



DAVID HUME KENNEDY

FORD TAKING OATH AS VICE PRESIDENT FROM CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN BURGER AS WIFE BETTY HOLDS BIBLE & NIXON LOOKS ON\*

**THE VICE PRESIDENCY/COVER STORY**

# The Veep Most Likely to Succeed?

As usual, Jerry Ford bounced into the day at 6 a.m., rising after only 5½ hours of sleep. He skimmed the *Washington Post*—"I turn to the sports pages first"—and then he spent 20 minutes speed-reading a copy of the detailed daily news digest that is prepared for President Nixon. By 8 a.m., along with other House chieftains, Minority Leader Ford was at the State Department for a 90-minute break. He was being briefed by Secretary Henry Kissinger, whom Ford deeply respects. Then he settled down to spend a large part of this momentous day with wife Betty and their four children, who were home for much more than the holidays. They were soon to become the nation's second family. Gerald Rudolph Ford, 60, was getting ready to be sworn in as the 40th Vice President of the U.S.

For the nation, Ford's investiture meant more than simply having a Veep once again. In the light of Richard Nixon's traumatized presidency, Ford would become a distinctly thinkable successor. This in turn rendered the prospect of resignation or impeachment less frightening to many people.

From far and near, mostly from his home state of Michigan, came 25 relatives—stepbrothers, in-laws, nephews and nieces. They gathered for a private luncheon in a House dining room, together with some longtime neighbors of the Fords' and Mrs. Clara Powell, the family's maid for 20 years, now retired.

Ford ran out of tickets for the late afternoon inaugural ceremonies and had to appeal to House Doorkeeper William M. ("Fishbait") Miller for extras. Betty Ford consulted Son Michael, 23, a student at Massachusetts' Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, about the Jerusalem Bible that he had bought especially for the inaugural. Where should it be opened when she held it during the swearing-in? They agreed on the 20th Psalm ("May Yahweh [God] answer you in time of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob 'protect you'"). Said Mrs. Ford: "I hope my hand doesn't shake."

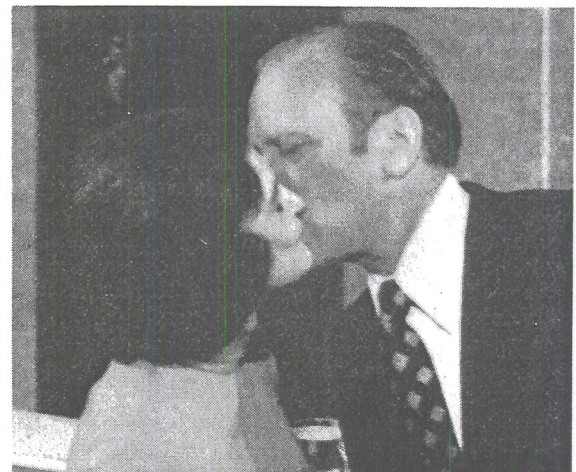
**Plain Man.** In an interview with *TIME* Correspondent Neil MacNeil before the ceremony, the Vice President-designate previewed the speech that he would deliver a few hours later. As he rehearsed his farewell to the House that has been his home for 25 years ("May God bless the House of Representatives"), tears began welling in Ford's eyes, and during the tribute to his wife and children the words came haltingly, only two or three at a time. "Ford is an emotional man," reports MacNeil. "He is a plain man who loves his family, loves his friends, loves the House. Reading the words he knew he would speak to the Congress and the country, in the singular role he knew he now was in, Ford was simply overcome."

Ford regained his composure and

wore a triumphant grin by the time he entered the House chamber, which was jammed with the biggest crowd in the memory of seasoned Congress watchers. He was accompanied by Richard Nixon, who entered smiling but later appeared tense. As the two reached the podium, Ford stepped forward alone to acknowledge the applause, and suddenly it grew into a cheering ovation. This was clearly Ford's day.

The new Vice President pledged to

\*Behind them: House Speaker Carl Albert and Speaker Pro Tem of the Senate James Eastland.



KISSING BETTY AS NEW NO. 2  
"The very best I can."

