

For the Ford Family, Life Went on

By Jeannette Smyth
Washington Post Staff Writer

Betty Bloomer Ford, 55, canceled a lunch date and an appointment with a foot doctor and spent the tense hours waiting yesterday behind the tightly shuttered blinds of the Fords' modest Alexandria house.

After repeated requests from reporters, who had taken up a vigil on the quiet suburban street at 10 a.m., Mrs. Ford emerged briefly at 4:20 p.m. to pose for photographers.

Smiling but strained, she answered questions as the Ford's chauffeur, Richard Frazier, held an umbrella to protect her from the drizzle. She said she hadn't heard from the Vice President, and planned to watch President Nixon's televised speech at home — "Won't everybody?"

According to her press secretary, Nancy Howe, the only way Mrs. Ford had been keeping abreast of the news was through "what we hear from reporters calling in all day."

For the four Ford children, life went on as usual. Mike, 24, was on his way back to Massachusetts' Gordon-Conwell Seminary, where he and his bride of a month, the former Gayle Brumbaugh, are students. Jack, 22, is a forest ranger this summer at Yellowstone National Park.

Eighteen-year-old Steve was the only other member

of the family to meet the press yesterday. He drove up in his new yellow Jeep and sweaty work clothes after finishing the last day of his summer job — mowing the grass on the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Reporters brought him the first news he'd heard that Mr. Nixon was going to address the nation. "We don't have any radios at work," young Ford said. "We just cut grass."

He said the Fords had not

discussed the possibility of moving to the White House Wednesday night, when the Vice President came home to "just a family dinner." He said his mother has "just been trying to move into the Naval Observatory lately," the newly designated Vice Presidential home.

As for Steve, he said he'd rather go work on a ranch than live in the White House. Last night he planned to write Duke University, where he has been accepted as a freshman, saying

he was taking a year off to go work "out West."

Seventeen-year-old Susan Ford, in blue jeans, went out with a girl friend during the afternoon. Press spokeswoman Howe would give no more details.

Signs that all was not normal on Crown View Drive included nearly a score of newspaper people who stood munching carry-out chicken in the rain.

Secret Service men, for whom the Fords' garage was made over into a command post, spent the afternoon re-

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moving the personal luggage they had packed for the California-Hawaii trip Vice President Ford was to have made starting yesterday.

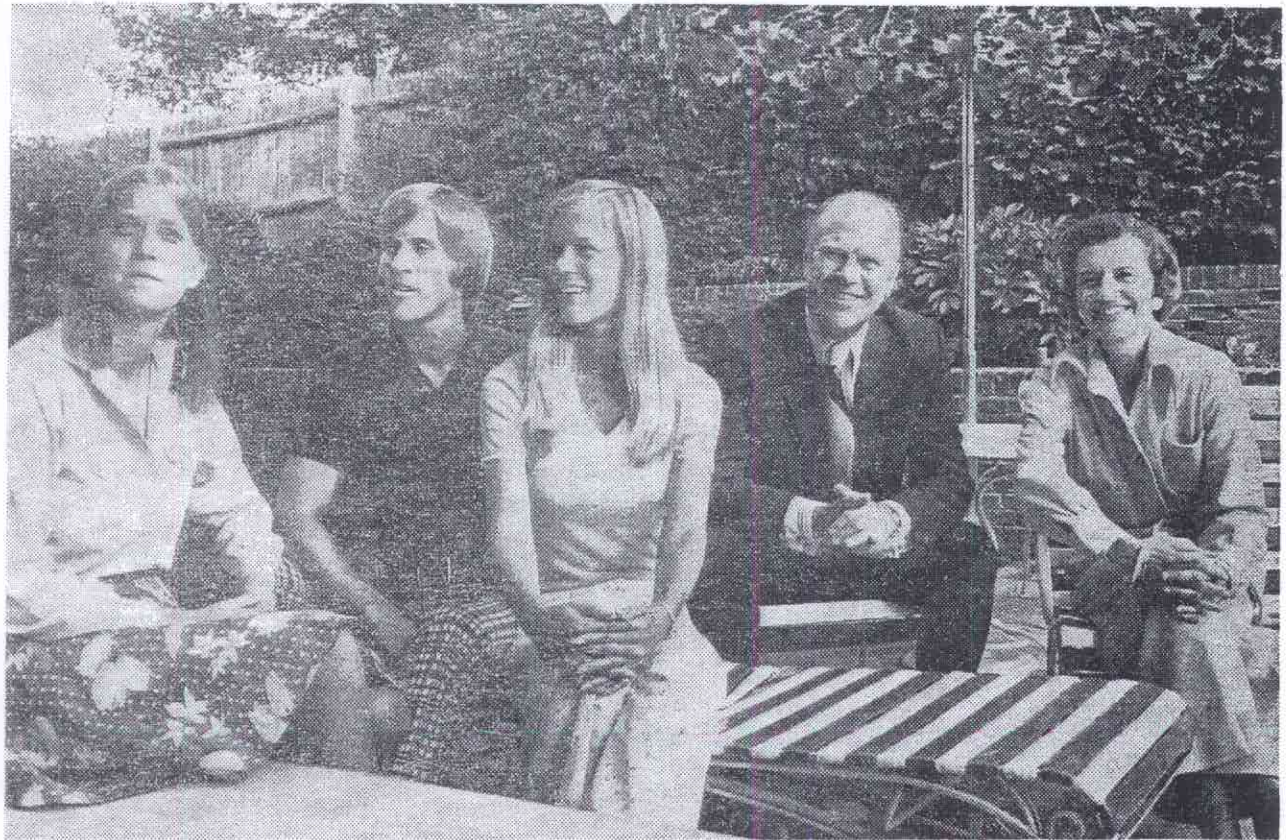
At 3 p.m., under orders from the Secret Service, Alexandria City police barricaded the Fords' street and tied yellow plastic rope across the opposite sidewalk to restrain reporters. "They tell us to block off traffic, we block off traffic," said Alexandria police Lt. Walter Calhoun, who said six city

policemen had been detailed to the Ford vigil.

At the same time, several C&P Telephone Co. crews worked in yellow slickers to connect up television cameras lines and press phones.

Alexandria boutique owner Frankie Welch, Mrs. Ford's seamstress, an unidentified neighbor presenting a nosegay, and Mrs. Peter Abbruzzese, who lives across the street, were the only outsiders admitted to the Ford home during the day.

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By Harry Naltchayan—The Washington Post

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford with their children Susan, 17, left, Mike, 24, and Gayle, 22, at home yesterday.