father, spreading his father's campaign message across the state and trying to garner as many votes as possible, while still trying to temper the Democratic political machine, who were supporting another candidate.

Jimmy's work on the 1932 campaign did not end with the Massachusetts primary. Jimmy struck out on the whistle-stop tour with his father as well. Jimmy performed the role of symbol while on the train. At each stop on the tour, Jimmy was part of the "act." As Jimmy recalls:

He would come out on my arm, smiling at the crowd, then take his stance at the rail...Finally, Pa would turn to me...and say, "And this is my little boy, Jimmy." He would pause for effect and then add, "I have more hair than he has!" The crowd's roar of laughter was my cue to grin...but to me the joke got pretty thin—as thin, as my hair (Affectionately 207).

Jimmy, like Margaret Truman, was playing a purely symbolic role in this case. He was to appear on the back of the train and only when acknowledged by his father was he to acknowledge his presence with a smile to the audience. He was there to not only be his father's "legs," but also to symbolically show that FDR was a good family man who had a wonderful rapport with his children. Jimmy continued to travel with his father and was on the campaign trail to the bitter end, when it was finally announced that his father had won.

### **Advising the President**

Once FDR was elected, Jimmy took on another political role. Jimmy "believed it his right and duty to make suggestions for appointments in the new administration, as he had been his father's campaign manager for the important state of Massachusetts"(Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 181). But this was not all Jimmy's idea.

When Father went into the White House he asked me to come to Washington to help him as a sort of unofficial aide...

It was an ambiguous sort of arrangement: I had no official status, no salary, and despite the wild stories that were written during this period about how I allegedly was coining money because of my connexion(sic) with Father, I was not capitalizing on our relationship.

Even before Father was inaugurated he was using me to represent him in certain quasi-official capacities. When former President Calvin Coolidge died at Northampton, Massachusetts, in January 1933 Father thought it would be a courteous gesture for the President-elect to be represented by members of his family at the funeral, so he asked me to accompany Mother to the last rites (Affectionately 227-228).

Jimmy thus was acting as an informal advisor for his father, and still participating as a surrogate. It also seems as if his role as informal advisor to his father might have brought some controversy over whether it was appropriate for Jimmy to be acting in this fashion and whether he was taking advantage of his father's position. Thus, at this stage it seemed as if Jimmy was also participating as a skeleton. As will be seen in the next section, Jimmy's role as skeleton did not seem to really affect FDR as much as it did Reagan and Bush. One possible reason is that early in the FDR administration, there was a high public approval of FDR during the times of economic crises. Another possible reason is because of the growth of the electronic media and the public's ever growing reliance on this form of information.

### **Business as Usual**

Over the years, Jimmy's involvement in the business world would create a scenario in which he could again be considered a skeleton. To begin with, in 1934, Jimmy went back to his life in the insurance industry. Here, he was accused of profiting from his father's position. "Hardly a month went by without the airing of some lurid but undocumented accusation, alleging that I was using my 'influence' to obtain lucrative contracts" (Affectionately 241). Most of these accusations came in the form of letters sent to the White House but a lot came from the press as well.

By 1935, Jimmy had left his insurance business to become the president of the National Grain Yeast Corporation,

which was involved in making industrial alcohol. Once more the public found fault with the president's son for it was rumored that backers of the company had underworld connections—that Jimmy's only credential for the presidency of the company was his connection to the chief executive of the United States. Under fire again, Jimmy resigned... (Quinn-Musgrove and Kanter 182).

It seemed as if no matter what Jimmy did, there was going to be a negative reaction.

After spending a year as his father's aide (which will be discussed in the next section), Jimmy was once again in the insurance business by 1938, and once again there was a public uproar. The *Saturday Evening Post* ran an article entitled "Jimmy's Got It." This article painted the image of Jimmy as an "unprincipled opportunist" who was making as much as two million dollars a year by using his position as first son to help him in the business arena (Roosevelt, J. *Affectionately* 241). The only option Jimmy felt available to him was to release his tax records (which showed he did not make anywhere near this amount of money) and to do a series of interviews with *Collier's* as well as radio interviews to straighten out the matter.

No matter what Jimmy did, he was scrutinized. It was a no win situation. Jimmy did bring a lot of bad press to the White House but it did not seem to affect FDR that much. In fact, after the 1936 election, the President asked Jimmy to move to Washington to aide him as an Administrative Assistant, which Jimmy gladly did.

### **White House Secretary**

In April of 1936, Louis Howe, FDR's top secretary and very close friend and confidant, passed away. Howe's death "left a void in the innermost circle around (FDR)" (Roosevelt, E. 146). FDR needed a close aide but also a confidant. Eleanor could not fill the confidante role because they had grown apart over the years, and she was traveling frequently. "So FDR had begun to groom...Jimmy, as an aide after Howe's death, beginning by getting him commissioned as a lieutenant colonel in the marines so that he could accompany him on his goodwill tour of South America and then offering him the job of presidential assistant in 1937" (Collier 349-350).



So, Jimmy came to Washington to be not only a formal advisor to his father, but “an adult confidant” (Roosevelt, E.150) and a companion as well (a role his sister Anna would later perform). FDR was criticized for the move, and it was labeled nepotism in the press. Eleanor Roosevelt herself was worried what the public and press would think of her son coming to work for his father. “I...could foresee the attacks that would be made on his father for appointing him, and on James himself, and I could imagine all kinds of ways in which, through his necessarily political activities, he might get himself and his father in trouble” (Roosevelt, Eleanor 165). But FDR needed someone close to him that he could trust and Jimmy was the number one candidate. Therefore, FDR ignored all of the warnings about the potential downfalls of having his son come to work for him as a White House aide. Although the public backlash was not as harsh as Eleanor anticipated, Jimmy was “cartooned as ‘Crown Prince’ and chivvied as ‘Assistant President’” (Lash 493).

Jimmy took his job very seriously and tried to ignore the criticism surrounding him. He immediately plunged into his duties. As Jimmy has stated:

A more important part of my job was to act as presidential liaison with Congress...My basic assignment was to coordinate father’s dealings with those government agencies not under a cabinet office...

I was his “legs,” carrying confidential memos back and forth. I participated in some policy-making meetings, though the decisions were his, of course. I was also a sounding board for some of his speeches...I carried father’s messages to Congress. I sounded out senators and representatives and counted heads so that we would know where we stood on some issue that was due for a vote (Roosevelt, J. My Parents 245).

What Jimmy will be most remembered for at the White House was his role in FDR’s “court packing” scheme. President Roosevelt felt the conservative nine member Supreme Court was impeding his New Deal programs and he decided the best way to overcome this would be to increase the number of the court from nine to fifteen once current justices reached a certain age. The thinking was that he could appoint Roosevelt supporters to the other six spots. FDR fought for it, or better yet, he sent Jimmy out to fight for it.

Jimmy was put front and center on the subject, making speeches in behalf of the bill sent before Congress, which called for the increase in the Supreme Court membership. The bill did not pass, and those White House aides involved were ridiculed and criticized in the press. “Although James Roosevelt was the target of somewhat less public brutalization, he too endured criticism for his role in the court packing fiasco” (Walcott and Hult 33). This time though, if Jimmy was acting as a skeleton, it was at his father’s bequest.

It was around this time that Jimmy had to start cutting back his work load because he became the victim of stomach ulcers due to the stress of the job as well as the negative press allegations surrounding it and his business matters. Jimmy felt that it would be better for his health and for his father if he resigned. He did not want to be an embarrassment to his father because of rumors in the press. In essence, he did not want to be a skeleton to his father. “He was generally credited with excellent work, but after two years, the stress of the position, coupled with charges in the press that he had used his public office for private gain, proved too much. He suffered a perforated ulcer, had two-thirds of his stomach removed, and...resigned” (Goodwin 177). FDR did not want to let him go, but Jimmy’s illness progressively got worse and it became apparent that the only way for him to recuperate was to get out of the White House.