## THE NATION

"set a high example of respect for the crushing and lonely burdens which the nation lays upon the President." He spoke of a "visible and living unity" in the nation and promised "to do the very best that I can for America." For a nation that has become all too used to hearing bitterness from its politicians, there was a simple eloquence in his words and a deeply felt one in his delivery. Daughter Susan, 16, was moved to tears.

Despite Ford's small and forgivable joke that he is "a Ford, not a Lincoln," his inauguration may well come to be both greatly noted and long remembered. It was a constitutional first: though the office of Vice President has been vacant 16 times before, it has never been filled in the middle of an Administration. Ford's ascension was made possible by the 25th Amendment, passed in 1967, which authorizes the President to fill vacancies in the office of the Vice President, subject to confirmation of his nominee by a majority vote in both houses of Congress. Ford was approved easily, winning by a vote of 92 to 3 in the Senate and 387 to 35 in the House.

**Grueling Round.** Most important, Ford's swearing-in moved the plight of the Nixon presidency into yet another phase. Now, for the first time since the Watergate monster took shape eight months ago, there is a potential presidential successor who, under the circumstances, is both politically acceptable to most Democrats and politically legitimate in the eyes of Republicans. After Spiro Agnew's downfall, the next in line to the presidency was Speaker of the House Carl Albert, a Democrat. Had he been called on to succeed Nixon, Albert could never have lived down the suspicion that his party had stolen the White House from its rightful Republican occupants.

Ford's chances for succession seemed remote at the time that he was nominated by Nixon in mid-October. Less than ten days later, however, after the Saturday Night Massacre of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, Attorney General Elliot Richardson and his deputy William Ruckelshaus, Washington heard an unprecedented chorus demanding Nixon's impeachment. Many Congressmen began to believe that Ford might well have to perform a Vice President's only important function: to take over for a departed President.

Congressional Democrats, who had been toying with the idea of holding Ford's confirmation hostage until Nixon released all presidential tapes containing Watergate evidence, quickly backtracked. Albert made it clear that he did not want to take the place of a Republican President in whose impeachment he might be involved, and that Ford must be quickly confirmed.

Ford faced a grueling round of inquiries that made him the most closely scrutinized public official in the U.S. With his complete cooperation, 350 FBI agents from 33 field offices dug into his finances, his friendships, his correspondence—none of which produced any evidence of misconduct. At his confirmation hearings, Witness Ford came across as a banal speaker, but he also impressed his questioners with his openness, candor and competence in the glare of sudden attention. More, he did not hesitate to differ with Nixon's approach on several important matters. He urged the White House to produce all documents that would be necessary to clear the President. When asked what he would do if, like Prosecutor Cox, he had been ordered to submit to a "compromise" that would cut off further Watergate investigation, Ford replied: "I would prob-

ably do the same." That is, he would refuse the President's order. All in all, the ordeal of digging and grilling enhanced Ford's standing with the Congress and with the nation—in obvious contrast to the fate of his new boss.

On the day of his inaugural and the day after, the stock market's recently leaden Dow Jones industrial average shot up almost 50 points, its largest two-day gain ever; Wall Street analysts attributed part of it to a boost in political confidence caused by Ford's swearing-in. In Washington, an AFL-CIO lobbyist said that Ford's arrival was "our go-ahead" for a broadened labor push for impeachment. In addition, the two dailies owned by Chicago's Field Enterprises chose Ford's inauguration day as the occasion to urge in editorials the "vigorous pursuit" of impeachment proceedings against Nixon. Said the *Sun-Times*: "Nixon sought and won a mandate from the American voters and he has debauched it . . . The President's culpability seems to us to be beyond question."

