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## Refugee Task Force Director

Julia Vadala Taft

BY DAVID BINDER

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WASHINGTON, May 23—Julia Vadala Taft is asked from time to time about the genealogy of her husband, William Howard Taft 4th, who is great grandson of the President.

**Woman  
in the  
News**

At least once she replied with a loving look at her spouse, "You and your Tafts," and proceeded to disclose that she, too, had aristocratic blood, a landed grandfather who was a baron in Catania, Sicily, Baron Vadala.

Although she does not consider herself a pronounced advocate of women's liberation, she insisted on the Ms. designation during her appearance before Congress as a member of the Ford Administration's Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees.

She discontinued the practice today when it was announced that President Ford would appoint her director of the group, which is managing the resettlement of more than 130,000 refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam.

"I don't care one way or the other," she said.

L. Dean Brown, the man she is succeeding, provided the bulk of the testimony before House and Senate committees on the Administration's request for a substantial authorization for refugee aid.

But many Congressmen paid tribute to Julia Taft's persuasive ability in presenting projected assistance programs for the Indochinese in this country. This week Congress authorized and appropriated \$405-million for this assistance.

She testified as the task force's delegate from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, where she has served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for human development since 1973 and earlier in external affairs as



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*Too busy for her usual gourmet cooking*

a special assistant.

Her task force assignment began April 18, when it was becoming apparent that tens of thousands of Indochinese would soon be seeking and needing asylum in this country.

Since then, she has been working a 15-hour day, seven days a week, something she calls "an extraordinary experience—being right at the point where decisions are being made about the futures of people and how to treat them most humanely so that they retain their own integri-

ty and get viable opportunities."

The emergency assignment has also had an almost disastrous effect on a passion she shares with her husband: preparing gourmet food. The Tafts have been subsisting mainly on sandwiches for the last five weeks.

Good cooking is something friends remember about the Tafts. On their first date in August, 1973, she cooked chicken in an Argentine style and, a friend recalled, "delicious stuffed mushrooms."

They had met at H.E.W., where Mr. Taft works as executive assistant to the Secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger. Asked about his wife's new job, he said, "I am obviously delighted. I think she'll do a good job. It's a good appointment!"

She was born Julia Ann Vadala on July 27, 1942, the daughter of Anthony J. and Shirley Vadala. Colonel Vadala, a native of Sicily and a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, was an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist in the Medical Corps.

Her education brought her bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees in international politics from the University of Colorado. During one of several trips abroad, she was an editorial assistant at Radio Free Europe.

A White House fellowship brought her to Washington, where she was assigned to the H.E.W. Department. Elliot L. Richardson, then Secretary, placed her in the external affairs section dealing with interest groups such as the American Medical Association.

According to Granville Austin, formerly a H.E.W. associate and now a policy

planner in the State Department, she is "very nice and generous, very intelligent, outgoing and bright."

Mrs. Taft is a tall raven-haired woman who moves and speaks with poise and grace. She describes herself as "a ski buff," but hasn't had time for the sport this year.

The Tafts spent a good deal of time decorating their new house in Alexandria—she did the wallpapering. It is furnished in part with some Chinese antiques bequeathed her by her late father.

They are known among friends as sharing a lively sense of humor. But Mrs. Taft was not amused two years ago about an article in a national magazine portraying her as one of a new breed of career women.

"It made me sound flaky with my money," she said. The magazine was Money.