### **Moving On?**

Only a little over a year after coming to the White House, Jimmy was once again in private business. Although he was no longer a formal advisor, he was still being used as a confidant to his father. “There were occasions when Father and I would have serious talks and he would reveal to me the deeper side of his nature and the essence of what he was trying to accomplish”(Roosevelt, J. Affectionately 275). When Jimmy moved out to California to participate in the movie-production business, he and FDR were in constant contact via memos about topics FDR wanted his son’s opinions on. His days as a formal advisor were over but he remained an informal advisor/confidant for the rest of the administration.

## Off to War

Jimmy had been given the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Marine Corps in 1936 in order to accompany his father on diplomatic trips but the title was meaningless. As it became apparent that the United States was heading to war in 1939, Jimmy resigned his commission. He felt that it was unfair that he should hold that high a rank due to his lack of experience and his age. Instead, he reentered the reserves at the lesser rank of captain, and for the first time he actually went into training with his unit. In September of 1940, Jimmy was called to active duty along with his brother Elliott, and later his brothers Franklin, Junior and John.

In April 1941, Jimmy was summoned to the White House for a “secret mission.” As Jimmy recalls:

I was to accompany Major Gerald Thomas on a trip to the Philippines, China, Burma, India, Iraq, Egypt, Crete, Palestine, and Africa. On the surface, Major Thomas was to observe and report back to the president on the military buildup and the success of our supply lines in these areas. Beneath the surface, I was to speak privately to the heads of state or government officials to assure them in father’s name that, although we ourselves were not at war with Germany, Italy, or Japan, he would do everything he could to help those who were at war. I was to suggest that we might well be at war before long and that we then would pitch in with both hands to help them. In effect, I was to tell them, “Hang on until we get there.”

Major Thomas knew nothing of this. Only father and I and his closest advisers knew. I presume I was selected because as the president’s son I would be believed and because father felt he could trust me to keep the mission confidential...

Father said, “This must be completely confidential...If you speak publicly of it, I will deny it and disown you...We can’t take any chance of having you communicate with me formally while you’re gone, but report to me the moment you return” (Roosevelt, J. My Parents 258).

Thus, Jimmy was not done with his formal duties for his father. With Jimmy being in the military and his father commander-in-chief, FDR was once again his boss. It is hard to categorize what Jimmy was asked to do in this situation. No other presidential child since Jimmy has been asked to do anything of this sort. The only other presidential child to perform such a task was John Eisenhower spying on the Soviets for his father. It seems as if this “secret mission” is best labeled the action of a surrogate. Jimmy was

standing in for his father. His father was not able to get in contact with all of these countries personally with his message without someone finding out. Therefore, Jimmy was sent as his father's substitute.

When it came time for Jimmy's unit to be sent to the Pacific, he had to use his father's name in order to go. The Marines felt that Jimmy's past medical problems would hinder his ability to fight on the front lines but with his father's help he was sent to fight. Jimmy did see front line duty, serving in Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Midway, and he won the Silver Star for gallantry. Jimmy was in the Philippines when he received word that his father had passed away. Soon after, Jimmy left active duty and moved to California where he began a political career of his own.

What is interesting to note here is that Jimmy and his brothers all served as symbols during the war. Jimmy was in the Marines, Elliott was in the Air Force, and Franklin and John were both in the Navy. Since their father was president and was the one responsible for all four of his sons fighting overseas, their service sent a message to the rest of the nation that FDR was being struck with the same worries and difficulties as the rest of the United States. He was not just sitting behind the high walls of the White House unaffected by what was going on around him. He also had daily worries about whether or not he would see his sons again.

### **Conclusion**

Over the course of his father's election to the presidency in 1932 and his twelve years in office, Jimmy Roosevelt played several political roles. Unlike the other presidential children discussed thus far, Jimmy is the only one who was dominantly active in all four of the political roles. Jimmy served his father politically during the 1932 campaign as a surrogate as well as a symbol. The political consequences were potential votes for his father. He was also an informal advisor/confidant through much of FDR's administration, especially after Louis Howe passed away. Lastly, he was a skeleton in both his business dealings and as a presidential aide. He was also a symbol again during the war and a surrogate on the trip with Major Thomas.

Jimmy Roosevelt performed a hybrid role which combined all four of the roles. Although performing all four roles equally is rare among the sample, two other presidential children also performed a hybrid role. Julie Nixon Eisenhower and her husband, David Eisenhower performed several of the roles. The following chapter will display their actions in these roles and demonstrate that, in the case of Julie Nixon Eisenhower, there is potentially another role that she is performing that was not categorized earlier.

## **Chapter Nine:**

### **Julie Nixon Eisenhower and David Eisenhower**

Julie Nixon Eisenhower has been described by William Safire as "...like her father without a dark side--that is, she is loyal, alert, considerate, virtuous, intelligent, and sensibly impulsive" (623). Safire continues on to say that "...if part of judging a man's life is to examine the sum of his human relationships, young Mrs. Eisenhower is one who speaks eloquently in Richard Nixon's favor" (626). These words of acclaim would be hard for anyone to live up to, especially in the spotlight of the presidency, but Julie Nixon Eisenhower earned her wings in the tumultuous political arena in which she chose to participate. This chapter attempts to put in perspective Julie Nixon Eisenhower's experience as first daughter. It seeks to elucidate Julie's behavior as a surrogate, symbol, advisor and confidante for her father, Richard Nixon. The chapter also will try to put David Eisenhower's participation in the political process as Richard Nixon's son-in-law in perspective.

Julie's indoctrination into politics began at a very early age. She was born on July 5, 1948 in Washington, D.C. where her father was a Congressman from California. By the age of four her father had become Vice President of the United States and by the age of ten her father made his first attempt at the Oval Office in 1960. After losing to John F. Kennedy he had an unsuccessful bid for the governorship of California in 1962, but Richard Nixon finally broke through in 1968 with a successful run for the presidency. Right beside him through all of these political ups and downs were his wife Pat and two daughters, Tricia and Julie. Although both Julie and her older sister Tricia were sheltered from the political world around them while they were growing up, something rubbed off on Julie and she became "a politician like her father" (Kellerman 152). Although Julie has never run for public office, during her father's career, she actively participated as a campaigner and chief supporter/defender of her father. She also seemed to withstand the rigors of campaigning and years in the White House with great fortitude.

## 1968 Election

The world would come to know Julie Nixon Eisenhower best during the Watergate debacle but her influence on and work for her father began much earlier. The campaign in 1960 was Julie's first real taste of politics and what a bad taste it was. She was finally old enough to understand the meaning and weight of a run for the presidency. At the age of twelve she refused to believe that her father had lost the election and even weeks after was adamant that they could still win with a recount of the votes. It broke her heart that her father had lost. When her father decided to give the presidency another shot in 1968, Julie was a sophomore at Smith College in Massachusetts. "In the spring both David (her fiancé) and I juggled full course loads and campaigning" (Eisenhower, Julie 242). They both dove head first into a campaign schedule that became so demanding that in the fall of 1968 she (from Smith) and David (from Amherst) took the semester off in order to be available for the full onslaught of political campaigning around the country. At the age of nineteen she proceeded to campaign in 33 different states for her father. Richard Nixon himself knew how valuable Julie, David and her sister were to the campaign:

In the 1968 campaign he(RN) told Bob Haldeman at length how Pat and the girls should be scheduled, where they should appear, how they should be introduced. Special aides and advance men were recruited for them. With Julie's fiancé, David Eisenhower, the family was a potent factor in the election campaign, and Nixon didn't miss a single opportunity to employ them to advantage" (Ehrlichman 55).

Julie's work stumping on the campaign trail as a surrogate for her father was invaluable. She traveled across the country, stopping in as many small town squares as possible to communicate the name of her father to the American voters. Although her surrogate work was tireless and undeniably beneficial, one action in particular was set to boost her father's campaign. Unbeknownst to her when Julie and David Eisenhower (the only grandson of former president Dwight D. Eisenhower) decided to marry, a political coup had taken place. Engagements are an every day occurrence but this particular one

brought with it political advantages for Nixon that were two-fold. To begin with, Nixon gained another campaign surrogate and an extremely valuable one at that.