**Watergate Panic.** Under Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr., the House Judiciary Committee holds its second meeting this week on the impeachment inquiry. The Constitution requires that the process begin in the House, precisely where Ford is liked and trusted most. Moreover, since any Congressman who is seeking re-election must face the voters in less than eleven months, the House is also where political panic over Watergate is first being sensed. House Republicans are worried that Nixon's troubles will wipe them out at the polls next year. After a secret survey, G.O.P. strategists calculated that the party may lose as many as 75 of the 191 House seats that it now holds. In the Senate, they found, Nixon's failure to resolve Watergate problems may cost Republicans six



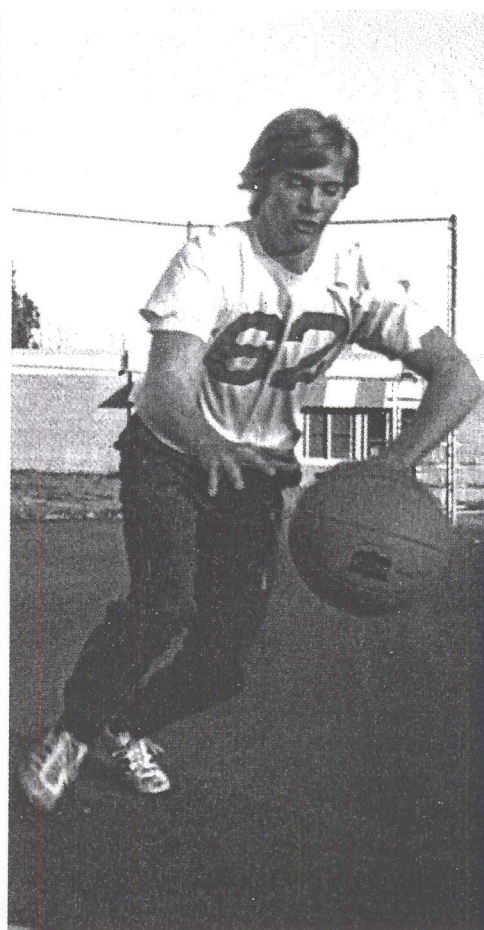
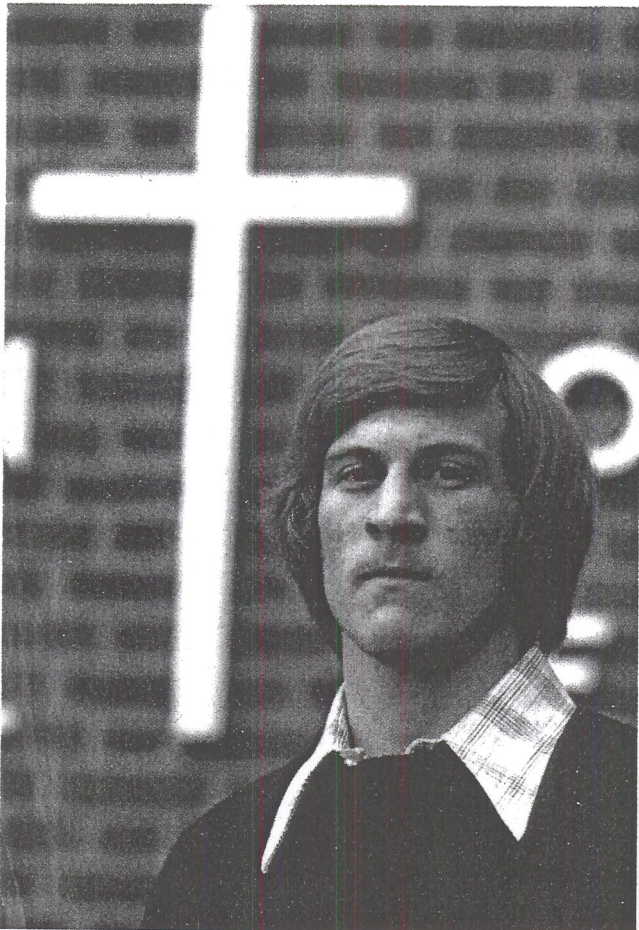
CELEBRATING IN WASHINGTON AFTER INAUGURATION

