

8-10-77

NYT



The New York Times/George Tames

Mrs. Gerald R. Ford, at center in doorway, and her daughter, Susan, clad in bathrobes, chatting with a neighbor, a few hours before Mr. Ford became President.

Good-Bys Are Private

While her children were still primping and polishing, Mrs. Ford arrived at the White House at 9:45 A.M. and went directly to the Diplomatic Reception Room, where Mr. and Mrs. Ford said their emotional good-bys in private to the former President and Pat Nixon, the Nixons' daughters and their daughters' husbands. The Fords then escorted the Nixons to the waiting helicopter.

Mrs. Ford and Julie and David Eisenhower then returned to Mr. Ford's Vice-Presidential office in the Executive Office Building, across West Executive Avenue from the White House, to wait until the new President took his oath of office.

After President Ford had been sworn in and had spoken in the East Room, and after a reception in the State Dining Room, the Ford family gathered for official family pictures in the Oval Office of the President.

The Fords' First Day as First Family

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9—For the new First Family, today was a flood of mundane chores and extraordinary events.

Only hours before Betty Ford sorrowfully embraced Julie Nivon Eisenhower on the south White House lawn as President Nixon departed in his helicopter, she was debating with her 18-year-old son about whether he should go to the beach this week.

President Ford seemed to set the pattern for the day when, at sunrise, he stepped out of his house in his bathrobe, uninhibited by the reporters on vigil outside his modest suburban home in Alexandria, Va., to retrieve the morning paper, which would have been a simple task for one of the Secret Service agents on duty there.

Mr. Ford cooked breakfast for himself and his son, Steven, who had risen early to collect his paycheck from the National Capital Park Service for mowing grass along a highway, while the rest of the family slept.

Designer Brings Dress

At 7:30 A.M. Mrs. Ford's secretary, Nancy Howe, arrived. They shared tea and toast as the house began to stir with the confusion of preparing for the swearing-in ceremony.

Frankie Welch, a local dress designer, arrived at 8:30 A.M. with Mrs. Ford's favorite dress, a light blue jersey knit, which had been dry cleaned overnight for today's events. Although Mrs. Ford had called on her friend, Mrs. Welch, to "help her dress" for the day, Mrs. Ford coiffed her own hair with a good brushing.

Later, Mrs. Welch turned her attention to 17-year-old Susan, who had also refused to buy new clothes for the day, choosing instead a black and white checked dress from her closet.

There was little conversation as Steven, Susan, John, the Ford's 22-year-old son, and Michael, 24, the eldest son who arrived at 10 o'clock this morning with his wife, Gayle, from Massachusetts where he attends seminary school, darted in and out of showers.

Mrs. Ford again chose her husband's Vice-Presidential office in the Executive Office Building to greet her in-laws and close friends—Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ford, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Palmer, and Mr. and Mrs. Jes Brown—who had flown to Washington to honor the new President.

At 3 P.M. a hungry Ford family arrived back home in the Washington suburbs. Mrs.

Ford had lunch. Susan and Steven shed their best clothes for blue jeans and left immediately with friends Michael and Gayle prepared to return to Massachusetts.

When will the First Lady move into the White House? "We have no idea," said Mrs. Howe. "Trying to pack up after living in a house for 20 years is going to take a little while."