The 1968 election was the first for the initial wave of the Baby Boom. Thousands of people born in 1946 and 1947 participated in the campaign, whether volunteers, hecklers, demonstrators, or just plain voters...But there was diversity among the Baby Boomers. There were plenty of youngsters around who were square, subdued, and solidly Republican. The most prominent of these were David Eisenhower and Julie Nixon (Ambrose VII 189).

David was the head of *Youth for Nixon* and worked tirelessly coordinating the efforts of this organization nationwide as well as at Amherst College. He also traveled on his own and with Julie, making speeches on behalf of Richard Nixon, his soon to be father-in-law. Julie and David presented the “image...of a wholesome, all-American couple, recalling the traditional values in a time when these were being bitterly contested, that was considered so valuable to the Nixon ticket” (Kellerman 155). Nixon himself even referred to Julie and David as “front-line troops in the battle to re-establish the traditional virtues” (Ambrose VII 317). Thus, these two individuals were being counted on to carry out a symbolic role as well as being surrogates on the campaign trail.

David Eisenhower’s presence in the family was also crucial for Nixon in a second way. When Julie and David decided to marry, there was a joining of two of the most powerful political families in the nation at the time. The engagement and marriage in December of 1968 was not only symbolically important for Nixon but it was also instrumental in garnering a very important endorsement that was essential for his success in 1968. Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower wanted to wait until the convention to give his endorsement to Nixon but “David Eisenhower was assuming a role of liaison between his grandfather and his father-in-law-to-be. David very much wanted a clear preconvention endorsement of Nixon” (Ambrose VII 152). David and Nixon both got their wish. As Julie herself recounts:

The issue of David’s grandfather’s support...remain(ed) a prickly one until July 18, just a few weeks before the Republican nominating convention, when he broke his own rule of preconvention neutrality by endorsing my father. Eisenhower was biding his time because, in the wake of the Goldwater debacle, he desperately wanted a candidate who could win; the primaries would be a test not only for my father but also of the other contenders (Eisenhower, Julie



This early endorsement was more valuable than any other Nixon got during the campaign and most of the credit went to David Eisenhower.

David Eisenhower began a long-standing relationship with his father-in-law early on. “He had always had a close relationship with his father-in-law; Nixon, Julie says, ha(d) a keen respect for David’s opinions and in fact finally decided to enter the 1968 Presidential race only after getting a six-page letter from David summarizing the reasons why he should” (Newsweek 41). Once deciding to run, Nixon took yet another piece of advice from David. “At David’s suggestion, instead of running down the Baby Boomers, he praised them, extolling the virtues of this generation of American youth and beckoning it to join him in his quest for ‘a new America’” (Ambrose VII 190).

The Eisenhower presence on the campaign trail was also there, although not quite as dominant as Julie’s presence was. “Young David Eisenhower did indeed play a central role in ’68. All who saw concurred: he inherited not only his grandfather’s name but also his ‘magnificent grin’; and he and Julie became, for some anyway, America’s sweethearts” (Kellerman 154). When David made appearances with his future father-in-law, Richard Nixon did not miss an opportunity to proclaim that “I always campaign better with an Eisenhower” (154).

It is impossible to know exactly what impact Julie’s and David’s work on the 1968 campaign trail had. It is easy, though, to assume that they not only brought some votes into the fold but also helped to create an image of Richard Nixon as a family man who was exceptionally close to his daughters and soon-to-be son-in-law.

Up to this stage, both Julie and David seem to have performed two different political roles. First, Julie and David became symbols of the younger generation of Americans during the 1968 campaign. They also served the purpose of helping to show that Richard Nixon was a good family man who had a daughter and soon to be son-in-law that were politically aware and active.

They also performed the role of surrogate in their campaigning across the country. As has been seen with other surrogates, the need for extra members of the candidate’s family to travel and make speeches in the candidates behalf is imperative to success.

## **The White House Years**

**1968-1972**

After the election of 1968, David and Julie performed the role of surrogate. In the years directly after the election, Julie and David were provided with situations that used their talents as able surrogates. Like Lynda Robb and Susan Ford, Julie and David from time to time performed as hosts at the White House. Similarly, both Julie and David (but Julie more often) also continued making speeches across the nation and being interviewed in the press.

### **Believers**

The next couple of years following Nixon's inauguration were not only difficult for Nixon himself as he tried to end the war in Vietnam but also extremely taxing on his daughter and son-in-law. As a young married couple with two years of class work left before they could graduate, David and Julie set out to live and learn in a college community that was growing more and more hostile toward her father and them. Julie felt the strains of the turbulent times and the pressures that it put on herself and her family. She has spoken clearly in her biography she authored about the life of her mother of her frustrations of living in a college community during these volatile years. It was hard for her to turn to her parents with these frustrations for fear of creating a greater strain upon them than was necessary; therefore she and David kept their troubles to themselves. Although times were turbulent, Julie never once was shaken from her trust in her father and her belief in his administration; still it was not always easy for her to face up to her responsibilities of being first daughter.

In an excerpt from her college diary, Julie states:

I hate being a celebrity—and I use that word hesitantly. I am a “celebrity” only in that I am stared at when I walk on campus, eyes and heads turn.

Sometimes, when I am speaking, I feel as if people were taking mental notes. And sometimes I feel so disgusted later when I *have* to put on a show. I am wondering , and doubting—whether another school, a Republican school, is the answer. I realize that it's not...If it weren't the problem of politics for me, it would be another. And yet, sometimes it's so difficult. And I feel sorry for myself. And then I hate myself for this feeling of self-pity (Obst).

It is obvious that Julie, and perhaps David, were struggling with the limelight into which they had been thrown. Being Republicans during such troubled times on some college campuses ( certainly Smith and Amherst) would have been difficult for Julie and David to begin with, but they also were considered symbols of the new Administration and this set them apart as well (Eisenhower, Julie 259). Nevertheless,

...Julie performed as the perfect team player. On the one hand, she was a typical young married: finishing college, keeping a house in a cheap apartment just off campus, and having her parents to dinner on Daddy's birthday. On the other, she was the energetic and outspoken defender of the traditional virtues that her father's administration was presumably elected to defend, but that were nonetheless under constant attack by the nation's young (Kellerman 156).

Julie's outspoken nature sets her apart from her sister Tricia. Tricia preferred to stay out of the limelight and speak publicly only when she and her father deemed it necessary (particularly on the campaign trail). Julie, on the other hand, "bore the brunt of the dissidents' anger. And it was Julie who fought back" (Kellerman 157).

Julie took to the bully pulpit herself. She did not speak on issues that could be labeled as "fluff"; instead she tackled the more substantive issues of the day. Julie became "a semi-official defender of and spokesman for Mr. Nixon's Vietnam policy" (Kellerman 157). She enjoyed making speeches all across the nation for causes such as health care, the environment, and educational programs for the young and elderly. Julie also became a champion of placing a woman on the Supreme Court as well as of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and pressed her father on both of these issues.

Following the Nixon family protocol for addressing important issues, Julie wrote her father a note demanding vigorous support of the amendment. The next morning (February 2, 1972), Nixon's secretary Rose Mary Woods wrote to John Ehrlichman, "Last night the President asked that I again send you a note saying 'we absolutely must push this Women's Rights Amendment.' This was

after a discussion with Mrs. Nixon and Julie” (Troy 192).

This example not only shows Julie’s verve to undertake and discuss policy issues but also her father’s deep respect for her opinions as well as her role as an informal advisor.

“Julie’s appeal to her father on the ERA reflected the Nixon daughters’ intense involvement in their father’s administration...The Nixon children were particularly important in an administration with a shy President and a reserved First Lady. By proving that they had not been reduced to ‘appendages to his career,’ they rehabilitated the President” (Troy 192).

Julie has admitted that from time to time she would have rather been as far away from the political world as she could (Eisenhower, Julie 227). No one could blame her or Tricia for wanting to retreat behind the protective walls of the White House. The years of the Richard Nixon presidency were explosive at home as well as overseas and having to live on a college campus where the majority was adamantly against your their father must have been extremely tumultuous for both Julie and David. Julie was glad to graduate and move away from Smith. At the time she said, “There was so much emphasis on conformity...you had to be involved in a strike; you had to be involved in a fast for peace...There really was belligerence against those who didn’t want to be part of this” (The New York Times). Of course Julie was talking about herself in this instance; she was one who did not conform.