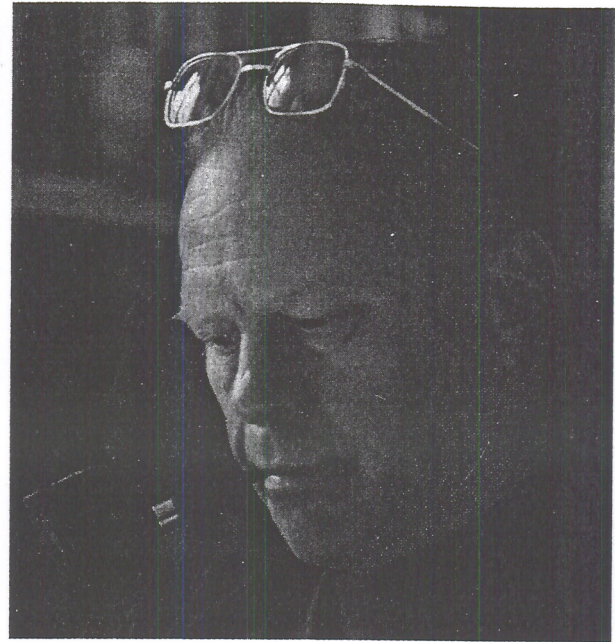
WITH NIXON, ARENDS & LAIRD  
AT REPUBLICAN BASH IN 1969



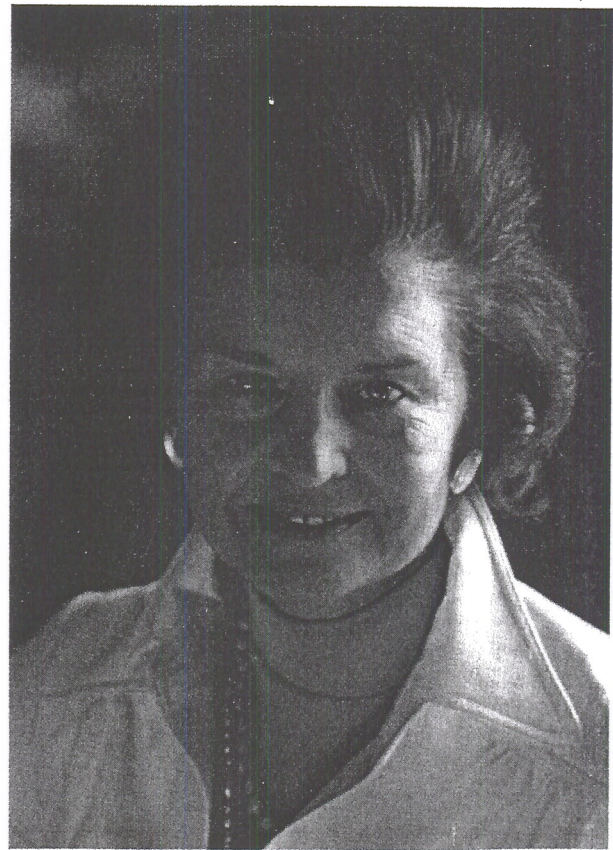
*Susan Ford, 16, exercising at ballet bar in school and playing with pet kitten at home.*

*Ford sons Michael, 23, at a seminary in Massachusetts; Steven, 17, on court; and John, 21, skiing at Sun Valley.*





*Vice President Gerald Ford and his wife Elizabeth. At left, strolling near their home in Alexandria, Va.*



PHOTOGRAPHS FOR TIME BY DAVID HUME KENNERLY

of their 43 seats, those of Kansas' Robert Dole, Colorado's Peter H. Dominick, Kentucky's Marlow W. Cook, Utah's Wallace F. Bennett, North Dakota's Milton R. Young and Florida's Edward F. Gurney (who has scandal problems of his own as well).

New York's liberal Republican Senator Jacob Javits, who is up for reelection next year, predicted that the question of Nixon's resignation "will probably come to the front" now that a logical successor is at hand. More surprising, conservative Ohio Congressman John M. Ashbrook declared bluntly: "I have found an increasing number of people, party loyalists, who believe the only hope for the Republican Party and the country is his resignation."

A majority of Republicans still reject that notion, for the record. Republican National Chairman George Bush, who reportedly abandoned plans to run for Governor of Texas next year because of Watergate, nonetheless maintains that Ford's presence has not altered the presidential picture. "I think there's a craving in this country for stability," he says. "I don't see Ford's confirmation as breaking some sort of psychological barrier. What I do see is that Congress is going home for Christmas, and if the President's approach—setting out the disclosure documents, moving around—is successful, then it will be reflected in Congress." If it is not successful—and Operation Candor so far has hardly been a ringing victory—then that will be reflected in Congress's mood as it heads into the new year.

