

Politician Branching Out

Anne Legendre Armstrong

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Anne Legendre Armstrong, whom President Ford reportedly intends to name as Ambassador to Britain, is no stranger to the kind of gracious socializing that such a post requires.

Woman in the News Nor is she unfamiliar with the role of enthusiastic representative for the cause she chooses to espouse: when Watergate cast its pall across the Nixon White House it was Mrs. Armstrong, a counselor to the President, who often took up the defense.

Mrs. Armstrong, who would become the first woman American ambassador to Britain, served as counselor to two Republican Presidents, but began her life in politics working for a Democrat. At assar, she was a volunteer worker in the 1948 Presidential campaign for President Truman.

Mrs. Armstrong was born in New Orleans on Dec. 27, 1927, daughter of Armand Legendre, a coffee importer who belonged to a Creole family. She attended the Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Va., where she was president of the student body and valedictorian of her class.

When They Met

After college, she worked as an assistant editor at Harper's Bazaar, but left the job to marry Tobin Armstrong, a tall and rugged Texan whose 18-square-mile ranch holds 3,000 head of Santa Gertrudis cattle. Their courtship — four months — began when she visited a classmate at the King Ranch, which adjoins the Armstrong property.

The Armstrongs have five children — two girls and three boys, including 19-year-old twins. According to Dorothy Hasty, Mrs. Armstrong's secretary at the ranch, the children would probably stay in this country if their mother's nomination was confirmed, because they are in college. But Mr. Armstrong would accompany his wife to London, the secretary said.

The Armstrongs are independently wealthy, traditionally a necessity in the London post because the costs of its maintenance and its social functions are so high.

The American Ambassador lives at Winfield House, a three-story, pink mansion on

12½ acres in Regent's Park, including greenhouses, a tennis court and swimming pool. In 1969, when Walter Annenberg was the official tenant there, Winfield House underwent \$1 million of improvements at Mr. Annenberg's expense.

Life in London is not likely to provide the easy access to the rugged life that Mrs. Armstrong came to enjoy as the wife of a Texas rancher.

In Texas, where her great-grandfather, Leonidas Jefferson Storey, served as Lieutenant Governor in 1880, Mrs. Armstrong entered politics at the grassroots level, she says, and then "sort of branched out." She began with precinct work and became a Republican in the first Eisenhower campaign of 1952.

She became vice-chairman of the Texas Republican Party and a National Committeewoman. She was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 1964 and '68, serving on the platform committee. In 1969, she was on the executive committee of the Republican National Committee and was elected co-chairman of the Republican Party in 1971.

'Open-Door Policy'

According to a Republican "is one which parallels a Party profile of her few years stated objective of President ago, her political philosophy Nixon — an open-door policy for the Republican party." The profile continued:

"She firmly believes that the G.O.P. must be open to all people, young and old, faiths and races. Another one of her strong convictions is that there should be more and more women in top government positions."

In 1972 Mrs. Armstrong went to the White House. As a counselor, with Cabinet-level status, to Presidents Nixon and Ford, she acted in a liaison capacity in matters relating to the country's Spanish Americans, women, to youth and to the Bicentennial. She was a delegate to the United Nations food conference in Rome in 1974 and a member of the Commission on the Organization of Government for the Formulation of Foreign Policy.

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