Retreating from Smith and Amherst for Julie and David would prove yet another challenge in their young marriage. Neither Julie nor David was able to attend their graduation ceremonies in June of 1970 for safety reasons. As Julie recounts,

Four hundred fifty colleges and universities were now on strike, among them Smith and Amherst, and classes and study were suspended. Several weeks before graduation, the head of my Secret Service detail had asked if he could talk to David and me. Formally he told us what we already had heard as campus scuttlebutt: if we or my parents or any of David’s family attended either the Smith or Amherst graduation at the end of the month, the campus organizers were boasting they could swell protesters ranks to 200,000 people by busing students from the enclave of colleges around Boston and other points in the East. College officials at Smith and Amherst had made it clear to both the Eisenhower family and my Secret Service detail that they could not guarantee our safety at graduation ceremonies. Emotions were running high. The

demonstrators' usual chants were "Hell, no, we won't go," "Peace now," "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fuckin' war." But recently the Northhampton *Hampshire Gazette* had reported that at an antiwar rally the crowd had screamed a new chant, "Fuck Julie, fuck David" (Eisenhower, Julie 290).

Although their college years were tainted because of protests against Richard Nixon and against their own presence on campus, Julie and David remained resolute defenders of the President. For Julie, her defense could be categorized as a blind faith, one that is constant and could not and cannot even now be swayed. UPI reporter Helen Thomas simply called her at the time, "a believer" (Thomas 185).

### **Broadening Horizons**

1970 brought many new opportunities for Julie and David to garner and sharpen their skills as surrogates for the President. As a graduation present, Julie and David were given a trip to Japan. The trip was not all fun and games because they were there as representatives of President Nixon at Expo '70 in Osaka. Upon their return, Julie and David along with Tricia were the formal hosts of Prince Charles and Princess Anne of England. Julie and David spent a whirlwind several days shuttling Charles and Anne to museums, parties, and sight-seeing. Once again, Julie and David were faithfully acting as surrogates for the President.

Julie (as well as Tricia) not only acted as a surrogate for the President but whenever possible would help fill in for her mother. Plenty of opportunities developed when Julie lived in the White House during the summer of 1969. "...Julie and Tricia...each served as occasional 'assistant First Lady' at different social events" (Anthony VII 175-176). They were asked to represent the First Lady at luncheons and teas as well as to show visitors around Washington, D.C. "Julie (also) believed that part of her role as the President's daughter was to work at humanitarian projects. She took on a summer job as a tour guide at the White House and was specially solicitous to blind children, leading them through the historic rooms and explaining the surroundings" (Thomas 185).

The fall of 1970 brought Julie to the White House to live temporarily. David had begun Officers Candidate School (OCS) in Rhode Island where he was training for his

three year navy duty. During this time Julie moved into the White House while she began work on her master's degree in elementary education at Catholic University of America. Julie had to quickly become accustomed to the ever present White House press corps. Julie found herself being barraged with requests for interviews on any and every subject. Julie, unlike her sister and mother, often relented and granted interviews. Julie has recounted that:

In November of 1970 I wrote to David at OCS: "I hate interviews. You never sound like yourself-everything is somehow distorted. I also fell inadequate. What do I have to say in an interview? Here we go, same old women's lib, campus unrest, drug questions."

At twenty-two years of age I did not relish being quoted constantly as a "young person" in or out of touch, according to the view of the writer, with my generation. In retrospect, I should have taken more cues from my mother, who deftly turned aside many political and personal questions...( Eisenhower, Julie 296).

But no matter how much she hated being interviewed or how guarded she felt she should be, she spoke often to the press. Julie herself may be the reason that she was sought out by reporters. Helen Thomas has stated that "I enjoyed interviewing Julie immensely...because she was honest, and like a mirror, reflected her own feelings of her family. She called them as she saw them, fearlessly" (Thomas 185). It seems that Julie was a breath of fresh air for reporters covering the White House. It was not business as usual with Julie. She was not toting the "party line" but rather speaking her heart and that seemed appealing to the press. "When Julie took up the cudgels and became her father's Number One Public Defender, she did it on her own initiative. 'It was something I took on myself,' she told an interviewer" (Thomas 185).

Soon not only was the press corps finding her a refreshing change but so was the White House itself. An interview that Julie gave in January of 1971 set off a chain reaction of memoranda (see Appendix B) among Nixon's key staffers, especially those in the press and communications offices. These memoranda display the role aides felt that Julie was playing and could eventually play to help the President. Julie agreed to be interviewed by Helen Thomas from UPI and was questioned on a wide array of topics about herself and her family. The memoranda display that Julie's presence in the White

House and her abilities to create a positive image of her father with her words were of great value. H. R. Haldeman wrote that “Julie had an exceptionally good sense of the value of her public activities and the need to get maximum benefit from them” (Haldeman 71).

The Nixon White House had a strong need to exploit the Nixon daughters. In addition to mobilizing White House resources to advance the daughters when they traveled, Nixon had his best men trying to figure out what kinds of jobs his daughters should take. Such official concern illustrated a new level of politicization of the presidential family. In the White House and in the press, the daughters were treated as extensions of the President himself (Troy 193).

President Nixon weighed everything that was done with one question: “Does this help us politically?” (Haldeman 298). In most cases where Julie was concerned, the answer was probably “yes.”

Julie continued her touring schedule, making speeches across the nation even after her graduate work began. Because the touring was on a limited schedule, she and the White House had to take full advantage of every outing. The White House’s concern over this issue can be seen in an excerpt from H.R. Haldeman’s diary on November 13, 1971:

We got into quite a thing late in the afternoon because he (RN) discovered that Julie didn’t have adequate preparation material for her trip. He wants me now to put(speechwriter John) Andrews on it, and get some really good Q&A things worked out for her and some talking points on Administration programs and achievements, the kind of points that we want her to get across such as we would give a Cabinet officer (Haldeman 373).

This statement underscores the fact that the White House was not looking for Julie to only discuss “fluff” issues, but rather to speak out on what the Administration was doing and that they viewed Julie as a trusted mouthpiece. Again, Julie was acting as a surrogate for the President. She was touring the country in his name speaking about what the Administration was doing and what its goals were for the future.

Nixon also was counting on his family to make him appear warm and loving, “calculating that his family’s love made him lovable” (Troy 194). The key here was to make sure that the family’s close-knit loving environment be shown to the rest of the world. Thus, Nixon was counting on his family to be symbols. He was looking for his

daughters and wife to portray him as a family man. Part of the plan to do this culminated in Julie doing what the White House called “The Julie Show,” which CBS entitled “Christmas at the White House with Julie Nixon Eisenhower.” “The Julie Show” almost did not take place took place because of some behind the scenes jockeying for position between the White House and CBS that Julie herself was never involved in. Her mother advised her not to do the program but Julie relented. The show was aired on Christmas eve of 1971. Julie took viewers to the living quarters of the White House where Nixon was “sporting a colorful smoking jacket he only wore ‘at Christmas’...the President was jocular, just a bit stiff and a touch sweaty on his nose. Here was Nixon as the head of a cozy, devoted family...” (Troy 194).

With Julie’s TV tour of the White House as well as her public speaking engagements and Tricia’s wedding taking place in June, the Nixon family had a wonderful 1971. Nixon wanted to carry this family-centered atmosphere through the next year so as to make it beneficial in the upcoming election. “Special Counsel to the President Charles Colson told the President that ‘image of the First Family as it has recently emerged—warm and appealing—may be one of the most important political developments of your Presidency’” (Troy 194-195). As Nixon would soon find out, his family was going to be extremely important in the 1972 election and during the difficult times surrounding the Watergate scandal.

### **1972 Election**

In his memoirs, Richard Nixon described his strategy for his reelection in 1972:

Since my strategy was to minimize my own campaigning, my family took over the burden of crisscrossing the country making appearances. All together, Pat, Julie, and Tricia covered seventy-seven cities in thirty-seven states in the nine weeks from the end of August to Election Day...In all their speeches and in all their press conferences, there was never a misspoken word. They were heckled, shoved, hissed, and subjected to obscene shouts from demonstrators, but they pressed on like professionals, with poise and grace (Nixon 686-687).

