

## Betty Beale: Washington

WASHINGTON — Generally, people have two images — the one presented to the public and the private one reserved for family and trusted friends.

For a personal view of the nature of Richard Nixon, as in the case of the Democratic contenders, the wife of the candidate was approached. Admittedly, Pat Nixon would not differ from Eleanor McGovern in wanting the public to see her husband in the nicest light.

But never has the difference between the public and private images of two political men been more apparent than in the responses of the wives to the first question.

If George McGovern has been criticized for one thing it is for not being able to control his own people, to keep his own house in order. Yet, when Eleanor McGovern was asked before his nomination what one word best described her husband, she answered, "strong."

And if there's one thing President Nixon has been accused of in the past it's for coolness or lack of concern for the little man. But when Mrs. Nixon was asked how she could best describe her husband in one word, she replied, "Compassionate — because he is so thoughtful of everyone, the family, friends, the little man on the street, everybody."

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If you asked most people, including members of the press, if the President was an easy man to know or to understand the answer would probably be no.

But if you say that to Pat Nixon you get a strong reaction. She thinks that impression is due to the image making of the media and not to the shyness both Henry Kissinger and Rose Woods attribute to him. Indeed, the First Lady would not say Dick Nixon was shy.

"I think it's because he doesn't have a good press, because everybody who knows him thinks he is an easy man to know," she insisted. Then she pointed to characteristics that people do not automatically associate with this reserved President.

"I have never seen a person with a better sense of humor or one who cares more about people. He is the warmest person I have ever known. He is not the back-slapping or gushing type but he is constantly concerned about others."

Asked why over the years he had held aloof from the press rather than cultivate friends in the media as did Jack Kennedy, who received the best press of any President, she said, "I think he's very friendly to the press. He doesn't have time to see many people privately.

"It took three years to get prepared to go to China. You know he was working on that from the moment he got into the White House. We had many people in other countries working on this, for instance the president of Rumania. When you do all this you don't have time for some things."

What kind of a man is Dick Nixon around the house? Is he a handy man: Is he ever a Mr. Fix-it?

"He is not a fixer. Dick pretends he can't hang a picture but when I get in a pickle I call on him."

# The Way Pat Sees Him

"He loves his home. He loves the gardens. We have some beautiful roses at San Clemente." He cares enough about having them in the house to go out after dark and clip them.

Does he wear old clothes when he relaxes at home?

"He wears a sports jacket. Mostly he DOES dress. He's always been that way. He has never sat down for dinner without a jacket on except for one time, and it was a very hot night. He thinks dinner is special."

"We don't have anybody (domestic help) on deck at night so we can be alone," said Pat who does any late-night cooking desired. "When our friends come we help ourselves. I like to raid the ice box."

The president is on a diet and if he watches his breakfast and lunch he can have anything he wants for dinner. "Fruit juice and some kind of cereal and wheat germ," is what he starts his day off with, and luncheon is apt to consist of cottage cheese and fruit. "He weighs 173 pounds."

"There is one thing he enjoys very much. He has a sound system which he put into the Lincoln Room and he puts classical music on very, very loud. You can hear every note. It practically shakes the walls down but he loves it. He likes to read history and he's a spectator sports man too," she added referring to his well known habit of watching football or baseball on TV.

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Is he interested in clothes, either his or hers?

"He doesn't discuss clothes but he notices what I wear. He will say, 'You have a pretty new dress,' or 'I like that color.'" He has never picked out a dress for her or the girls by himself, although in his pre-White House days he went shopping with them on occasion.

"I love to help him choose things," said his wife. "I



was a merchandising major and I love fabrics. I was assistant buyer at Bullocks - Wilshire.

"He isn't a vain person. He dresses in a few minutes. He wants to be neat and well dressed," is the way she described his fashion goals.

Although the public only sees Richard Nixon in ultra-conservative, trim well-pressed dark suits, his wife insists he has lots of sports jackets.

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One reason, obviously, this First Lady regards another four years in the White House without misgivings is seen in her answer to the following question: Has the past term taken a toll?

"I don't believe it has as much as it has with some other Presidents because Dick is very confident in his work. There hasn't been the strain and frustration." Whatever the reason, to the observer he seems to have aged less than many chief executives.

What traits of character in others does he most prize?

"Honesty," was the immediate reply. "I can remember him lecturing the girls about that a long time ago. I remember the first lecture he gave them. They were telling him about how some people cheated in exams and he was so shocked he told them it was important to be

honest — honest in every way — to speak their minds and be straightforward."

Does he have any pet economies?

"No, he doesn't, but generally we have always had to be economical. If he has a pet extravagance I think maybe it's gifts for the girls and me. He will see something and get it on the spur of the moment." She recalled with a smile how he once saw some beautiful candles in a New York store and instantly said he would take three of them only to discover that they were \$25 each. He couldn't bring himself then to say he didn't want them. "Tricia never burned hers, but Julie and I burn an inch a year."

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Pat Nixon was queried next on what was the best way to get him to do something. Ask him straight out, or simply drop a hint?

"I just ask him because he is very busy and I don't have time to hint."

How strong a disciplinarian was he with the children?

"He always wanted a very happy home life so he never said a cross word to the girls. I had to do it." As with Eleanor McGovern, this last comment was the closest Pat came to a criticism of her husband.