**Awesome Alternative.** The Administration was still claiming that it does not take seriously any thought of impeachment. "Sure, the Republican guys are nervous," says a top Nixon aide. "There's no doubt that they are looking with less disfavor on that awesome alternative [impeachment]. But you can't just say, 'We're going to take a bath in November, so we've got to have impeachment.' You've still got to have some hard evidence of criminal involvement." In fact, there is no such requirement; most constitutional scholars believe that officeholders are impeachable for ethical as well as criminal lapses.

Illinois Congressman Tom Railsback, a Republican member of the House Judiciary Committee, predicts that Democrats rather than Republicans will push hardest for impeachment, now that they have helped to assure continuity in the Administration by approving a Republican Vice President. Railsback's odds that the President will eventually face the impeachment procedure: fifty-fifty. However, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield reports that his colleagues "aren't putting any pressure on me" to press for an oust-Nixon drive. Some anti-Nixon Republicans surmise that the Democratic leadership may decide that the President has been so seriously wounded that the party could profit most by keeping him in office and trying to engineer an anti-



RHODES & ARENDS AT CAPITOL  
Even the Strangler could win.

Administration election sweep in 1974 and 1976. In House debate, Maryland Democrat Clarence D. Long taunted Republicans: "If you keep the present incumbent in for three more years, the Democrats could win with the Boston Strangler."

Even the G.O.P.'s optimists admit that all pretense of recovery will be lost if any further time bombs are ticking away in the Watergate investigation. Still shocked by the Cox firing and the 18-minute gap in a Watergate tape, Republicans have grown wary indeed. "If it ever bottoms out, we might be all right," says Kansas' Dole. "But the coconuts keep dropping. You have to wear a steel helmet around here."

For his part, Ford left a post-inaugural conference with Nixon brimming with loyalty. "I can assure you that the President has no intention of resigning," he told newsmen at the White House. "When all of the facts are out, he did assure me that he will be completely exonerated." Ford continued: "If I were a member of the House of Representatives and the President indicated he was coming to my district, I'd be darned glad to have him." Ford was putting up a brave front on that score, in accordance with his political rule: "You don't tackle your own quarterback."

Such spirited support, of course, is a major reason why Ford was picked by the President for his new job. The two men have known each other since both arrived in Washington as freshman members of the House in the late '40s. Ford has said: "For whatever reason, Nixon and I have never seriously disagreed on any vital, substantive issue."

Their closeness in viewpoint may partly result from broadly similar backgrounds. Raised in Grand Rapids by his mother and stepfather, who adopted him, Ford went to the University of Michigan and was a football star. After graduating from Yale Law School and serving in the Navy during World War

II, Ford entered politics, defeating the isolationist incumbent, Bartel J. Jonkman, in the 1948 Republican congressional primary and went on to win in November with 60.5% of the vote. He has always been re-elected by more than that margin, thanks to efficient help and his own personal attention to the hometown electorate, which still amazes local Democrats. Says Grand Rapids Democratic Co-Chairman A. Robert Kleiner: "If anybody's grandmother in Poland is having trouble getting a U.S. visa, Jerry's right here."

Ford describes his views as generally "conservative in fiscal affairs, moderate in domestic affairs and internationalist in foreign affairs." His detractors argue that those labels cloak an essentially conservative outlook in all affairs; yet Ford's views on most issues have not been entirely predictable. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Peace Corps and foreign economic aid, for example, as well as an ardent cold warrior and backer of the Johnson-Nixon Viet Nam policy. On domestic issues, he would like to see a constitutional amendment permitting school prayer and a legal ban on abortions. He has also supported federal aid to higher education and welfare reform.

