



Helen Smith: Plenty of red-letter days

## Helping Pat Meet the Press

### Washington

HELEN McCain Smith, Pat Nixon's third press secretary, who has succeeded Constance Stuart, does not intend to hold press briefings as often as her predecessor.

Miss Stuart held forth in the White House theater twice a week, rain or shine, no news or good news.

"I will only hold briefings when there is something to say," says Helen, a widow and a member of Pat Nixon's press staff since 1968.

Nor will Helen pursue a policy of barring reporters from events. (Dorothy McCardle, Washington Post society reporter, was recently banned).

Helen thinks singling out reporters for punishment is a mistake and, although she tried to make her feelings known at the time of Mrs. McCardle's expulsion, presidential press secretary Ron Ziegler's office would not relent.

Helen intends to see this does not happen again. Unless a specific press pool is called for, she said she will do her utmost to include everyone.

Soft-spoken, blue-eyed Helen does not anticipate that

Mrs. Nixon will take many trips in the near future, except to accompany the President.

Helen is not one to concur with the idea that Pat Nixon has gone from Plastic Pat to Pat the Politician.

"I think she has always done well, she had just never been recognized as highly before. It was only after her China and African trips that the world began to take notice of what a remarkable person she is.

"She's very proud of what the President has done. She said to me the night the peace agreement was signed, 'This is the fulfillment of a dream.'"

Helen says there is no one highlight of her years in the White House that can surpass simply "being in contact with the First Family. Every day is a red-letter day.

"It's being about to pick up the phone and call Julie or Tricia and knowing they'll answer. It's the many kind and wonderful things they've done for me."

Does the job have a bad side? "Yes," laughs Helen. "Answering the telephone. But being available is a necessary part of the job."

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