Nixon did not spend as much time on the campaign trail himself in 1972 as he had in 1968, thus putting the pressure on his family members. It is no secret that both Pat and Tricia Nixon were uncomfortable with campaigning and making public speeches. They did



what they needed to do in order to support their husband and father but tended to shy away from doing anymore than was necessary; that was left up to Julie.

“In the ensuing months, Julie threw herself into her father’s reelection campaign and was much in demand as a speaker at rallies and Republican fund raising. She worked closely with the Committee to Reelect the President and was on the road more than her father” (Thomas 190). Julie once again took on the task of being a surrogate for her father. Since Nixon himself had decided to not be seen as much publicly in this campaign as in 1968, it was even more important for Nixon to have Julie on the campaign trail acting as his surrogate.

By her own account, Julie did the most in 1972. By July 1972 she had made 35 public appearances in 13 different states. This was in comparison to Tricia’s 16 public appearances and Pat Nixon’s 25 public appearance (Kellerman 158).

Nixon took it upon himself to make sure that he was getting as much mileage out of his daughter’s campaign activities as he possibly could. Nixon did not trust the speech material that Ray Price was providing for Julie and Tricia (as well as Tricia’s husband Ed Cox). So on occasion he would send memos to Julie and Tricia, giving them talking points and suggesting particular anecdotes he felt were more appealing than those provided by Price. Once again, as he did in 1968, Nixon made up the campaigning schedule for his children himself.

In an article titled “With Julie on the Campaign Trail,” *U.S. News and World Report* commented on Julie’s political role.

Seasoned politicians are keeping a weather eye on the comings and goings of Julie Nixon Eisenhower...At 23, she has been sharing the platforms—and the speechmaking—with Governors, Congressmen, mayors and federal officials... Julie plans to continue her effort on behalf of presidential programs... “I really believe in...He’s done so much.. It shows we do care... I think some of his programs are so terrific, I’d like to see them publicized more...” David usually ducks arguments on the Vietnam war... While Julie is too much the political and family cheerleader to resist sticking up for Daddy (Kellerman158).

Because of David’s active duty in the Navy, he was unable by law to participate in the campaign. This is not to say that Nixon did not try his best to circumvent the regulations that kept his son-in-law and second strongest public defender off of the

campaign trail. “In a series of requests to Haldeman, Nixon tried to find some way around that legal restriction, without success” (Ambrose VII 598). But Nixon did not let this deter him. Instead, “On July 20 the President sent a memo to Haldeman: ‘A suggestion has been made that David might say a word at the convention after the [film] tribute to his Grandfather. Some thought it would be political. However, I think it would be very appropriate for him to talk about his Grandfather. See what can be done to work this out’” (Ambrose VII 598). Nixon desperately wanted his son-in-law’s presence to be felt and no doubt David himself wanted to be there as well but was unable to participate.

But David would revitalize his presence in the politics of the Nixon Administration sooner than he thought. The next 22 months would bring him and Julie face to face with the worst controversy that they would ever experience or ever want to experience.

### **Watergate**

The Nixon family’s elation over the landslide victory of 1972 began to fade rapidly as the weight of Watergate began to bear down not only on the White House but on the Nixon family as well. The Watergate fiasco was a scenario that none in the Nixon family would have wished on their worst enemies, but each member had to deal with the rapidly changing circumstances as best they could. Pat and Tricia tended to retreat from the public in order not to have to meet the pressures of what was happening around them. Julie took another route. Julie never relented to the pressures surrounding her or her father. Julie believed in her father, and she was determined to show the world that he was an honest and decent man. If Julie Nixon Eisenhower is going to be remembered for one thing that she has done in her life, it will probably be how stolidly she stood beside her father during such difficult times.

By the end of 1972, it was obvious to those in the White House that Julie was an asset that they did not want to lose. She had finished her graduate work and the White House decided that the best place for her was to stay in the White House. Around Christmas of that year discussions began on how Julie could be utilized most appropriately and the idea of her taking an East Wing staff job was overwhelmingly supported. H.R. Haldeman dictated in his diary on Tuesday, December 12, 1972:

The P(resident) had me over to talk about the Julie job... he wanted to consider what she could do over here(the West Wing). She's good for the P, well organized...It's good to have her around, so he wants to see what she can do at the White House. She could schedule events, getting people to cooperate and all that. She could something where she handles people. I talked to Julie later, and she agreed that the real place for her is in the East Wing job (Haldeman 554).

It is unsure from this discussion what the primary reason for having Julie in the White House really was. There is no doubt of her experience and capabilities when dealing with others, but it might have been her ability to handle one person in particular that made her presence in the White House mandatory. Nixon was always a private person who fought with his decisions within himself and often closed himself off to others. But Julie was one person who could break through the barriers. It would also become imperative to have Julie present when Watergate began to bear down on Nixon later in his administration. During this time, Nixon began to withdraw more and more into his own thoughts, and Julie may have been the only one who was capable of breaking through.

The need to have Julie close to the President is similar to Anna Roosevelt's close proximity in the FDR White House. Both seem to have played the role of protector. This is also very similar to George W. Bush's need to protect his father during the 1988 campaign. This is a new role that was not categorized at the outset. Only four roles and the hybrid role were designated. It seems as if at least two presidential children, Anna Roosevelt and Julie Nixon Eisenhower performed a role of protector. Nixon's need to rely on Julie's advice and companionship is also comparable to President Eisenhower's need to constantly rely on John Eisenhower's advice. Thus, Julie seemed to be executing the role of informal advisor/confidante just as these other three presidential children had either done in the past and were to do in the future. But it also seems that she was performing a new role. It is more evident in the actions of Julie Nixon Eisenhower but the role of protector can also be seen in Anna Roosevelt and to a lesser extent, George W. Bush. All of the presidential children that have performed this role have been informal advisors/confidant(e)s. Thus, the role of protector could be a part of the informal advisor/confidant(e) role or only performed by presidential children that are older and have more political experience which will be discussed in the conclusions.

1973 brought new experiences for Julie but always intertwined with Watergate: Since September of 1973 I had worked as an assistant editor at the Curtis Publishing Company, which published *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Holiday*, and four children's magazines. I spent two days a week in Indianapolis, where Curtis was headquartered, but in any spare time I continued to travel across the country as I had during the 1972 campaign, primarily on behalf of health care, the environment, and educational programs for the young and the elderly. After the election, the tremendous number of invitations had not lessened and I tried to accept as many as I could. Between the summers of 1972 and 1973, I made more than 150 trips. When the questions in May 1973 started to be more on Watergate than on the purpose of my visits, I did not dodge them. I believed the programs I was involved with, was proud,...and was not going to stop my activities because of Watergate. Although I never gave a speech on Watergate or embarked on any kind of "campaign," the news I now generated was almost all Watergate-related. Finally, by the spring of 1974, I had to face the fact that my presence at a Conference on Cancer and Human Values might make a difference to those attending it, but the next day the only news would be Julie's response to questions on the latest Watergate issue.

...Consequently, in contrast to Tricia's infrequent appearances and Mother's reluctance at hers to get entangled in Watergate questions, my activities took on added significance in the eyes of the media, and I found myself in the unwanted and unsought role of the one "unafraid to speak out on Watergate." None of us was afraid (Julie Eisenhower, 408).

Julie felt that she was the only one who could tell the world who her father really was and she felt it her duty to fulfill this task. Admittedly, Julie has denied that the White House put her on the front lines during Watergate. Julie has noted in her mother's biography that "...my father never asked me to be out front" (408). But it is also interesting to note that he also never asked her to stop (Edmonson and Cohen 120).

