

**The original documents are located in Box 41, folder “Ford, Steven - "People"” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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People 10/4/76 ON THE **MOVE**

**THE COWBOY FORD JOINS UP—  
YOUNG STEVE GOES THATAWAY FOR  
VOTES ALONG THE WESTERN TRAIL**



**Campaigning in 11 Western states** for his father, Steve Ford kibitzes, left, while a pal checks the oil in their mobile motel room. Above, he inspects grapes damaged by rain in Fresno, Calif. and, below, reaches out for a vote in a Bakersfield store.

**H**i, I'm Steve Ford and I'm campaigning for my father, who is running for President of the United States." The speaker is blond, blue-eyed, a strapping 6'1" (with a chipped front tooth) and is the second youngest member of the First Family.

Steve, 20, has embarked on a 6,000-mile, 11-state campaign expedition for his father. Trailing after Steve's Travel Queen motor home were two campers full of Secret Service agents and three cars stuffed with reporters.

Steve, a fervid outdoorsman who once said he preferred bulldogging to politics, says his change of heart occurred at the GOP Convention in August. "Kansas City really got me excited," he says. He announced his decision to join the campaign while the Ford family was vacationing in Vail, Colo. "I'll never forget the smile on his face when I said, 'Dad, I'd like to quit school this fall and campaign full-time,'" says Steve. Betty Ford was less impressed. Says Steve: "Her first question was, 'When are you going back to school?'"

It was a fair question. Steve hasn't exactly galloped in his pursuit of a degree. After high school he worked for part of a year as a cowhand on a Montana ranch; then he enrolled at a



California rodeo school. When he finally entered Utah State University he had a hard time making it to class. After one wobbly quarter he transferred to Cal Poly at Pomona. He currently is in his sophomore year and is studying animal husbandry.

At Steve's first stop in Newport Beach, Calif., he told shoppers at a grocery store, "This is my way of paying my father back for all that he's done for me." In Bakersfield, dressed in jeans and a sportshirt, he walked through the crowd pressing flesh, kiss-

ing babies and smiling patiently while teenage girls squeaked, "He's cute!" One woman remarked, "Oh, I feel so guilty. I shook his hand and I'm not even going to vote for his father."

An hour later, slouched in a swivel chair in his rented van, his feet shod in pointy, hand-tooled cowboy boots, Steve considered his role. Also in the van were two friends—Greg Willard, 22, a Westminster College graduate, and Kevin Kennedy, 20, a junior at the University of Virginia. "I wanted to bring the campaign to the rural areas," said

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