

MY VERY SPECIAL LADY --- BETTY FORD
By Maria Downs

A recent request from the Gerald R. Ford Library for assistance and information regarding the manner in which President and Mrs. Ford entertained during their tenure at the White House involked many fond memories which I thought might be interesting to share with you.

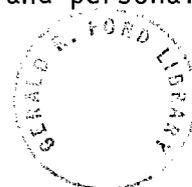
The social side of the White House plays a very important role in accomplishing the goals of an Administration --- much as a charming savvy spouse assists with the advancement of a partner's pursuits.

The partnership of Betty and Jerry Ford in hosting foreign and domestic dignitaries as well as people in general can best be described as an endeavor of love --- with love being defined by the late Fred Allen as " what makes the world go round ----- with a worried expression."

Surprised by that last remark ? So am I. It sounds more like something Betty Ford would say rather than something I would write about them --- but as I said earlier --- there are many fond memories, many humorous tales and even a few tears involved in working for and working with a very special lady.

The Ford Library turned to me for assistance because I was the White House Social Secretary for President and Mrs. Ford. Let me explain a little bit about what White House Social Secretaries are and what they do. To begin with we are a rather rare breed of birds --- there have been only seven White House Social Secretaries in the history of our country. The custom began under the Franklin Roosevelt Administration. You serve at the pleasure of the President and the First Lady and are considered a part of the senior White House staff with a Presidential Commission.

Your major responsibility is to work with the First Lady in the overall planning, arrangements, co-ordination and direction of all official and personal social events given by the President and his family.



My Very Special Lady -2

This includes the form and wording of invitations, compiling of guest lists, setting of menus, the choice of entertainment and the theme of each event, just to mention a few of the duties.

There are a wide range of events which are covered under the umbrella of the social side of the White House. They are represented in part by state dinners, diplomatic affairs, receptions, luncheons, holiday balls and what we called special dinners. Special dinners are occasions honoring someone or something in particular such as the Congress, the Judiciary, the Governors or the Medal of Freedom recipients (the Medal of Freedom is the highest civilian award given by the President). The "working" dinner falls under the category of special dinners. In many instances it involves a visiting head of state, the President and pertinent members of their staffs who meet to discuss business over dinner. It is generally a small group (under 12) and does not include spouses. Many times, Mrs. Ford and I laughed over the term " working " dinner ---- to us, every dinner was a working dinner ---- for someone.

My job as White House Social Secretary was made immeasurably easier because of Mrs. Ford. I say this because she is a person blessed with a flair for originality, an eye for beauty and the dramatic but is always practical and very considerate. She has a way of lending a final touch of elegance to everything she does.

I learned much from Mrs. Ford. I had been Social Secretary less than three weeks before my first State Dinner was upon me. A State Dinner was once described by a reporter as a Social Secretary's " trial under fire " , actually it was but to use the same reporter's words again --- it also is one of the White House's " grandest occasions ". A State Dinner is part of an official state visit which gives the President and the First Lady the opportunity to honor the visiting head of state and his mate. It is a courtesy --- an expression of good will --- our way of extending hospitality. It brings to mind the old tradition of breaking bread with one's friends to seal a friendship. A State Dinner is usually followed by a



My Very Special Lady -3

reciprocal event the following evening.

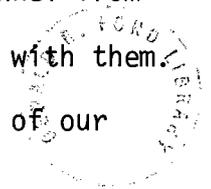
The particular State Dinner I am referring to was in honor of His Excellency The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Mrs. al - Sadat.

Before I tell you more about the Sadat dinner let me describe briefly some of the offices and people within the White House who assist in putting it all together.

You will hear me referring to the East Wing and the West Wing of the White House. The First Lady's staff as well as the Military Aides office and the Tour office were housed in the East Wing. The President's Chief of Staff and key senior White House aides were located in the West Wing. The space in those two wings was very limited, most White House staffers having offices in the Executive Office Building across the way from the West Wing.