At confirmation hearings, Ford was criticized most harshly for his civil rights record, seemingly an odd rebuke since he has voted in favor of every major civil rights bill since 1949. His critics complain, however, that the final yes votes shield a far murkier record of support for amendments and other Southern-supported obstructions that were intended to cripple the purpose of the original legislation. Ford maintains that his preliminary voting record reflects both his attempts to conciliate between party factions and his own instincts against "moving too fast." Ford carefully pledged in his inaugural remarks to support "equal justice for all Americans."

**In Training.** Nixon reportedly wants Ford to become director of the Domestic Council, a post now held by Melvin Laird, who intends to leave. The word in Washington is that Laird is decamping because the President rarely heeds his advice. Ford is eager to take on responsibility; yet he is deeply disturbed by the prospect of losing Laird, one of the few White House aides with excellent connections in the Republican Party and on Capitol Hill. Speaking of Laird and Presidential Counsellor Bryce Harlow, another political veteran who plans to resign, Ford says: "I hope that they don't leave too soon. We need them badly."

The job Ford is clearly best qualified to take on is that of White House liaison officer with Congress. As a parting gift, Speaker Albert offered him the continued use of one of his offices in the House. Moreover, as Ford points out, he is not starting cold with the members of the Senate. "I've served with 34 Senators when they were in the House," he says. Now that Ford is Vice President, lead-

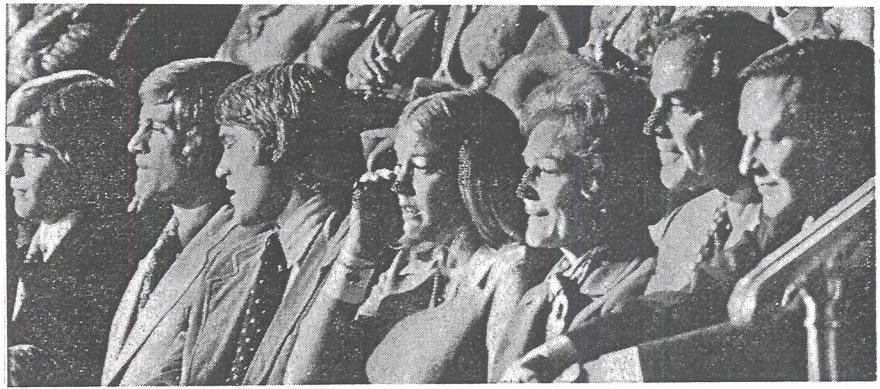
ers in both houses hope that for the first time their views will have direct access to President Nixon. Arizona's intellectual and staunchly conservative John J. Rhodes, who was unanimously elected by House Republicans to succeed Ford as minority leader when Rhodes' only challenger, Illinois's Leslie C. Arends, withdrew from competition, firmly endorsed such hopes.

Ford's performance as Vice President will almost inevitably be judged as if he is in training for another post. Though he has declared, "I have no intention of being a candidate for President or Vice President in 1976," he will be a leading prospect—if he does a good job. Those who doubt Ford's capability point out that he has had almost no experience in foreign affairs. Ford is determined to remedy this shortcoming in frequent sessions with Kissinger, who would almost certainly be asked to continue his geopolitical goals unchanged in any Ford Cabinet.

**Faint Praise.** Not everyone believes that Ford would distinguish himself as President. Many congressmen question his intellectual qualifications, about which even some Ford supporters provide faint praise. "Maybe he is a plodder, as some people here say," remarks liberal Democrat Richard Bolling of Missouri, "but right now the advantages of having a plodder in the presidency are enormous." Ford has impressed others with his drive and determination to do a solid, honest job. "Jerry Ford exudes the kind of confidence that I hope to see in a President," says Democrat Edward P. Boland of Massachusetts. "He could be the kind of President that Harry Truman became."

Above all, the nation will be looking for Ford's instincts, both political and human. Congressman Donald W. Riegle Jr., a political maverick from Flint, Mich., believes that they will be solid and fair on both counts. When Riegle was running for re-election in 1970 as a Republican supporter of Peace Candidate Pete McClosky, Ford braved the wrath of Nixon's White House to tell Republicans in Flint that Riegle's stance was within Republican bounds. Says Riegle, who has since become a Democrat: "The whole question of whether Jerry Ford can change from being a partisan battering ram to being a national conciliator can be answered only by his taking on the job. He has the kind of sensitivity that gives him a potential for growth. If I could trade Nixon for Ford, I would do it in an instant."