By Julie taking such an open position and talking to the public and the press about Watergate, she was essentially acting as a surrogate for her father. She was acting the duties that he himself should arguably have been handling. Julie's role as surrogate in this situation is much different from the surrogate role that she had performed in the past or the surrogate role that any other presidential child has performed. Julie was no longer acting as a surrogate during a campaign or talking to the public about specific policies that her father wanted to implement. Instead, Julie was answering for the White House on a matter that involved possible Constitutional violations. Although Julie may have wanted

to act in this surrogate role so that she could defend her father, it was still a situation in which Nixon himself should have been answering the questions and not Julie.

There is some question as to whether or not it is true that the President did not specifically send Julie to speak on his behalf. When Pat Nixon biographer Lester David interviewed Helen Smith for his book, *Smith* (Pat Nixon's press secretary) confirmed the speculation that Julie was chosen by the family to be the one to take the brunt of the media heat (175). Many saw Julie defending her father and felt that "Richard Nixon could not be as bad a man as they say if he inspires so much love from his daughter" (*Newsweek* 39). This is one view but as time elapsed it became obvious that Julie was not being told the truth by her father and was still being sent out to answer the press. Julie was defenseless because she was not being told the whole truth, thus eliciting thoughts from the public such as "What sort of man would hide things from his daughters and let them go out and defend him?" (*Time* 36). Whether Julie was strategically sent out to talk to the press or whether she did it on her own accord, there is no doubt that she gained a vast amount of respect from the American public as well as the White House press corps who called her "the only credible Nixon" (*Newsweek* 39).

Julie not only took her message to the American people but proceeded to take her father's case to England as well.

In the summer of 1973, she and David went to London where she appeared on BBC television and fielded questions asked by British viewers. She was, as always, lucid in her replies, detailed and remarkably composed. And, as always, she never for a moment doubted her father's innocence. She counterattacked too, as she would continue to do for the next twelve months. One viewer asked if, looking back, she would have wished that Nixon had kept his promise to retire from politics in 1962 after his defeat for the California governorship. She answered: "I can't wish that when I've seen my father end the war in Vietnam" (David 173).

A friend at the time was watching all of this play out with the rest of the world and remarked: "It was as if they were one person, Nixon and Julie, and she was defending herself" (Thomas 204). Others noted that it seemed as if during this period that Julie had "become her father's...First Lady in practice if not in fact" (David 172). Julie had taken

her surrogate duties to such proportions that it seemed as if it was difficult to figure out where Nixon ended and Julie began.

The Nixons were a family trapped behind the high walls of the White House, having only themselves to count on while much of the rest of the nation was condemning them. During this period Julie was the only family member able to provide any information for a waiting nation as to how the family was faring. In spite of how much she believed in her father, as Nixon's resignation began to loom, Julie too began to show the strain of the circumstances as the days slowly drifted by bringing more bad news each time.

On April 29, 1974, the Blue Book (so-called because they were bound in a blue cover) transcripts were released to the public. These transcripts "proved conclusively that (John) Dean had lied when he said he had discussed the cover-up with the President over a period of months. But they undermined...(Nixon's) assertion that he had 'acted like a prosecutor' when informed by Dean of the cover-up" (Eisenhower, Julie 409). Just days after the transcripts were released, the White House was bombarded with requests for interviews, and it was left up to Julie to take the brunt of their insistence. On May 11, 1974, Julie and David met the press in the East Garden of the White House.

"Do either of you foresee any point at which the President would resign?"

"Absolutely not, no," David replied.

"He is stronger now than he ever has been in his determination to see this through," Julie added.

The next question came from Robert Pierpoint of CBS: "Mrs. Eisenhower, may I say first of all that I feel I have to apologize for addressing these questions to you, since in our system we do not hold the sins of the fathers against the following generations, and we don't have a monarchy in which you are going to inherit the power, I am not quite sure why you are here to answer these questions."

Julie was visibly agitated. "Mr. Pierpoint, I am going to try to control myself in answering the question, because it really does wound me...I have seen what my father has gone through, and I am so proud of him that I would never be afraid to come out here and talk to any members of the press...even though it goes against my grain because I know he does not want me out here because he does not want anyone to construe that I am trying to answer questions for

him...I am just trying to pray for enough courage to meet his courage. Really." (Kellerman 162).

As the months progressed the press became accustomed to Julie being the go-between between the press and the Nixon family, especially Richard Nixon. She became the official surrogate for Nixon himself. Julie was in constant contact with her father, listening and offering advice as well as keeping up to date on the movements of the investigations or at least Richard Nixon's interpretations of these events. Thus, Julie

had the double advantage of being both the most accessible and the most knowledgeable Nixon insider. Julie also had the invaluable asset of being the most appealing member of the Nixon family. She and David were so earnest and energetic in their support of the president that even diehard Nixon haters found it hard to extend their distaste to his most ardent ally (Kellerman 162).

Throughout the events surrounding the investigation and its ultimate resolution with Nixon's resignation, it is easy to see Julie and David's multiple political roles. They were both informal advisors. As Nixon's decision to resign became more imminent, Julie and David both offered their advice. Julie tended toward Nixon hanging on longer while David felt that it was better for the presidency if Nixon resigned. As has also been mentioned, Julie was the family member who was in constant contact with her father. She presented herself as a confidante. She also took on the same new role as Anna Roosevelt. Julie, more than ever, became her father's protector wanting to shield him from any harm.

Although Julie's support was undaunting, by July David became more and more aware that the President had been a participant in a cover-up. David also "was coming to grips with something he hadn't fully realized when he married Julie: that he had become not only a member of the Nixon family but a member of the Nixon Administration...Now that the Administration was coming apart, so was everything else" (Woodward and Bernstein 243). A strain was being put on their marriage, Julie got physically ill at one point, and David blamed the stress that Julie was under. And as already mentioned, David felt that it was best for the presidency as an institution if Nixon resigned.

Julie was called into her father's Executive Office Building office on August 2, 1974, and she was informed that he had decided to resign. No matter what the shock and hurt that she was undergoing, she was left to inform the rest of the family. She had to

return to the White House and inform her mother who for the last few months had lived in solitude in her White House bedroom. Next she called Tricia who was living in New York. Tricia immediately flew to Washington where Julie told her that their father had decided to resign. That night, after Tricia and Ed had arrived back in Washington, Richard Nixon gathered his whole family in the Lincoln Sitting Room, and they were finally presented with copies of the transcripts of the June 23, 1972 tape. This tape proved that Nixon and Haldeman had “discussed having the CIA limit the FBI investigation of the break-in at the Watergate—for political reasons, rather than for the national security reasons he had claimed in his public statements on Watergate” (Eisenhower, Julie 419). There was no doubt from the transcripts of these tapes that Nixon was indeed deeply involved.

Upon reading the transcripts Ed Cox was more in support of resignation but still somewhat reluctant, while David felt that it was the only option. Tricia fell into Julie’s corner with objection to resignation. Julie’s reaction after reading the transcripts was an intensification of resolve against resignation. Up until the last minute Julie hung on. On August 6, 1974, the night that Nixon wrote his resignation speech, Julie entered the White House late in the evening and slipped a note on her father’s pillow (Eisenhower, Julie 422-423).

I knew it would be too painful to confront him face-to-face with my plea, but I still was convinced he was being stampeded and that events were moving too fast. Repeatedly he had said in public statements and to us privately that resignation would set a dangerous precedent for the Presidency. I knew he still believed that. When my father went to bed at 2 a.m., after working out some thoughts for his resignation speech, he found my note.

August 6

Dear Daddy,

I love you. Whatever you do I will support. I am very proud of you.

Please wait a week or even ten days before you make this decision. Go through the fire a little longer. You are so strong! I love you.

Julie

Millions support you.



But no matter how strong her resolve, her father left the White House on August 8, 1974.

### **Helpful or Harmful?**

Barbara Kellerman in her book All the President's Kin asks how useful to Nixon Julie's exaggerated will to win really was.

One Nixon aide suggested that it had a disadvantage: "Julie was the fighter. She was so much like her father—a real, tough, little battler—that at times that week I think she lost touch with reality. And that just fed her father's illusions." It is not surprising in any case that when it was all over, when the family stood in a row together to pose for pictures just after it had been announced to them that Nixon was now finally poised to resign, it was Julie who broke ranks, burst into tears, threw her arms around her father, and sobbed, "I love you." (165).

