

Agnew's Idealist

Don 11/16/69
By Judith Martin

Cynthia Rosenwald is Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's speechwriter, researcher and intellectual sounding board. There are those who might find that job description humorous, and they think it's even funnier that it's filled by a little housewife from Baltimore.

Add the fact that many consider her to be the intellectual-in-residence on the Agnew staff, and you have a full-fledged Agnew joke.

But maybe not. She refuses to talk about herself, but it is known that Agnew's famous phrases—like "effete corps of impudent snobs"—are as much of a shock to her as to anybody else. Her boss adds those to her quietly structured, issue-oriented speeches.

As for being a housewife—yes, in the sense that she lives in a tidy, white brick house with her husband and three children. But she also works full time and more at a job ordinarily filled by several people—she is Agnew's only researcher, as well as only speechwriter—and has been described as a genius, an idealist and a fighter.

"Ted Sorensen is her speech-writing idol," said a colleague. "She's no middle-brow, the way Agnew likes to describe himself—she's an aristocrat, with plenty of smarts; a genius with a pho-

tographic memory and a fantastic knowledge of history and issues. If she weren't here, she would probably be a professional student, piling up degrees."

"Agnew needs her. She has the ability to make him feel uncomfortable when he's taking an inflexible viewpoint. There's a creative closeness between them. Cynn timer does more than write words—she knows history, and she deals with ideas and philosophy. She's very tough on him, and he takes it from her. Cynn timer's the only one he'll take it from, because he knows she's devoted and loyal and that in the end she'll articulate his views. She's a professional, and he knows that when all is said and done, she'll go to work for her boy. But she has made damn sure that he's seen things through her eyes, even if he makes the final decision otherwise."

An old friend describes her as "the Mary Wells of this business. She's cute as a button, and it's deceiving as hell. People think 'What a nice girl,' but when she gets in a meeting, watch out. She can charm you, or she can slay you. The people who think they'll humor Agnew's kid are in for a shock."

But charm isn't the chief part of her feminine advantage: it's the fact that everyone, including Agnew, knows that she doesn't need the job.

"If Agnew really violated an idea that was dear to her, she'd leave tomorrow," says a co-worker. Whatever it is that drives her—and her fingernails are bitten down to the knuckles—it doesn't seem to be the need for a place of glory.

She comes from a comfortable background—her father was head of Hecht's in Baltimore—and was leading the good, middle-class life when she chanced on her job.

The wife of another Hecht's executive, she was spending her spare time doing charity work and taking research courses at Goucher College toward the degree she never got because of her marriage.

A friend, advertising executive Robert Goodman, suggested that she take a researcher's job in Agnew's gubernatorial campaign. "She set up a tremendous research operation," he said, and "out of her research, she began to complain about things she knew weren't being captured in the speeches."

Soon, she was writing them with him—he says he's still trying to meet her challenge "of writing the perfect speech"—and, Goodman said, "Agnew, who had been spitting out speechwriters throughout the campaign, found he was very comfortable with her work."

See CYNTHIA, G9, Col. 6

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CYNTHIA, From G1

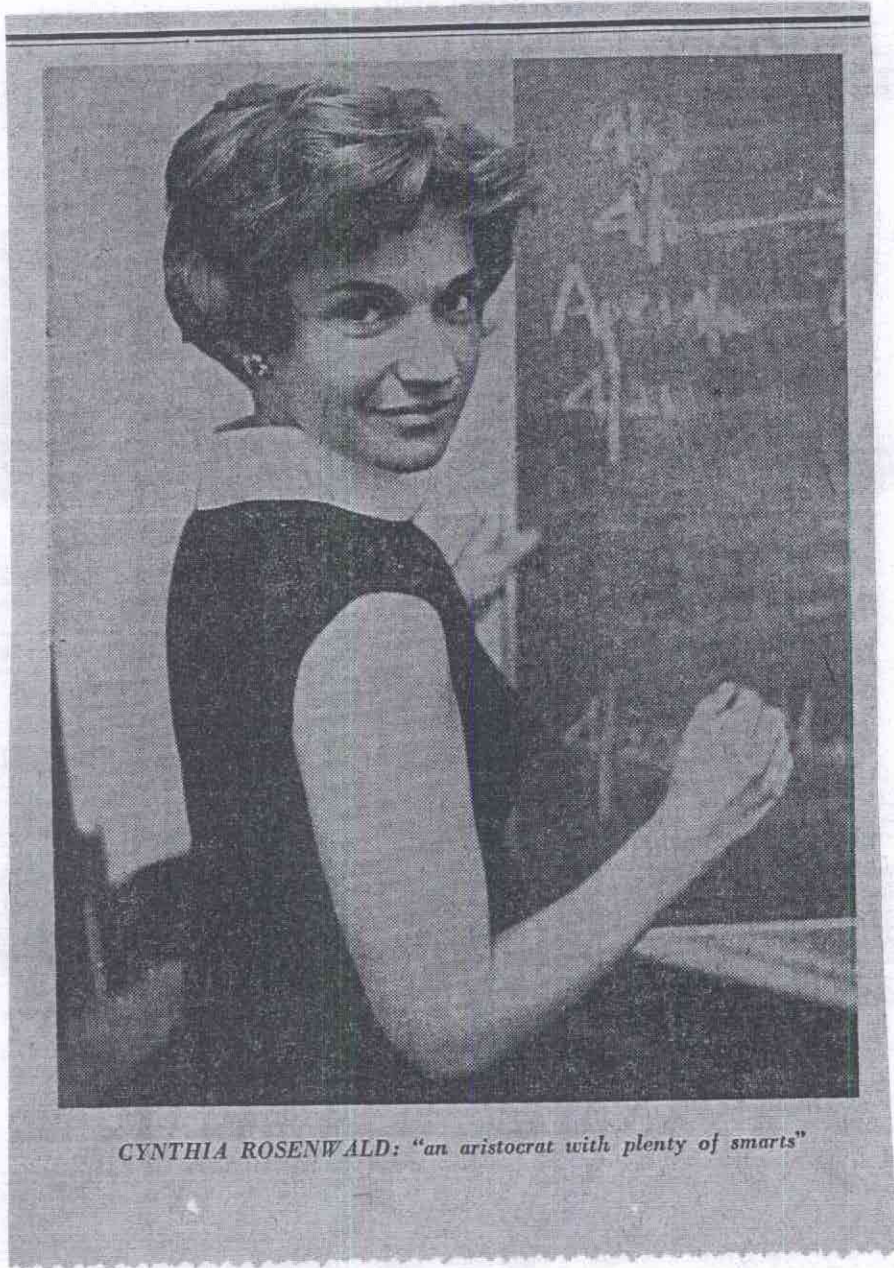
She was in Miami for the convention—on the verge of going home to tend to a sick child, but staying on and working around the clock when it became apparent that her boss might be destined for the Vice Presidential nomination.

Her schedule now is a rigorous one—up early to make breakfast for the family; leaving Baltimore at 7 a.m., working all day every day, and weekends when necessary, and returning home at 7 p.m. to make dinner, read to the children and collapse at 10 p.m.

"She doesn't get the glamor; she doesn't take a lot of the fun trips or meet the exciting people. She just sits in that little box and sometimes gets to feeling that the world is pretty small for her. Her Washington is one room with a telephone.

"Maybe she feels there's too much pulling at her. The excitement of hearing her own words has worn off, and I think she's in it now for the feeling that she is really doing something in the world. But nobody owns her. She could retire back into her own world tomorrow.

"Only they'd have to hire four men to replace her."



CYNTHIA ROSENWALD: "an aristocrat with plenty of smarts"