For the time being, Ford's instincts are to learn his new job and allow a nation that has been often and rudely jolted in recent months to get to know him. He also realizes that he must hold the President to his word that Ford's appointment truly marks a "new beginning" in the Nixon Administration, not just a troop replacement. "What I have to watch out for is not to become Nixon's apologist," Ford says. "That wouldn't help either of us."



FORD CHILDREN, PAT NIXON, AIDES HAIG & WILLIAM TIMMONS AT INAUGURATION

## Life with a "Perfect" Father

Since President Nixon nominated Gerald R. Ford to be Vice President, the Ford family has made two important decisions. One was not to move out of the four-bedroom house in Alexandria, Va., that they built 18 years ago and is now worth about \$65,000. The other was to keep an unbroken 16-year family tradition of getting together at their condominium in Vail, Colo., for two weeks of skiing over Christmas. "Ours has been a very close family life," explains Betty Ford, "but that's about the only time all of us can get together these days."

During Ford's 25 years in politics, much of the burden of raising that family—Michael, 23, John, 21, Steven, 17, and Susan, 16—has fallen on Betty. Ford averaged 200 out-of-town speeches a year and often had to work late at the Capitol. Fortunately for the family, his wife prefers her children and community activities to politicking. She has served as a Cub Scout den mother, a Sunday school teacher and head of the local cancer fund drive. One year she had children in three different schools and made a point of attending meetings of all three Parent-Teacher associations.

Slim (size 10) and brunette, the soft-spoken Mrs. Ford, 55, was raised in Grand Rapids. Before her marriage in 1948, she was a Powers model in New York City and a dancer with the Martha Graham troupe. Her favorite hobby is growing flowers and vegetables. As the nation's Second Lady, she hopes "to do something for the arts."

The Ford children's lives demonstrate that they are individualists. Reared in his family's Episcopal faith, Michael became deeply interested in theology as an undergraduate at Wake Forest College, a Baptist school in North Carolina. Now he is a first-year student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass., though he does not plan to become a minister. After class, he works with "Young Life," an evangelical organization for teen-agers.

Jack, the middle brother, is the only Ford child who has shown any political bent. In 1972, he skipped a semester at Utah State University, where he is now

a junior, to work on college campuses for Nixon's re-election. But his principal interest is forestry, and he hopes to go either to graduate school in watershed management or to law school, where he would specialize in environmental problems. Last summer, he spent six weeks with the Forest Service, fighting forest fires in Idaho and California.

Steve, a senior at a public high school in Alexandria, recently bought a motorcycle out of the money he earned as an elevator operator in the Senate last summer. He jogs, shoots baskets at a nearby school, and lifts weights in his family's paneled recreation room.

Susan, a boarding student at Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, Md., has followed in her mother's jetés. She has studied modern dance since the age of eight, and is now taking ballet lessons as well. She tends 25 plants in her room, loves to do needle point, and dotes on her Siamese cat, Chan. All four children feel unusually close to their father. Explains Jack: "He never tried to mold us or direct us. He allowed us room to explore for ourselves, to find ourselves." Exclaims Susan: "He's the perfect father."

At night, Ford usually brings work home and goes through it while glancing up at TV (favorite programs: *Cannon*, *McMillan and Wife*). Only rarely do the Fords entertain at home or go out to eat. When they do, they usually eat seafood at Washington's Jockey Club or Sea Catch Restaurant. A dedicated weight watcher, Ford swims in his heated pool twice daily from March to November. Frequently he skips lunch, or has a dish of cottage cheese with ketchup in his office. He weighs 201 lbs., just four more than during his football days at the University of Michigan, but admits that his weight has "shifted" a bit.

Since his nomination, the family lifestyle has scarcely changed. The Fords now have five telephones, including a direct line to the White House, and are remodeling the garage to accommodate the Vice President's Secret Service guards. At Utah State, John shaved his beard, partly because of letters from people who thought a Vice President's son should not have one.