It also could be said that the opposite was true: that Nixon's illusions fed on Julie's. But whatever the case, Julie fought until the very last minute for her father. She placed herself in front of a ruthless White House press corps time and time again as a surrogate for her father and took the beating that her father should have been taking. She risked her personal health as well as her marriage in order to stand firmly beside her father every step of the way.

After Nixon left office, Julie continued to stand firm in her support of her father and still does to this day. During the year following his resignation, both David and Julie continued to speak out as representatives for the Nixon family.

### **Conclusion**

The question remains to be asked, why is Julie's work an outlier among other presidential children? There is the possibility that it was purely circumstantial. During the first part of Nixon's administration, the United States was still embroiled in the war in Vietnam and the latter part was consumed by the Watergate scandal. Was it because of

these circumstances that Julie and David spoke out so fervently and often? If this is the case then why was Tricia not more active?

The answer might lie in an evaluation of the interaction of Richard Nixon's and Julie's personalities and how they handled crises. As was stated at the outset, Julie was "...like her father..." (Safire 623). She was strong willed and politically savvy. This is unlike her sister who seemed to take after her mother more than her father. Tricia, like her mother tended to shy away from public exposure while Julie seemed to revel in it. Julie was so much like her father that she felt compelled to act as she did. David, in the same manner, was raised in a politically active family and thus probably felt comfortable in that domain.

The answer to why Julie and David took on multiple political roles probably lies somewhere between being raised around politics and their individual personalities. Because of who they were personally and the podium that they were given they became outstanding examples of the range of political roles that a child of a president can have.

Julie and David were not just surrogates, they were also symbols of the youth of America, they were confidant(e)s to the President and provided him informal advice. In the end they were perhaps the most valuable asset that Richard Nixon had. William Safire in his book Before the Fall includes a chapter on Julie. He concludes:

Julie's significance in the Nixon story, and one reason for this chapter, is this: here is a young woman whose good sense, grace, and goodness were not acquired in a vacuum. She was, at least in part, the product of an environment dominated by Richard Nixon. Admittedly, some fine parents have terrible offspring, and some terrible parents produce saints, but most often young people reflect their parents' strengths and shortcomings. Julie is evidence that the Nixon's ideas of family life help to develop good children and fine young adults. She is a glimpse of what her father could have been to others if he did not indulge himself in narrowing his own circle to the trusted, distrusting few.

Julie Eisenhower herself is everything a man could want in a daughter: not just a girl to be produced and strengthened against partisan blasts, but one to become a source of strength when an inner circle crumbles; if part of judging a man's life is to examine the sum of his human relationships, young Mrs. Eisenhower is one who speaks eloquently in Richard Nixon's favor. (626).

## **Chapter Nine:**

### **Conclusions**

Now that we have retraced each of the roles and the individuals that performed them, it is necessary to take another look at the initial hypotheses and summarize the findings.

#### **Political Roles Varying by Age**

The first hypothesis was that the political roles of presidential children would vary by age. There is more than adequate support for this hypothesis. As it turned out, most of the children labeled symbols were indeed under the age of eighteen. The one notable exception was Margaret Truman. She was in her early twenties when her father became president and she really only performed one role and that was as a symbol. It is interesting to note that a presidential child who is predominantly a symbol tends to perform only that one role. The other presidential children who perform one of the other three roles dominantly tended to perform at least one other role but not in dominance. This is not the case with symbols, or with Margaret Truman.

Surrogates also tended to be age dependent. Most were over the age of eighteen, except for Luci Johnson and Steve and Susan Ford. As was stated earlier, the reason behind these three acting as surrogates may be that the dividing line in age is flexible and these three were very close to 18 years old. It also may be that they were confident in their abilities to perform the tasks of a surrogate.

The informal advisors/confidant(e)s did tend to be much older children than either surrogates or symbols. I hypothesized that they would be older, due to the fact that they needed to be more educated and well versed in politics. All of the informal advisors/confidant(e)s discussed in this thesis were well established in careers and were generally all over the age of 30. The exceptions to this age rule would be Julie Nixon

Eisenhower and David Eisenhower. They were very involved politically, and both were raised within the world of presidential politics, so they would be more apt to be more comfortable giving advice to Richard Nixon.

### **Political Roles Varying by Sex**

The second hypothesis was that political roles of presidential children would vary by sex. Here, support was less clear.

Initially, looking at the children labeled as symbols, all but one were female . A reason for this was that there were only two male presidential children from FDR through Clinton who were under the age of eighteen. The first was John Kennedy, and he was most definitely used as a symbol. Steve Ford on the other hand performed the role of surrogate. The difference between the two was that John was just born when his father was elected, and Steve Ford was seventeen years old when his father became president. Therefore, since there were only two males under eighteen and only one was symbol, it is understandable why there are more females performing a symbolic role.

If the role of surrogates was broken down to campaign surrogates and non-campaign surrogates, then there is a difference in sex. Those surrogates who filled in for the president and first lady at events in the White House, all were females. As was mentioned earlier, a reason for this is that more females lived with their parents in the White House than did male presidential children. In most of these cases, the presidents' daughters were still living with them because they were still in school. By circumstance only, they were still in school and living at the White House when their fathers became president and they took on this role. Yet another reason for the use of females as surrogates for the president and first lady at White House functions is that by precedent the White House hostess is the first lady and when she cannot attend the natural fill in would be a daughter instead of a son.

When it comes to being a surrogate on the campaign trail, there appear to be no sex based distinctions. When the numbers are counted, there are six more male presidential children than female presidential children. Therefore, it may seem that male presidential children have an edge in the number of surrogates but really they do not. It

appears that on the campaign trail males and females participate equally as surrogates. There is one problem, though, with this conclusion. Before 1964 there really were no female surrogates (unless Anna Roosevelt is included when she filled in as hostess when her mother was away).

Informal advisors/confidant(e)s includes roughly the same number of men and women. Of all of the presidential children who can be considered informal advisors/confidant(e)s (including Jimmy Roosevelt, and Julie Nixon Eisenhower, and David Eisenhower), three females and four males performed this role.

The same can be said for skeletons. There were only two dominant examples of this role, and one was female and the other male. Thus, it does not seem that sex affected who performed this role.

### **Political Roles Before and After 1960**

The last hypothesis was that symbols and surrogates would be after 1960 more important than before 1960. As the strength of national parties in the electorate declined, the number of primaries increased, new media advancements emerged, and the presidency grew more personalized.

Even so, symbols appeared before as well as after 1960. After 1960 there are four presidential children whose dominant role was as a symbol, while before there was only one. Margaret Truman was used on the whistle-stop campaign and functioned mainly as a symbol. She was to help create the image for her father as good family man. This is the same purpose of symbols since 1960. The difference is that the symbols since 1960 have had a much larger audience, encompassing much of the United States and parts of the world. This is in comparison to the whistle-stop campaigns in which the audiences may have been as little as 25 people. To that extent, it does seem that symbols are more important than they once were.

Surrogates also seem to have increased in importance since 1960. As John Eisenhower stated: "The habit of employing the whole family as a political phalanx was not yet in vogue [in 1952] (Eisenhower 187). Jimmy Roosevelt was used as a campaign

manager in the primaries but when it came to the general campaign he was used as a symbol. Neither Margaret Truman nor John Eisenhower was a surrogate on the campaign trail. Margaret was a symbol and John did not participate in campaigns at all. There seem to be many more presidential children on the campaign trails since 1960.

There has not been a shift in the need for informal advisors but the role of skeletons seems to have become more important since 1960. Jimmy Roosevelt had his moments as a skeleton but this did not have the impact that Patti Davis and Neil Bush had. The only conclusion here would be that with the growing amount of media and instant access to information, the slip-ups of presidential children are more noticeable.

### **Future Roles**

Looking toward the future participation of presidential children, it is hard to predict what roles they will perform. Political times change and roles may vary, but it can be seen from this analysis that all four of the roles have been important over the span of years from FDR to Clinton. George W. Bush was actually performing a role that combined what Anna Roosevelt and John Eisenhower had done many years before. But we did see for the first time with Amy Carter a child being used to send a political message. This was done by sending her to public school and by having her baptized in Washington, D.C. Jimmy Carter was using his daughter to show the American public what his political ideals were. Another new action was George W. Bush's involvement in the resignation of a White House staffer. So there are possibilities for changes within these four roles and roles can emerge. This has already been seen with the role of protector. This role was not accounted for in the initial categorizations but through the research on Julie Nixon Eisenhower this new role emerged.

### **Political Significance**

As a whole, the findings of this thesis are important to the study of the presidency and to the larger political system for several reasons. First, a greater understanding can be

gained of the character of each of these presidents through the actions of their children. This is important because it helps the public come to understand the man and not just the institution of the presidency.

Studying political roles of presidential children also helps to account for how the president uses his children to bring the outside world into the gates of the White House. The president is closed off to the outside world when living in the White House and we have seen that informal advisors/confidant(e)s have acted as conduits to this outside world.

We have also come to a greater understanding of the informal influences on the presidency. Not just in the advice that is given by presidential children but also the effect on the personality and ego these children may have. This can be viewed clearly in the case of Julie Nixon Eisenhower. Richard Nixon's ego was being fed by Julie and she seemed to reinforce some of his actions and denials as the investigation into the Watergate break-in and cover-up grew and eventually brought his demise.

Lastly, we have seen how presidents have adapted to the changes in the methods of campaigning. As campaigns have become more candidate-centered, presidential children performing the roles of symbol and surrogate have become increasingly more important. Presidential candidates have had to adapt to the candidate-centered campaigns and one way to this is by the greater participation of his own children on the campaign trail.

### **Further Research**

There are many areas of this topic that have not been touched upon here but may be studied in further research. Only the "modern presidency" has been analyzed in this thesis. A look to presidential children before Roosevelt and a look forward to the potential roles of presidential children after Clinton may provide new insights and may suggest other roles not discussed here.

The data presented in this thesis only dealt with presidential children's roles during the campaigns and while their fathers were in office. Other research may be executed to find out what roles, if any, presidential children perform, once their fathers have left office.

There is preliminary evidence to suggest that presidential children do continue to perform roles after their fathers have left office. Two examples of this are Margaret Truman and Julie Nixon Eisenhower who have written extensively about their fathers and in support of their administrations.



## **Conclusion**

In summary, there is no doubt that presidential children do perform political roles. Detailed research has suggested that presidential children seem to perform four distinct roles: symbol, surrogate, informal advisor/confidant(e), or skeleton. Each presidential child can be categorized as fitting primarily in one of these four roles. Three presidential children--Jimmy Roosevelt, Julie Nixon Eisenhower and David Eisenhower demonstrated the capability of performing all four dominantly. Some of the roles vary by the age and some by the sex of the presidential child. There also seems to be an increased need for surrogates and symbols since 1960. But it is obvious that presidential children from FDR through Clinton, have all performed political roles.

Thus, this thesis has provided an in-depth exploration into the roles of presidential children since the time of FDR. This was the main purpose of this thesis, being there is so little literature on the subject. Through this analysis, we have come to a greater understanding of the informal influences on presidents and seen how candidates have adapted to changes in the methods of campaigns and media by using their children more often as symbols and surrogates. Much has been written about the potential influences first ladies may have on presidents but little has been written about the influence presidential children have. Through the analysis of this thesis, we have attempted to come to a greater understanding of the influences presidential children do have and how much presidents rely on their children, not only for support on the campaign trail but also while in the White House.



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## APPENDIX A

- I. Paul Hume's review of Margaret Truman's performance at Constitution Hall as reprinted in Truman by David McCullough(827-828).

Miss Truman is a unique American phenomenon with a pleasant voice of little size and fair quality. She is extremely attractive on stage.

...Yet Miss Truman cannot sing very well. She is flat a good deal of the time—more last night than at any time we have heard her in past years. There are few moments during her recital when one can relax and feel confident that she will make her goal, which is the end of the song.

Miss Truman has not improved in the years we have heard her...she still cannot sing with anything approaching professional finish.

She communicates almost nothing of the music she presents...And still the public goes and pays the same price it would for the world's finest singers...

It is an extremely unpleasant duty to record such unhappy facts about so honestly appealing a person. But as long as Miss Truman sings as she has for three years, and does today, we seem to have no recourse unless it is to omit comment on her programs altogether.

- II. Harry S. Truman's letter of response as reprinted in Truman by David McCullough(829).

Mr. Hume: I've just read your lousy review of Margaret's concert. I've come to the conclusion that you are an "eight ulcer man on four ulcer pay." [Truman here was quoting a phrase he had once heard used by Steve Early.]

It seems to me that you are a frustrated old man [Hume was thirty-four] who wishes he could have been successful. When you write such poppy-cock as was in the back section of the paper you work for it shows conclusively that you're off the beam and at least four of your ulcers are at work.

Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a supporter below!

[Westbrook] Pegler, a gutter snipe, is a gentleman alongside you. I hope you'll accept that statement as a worse insult than a reflection on your ancestry.

## APPENDIX B

January 6, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: HERB KLEIN and RON ZIEGLER  
FROM: JOHN R. BROWN III  
SUBJECT: Julie's UPI Interview

On reviewing the UPI interview with Julie it was noted that it was a waste not to have had this on Television. In addition, you should note that the key to this was the enthusiasm-not the facts.

cc: H.R. Haldeman  
A. Butterfield

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON  
JANUARY 9, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN BROWN  
FROM: RONALD ZIEGLER  
REGARDING: UPI Interview with Julie

I agree it is unfortunate that an interview such as the one Julie gave to Helen Thomas was not on TV. However, I think when the story appears in the Sunday papers on January 10, as you will agree, the interview will have good impact.

I am suggesting to Connie Stuart(Pat Nixon's press secretary) that she attempt to arrange aTV interview with Julie along the same lines as the Helen Thomas interview.

cc: Connie Stuart

CONNIE:

Attached is a memorandum from John Brown and above is my response to it. Would you talk to Julie about the possibility of doing a TV interview similar to her UPI interview?

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January 11, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR RON ZIEGLER  
FROM: CONSTANCE STUART

I was rather surprised by your memo concerning Julie Eisenhower's interview with Helen Thomas. There is nothing "unfortunate" about an interview that runs in both the *Washington Post* and *The Evening Star* on the same Sunday. The story will receive wide national and international distribution as you well know.

The fact that Julie granted a UPI interview certainly does not preclude her giving such interviews to other media. Julie's TV interview with Nancy Dickerson early this fall was along the same lines as the UPI interview. Julie agreed to an interview some time this month with Clare Crawford of WRC. This interview would then run on the evening NBC News shows as opposed to the morning shows where Julie already appeared. I've also talked with Herb Klein about doing an interview with Julie for the Captain Kangaroo show. Herb thinks this would be a good place for Julie to make an appearance.

In addition to the UPI story and the television, an interview with Julie will appear this month in Family Weekly, the Sunday supplement, including a cover photograph, and Mrs. Nixon, Tricia, and Julie are on the cover of *Good Housekeeping* this month with an inside story by Jessamyn West.

Julie has accelerated her graduate school program and has little time to spare, but she has been most cooperative in giving what time she has and we will try to make as much use of her as possible through March when David graduates and we may lose Julie to some far-flung Navy post.

cc: Bob Haldeman  
Herb Klein  
Alex Butterfield

Source: Thomas, Helen. Dateline: White House, New York: Macmillan Pub. Co. Inc., 1975 pp. 187-188.

## **Vita**

### **Tabitha Alissa Warters**

I received a BA in Political Science and a minor in History in 1996 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). I also completed an MA in Political Science from Virginia Tech in 1998. My main focus is on the United States Presidency taken from a historical politics viewpoint. My thesis focuses on the political roles of presidential children from FDR through Clinton. I have worked for the past two academic years as a teaching assistant for the Political Science department at Virginia Tech. I am currently an employee at Colonial Williamsburg as an historical interpreter and I plan to continue my education in the fall of 1998 by beginning another MA in History at Virginia Tech.