The Chief Usher of the White House is Rex Scouten, one of the most dedicated people I have ever met. The term angel describes him amply. The Chief Usher is responsible for the care and maintenance of the White House and its grounds. His staff includes several assistants, the maitre d', butlers, chefs, maids, housekeepers, electricians, carpenters, florists, groundkeepers, etc. Without these fine people the White House would not ~~run~~. *operate efficiently*

The Military Aides office has a myriad of responsibilities for the President and his family. Why they were located in the East Wing with the First Lady's staff I will never know--- you never knew what to expect when you ventured down to the Military Aide's end of the hall. They were a good group --- they always kept moral up and managed to see the humorous side of a situation --- and if there wasn't one they created one --- sort of a White House M.A.S.H. operation. This office was made up of the President's three military aides, one each from the Army, the Navy and the Marines. The office was run by a crusty former Marine and manned by personnel from the various Services. We worked closely and most of the time harmoniously with them. The Military did many things for us including providing the music for all of our



events and ceremonies. The Services have some of the finest musicians in the country. They have performed with many renowned artists at the White House. The day President Ford presented Arthur Fiedler with the Medal of Freedom , he conducted the Marine Band which was playing for the occasion. Arthur Rubenstein, another Medal of Freedom recipient had many kind words for their talents.

The Military Social Aides, a group of young men and women from all the Services are an invaluable part of the support staff from the Military. These people serve as aides on a volunteer basis in addition to their regular military duties. They assisted at all events but were indispensable at State Dinners. They served as representatives of the President and the First Lady --- representatives they were very proud of.

I don't know if any of the other Social Secretaries worked as closely with the National Security Council as I did --- this is not as ominous as it sounds. The National Security Council was there primarily to serve and advise the President on affairs of national security. The gentleman who headed the National Security Council, General Brent Scowcroft, was one of those one in a million type people. He was always willing to take the extra step --- exert the extra effort. You felt quite secure knowing he was in that position. The purpose of this article is not to eulogize certain people but there truly were some very exceptional human beings surrounding the President and the First Lady. I feel ~~it was~~ ^{they were an important} part of the White House and it's story. Whenever I had a ticklish situation the " Little General " as we affectionately called him, always seemed to have a logical solution. He was exceptionally good at handling Henry Kissinger.

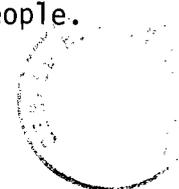
Everytime a compliment was expressed to me regarding an event we were involved with, I quietly thanked Heaven for my great staff. With the exception of the work the calligraphers did everyone on my immediate staff was a jack-of-all-trades and most pleasant about it. Our full time volunteer spent more hours in the office than at home --- as did everyone else it seems.



Now, let's begin creating a State Dinner.

Our initial involvement began with a call from General Scowcroft's office at the National Security Council advising us of an upcoming visit. We in turn checked with the Chief Usher's office to make sure there was no conflict with other events. We then made up a sample invitation providing several options as to dress for the occasion. These choices included business suit, black tie or white tie. These options and many of the details involved in a state dinner serve as symbolic significances watched closely by those involved. The finished invitation itself was a beautiful engraved memento affixed with the Presidential seal with the guest's name inscribed by the White House calligraphers. Next came the compilation of the guest list --- obviously one of the most important facets of the dinner. First a memo was sent to certain senior White House staff requesting input for the list. Their suggestions were usually in accord with the individual's area of responsibility. This was what we called requested input --- the unrequested input sometimes provided the comic relief necessary to keep one going when things got extremely hectic. One gentleman called after each state dinner was announced requesting an invitation. He claimed to be related to the visiting head of state. He certainly had a lot of relatives. Unsolicited input did at times provide some good recommendations. The State Department automatically submitted a list, although in all honesty I always thought they saved their best suggestions for the luncheon Henry Kissinger usually hosted for the visiting head of state.

President and Mrs. Ford were the best about input to the guest list. In addition to general recommendations the President, being an avid sports fan and athlete himself had compiled a list of sports figures he wanted us to invite. At every dinner we would draw from his list. He also expressed a desire to have more young people attend these dinners and suggested that we include U.S. Olympic participants. Jack Ford and Susan Ford were living in Washington and one or the other usually attended the dinners and hosted a table of these younger people.



The President also submitted the name of a personal friend of theirs for each dinner -- there were several times when the dinner was oversubscribed and he would be nice enough to offer to withdraw the name of their friend. They were much nicer about not insisting that people had to attend a dinner than many on their staff were. Mrs. Ford's suggestions were varied and fascinating --- many were from the world of design and fashion --- the arts. Betty Ford has an insatiable appetite for reading. Several times when I asked her why she had suggested someone it was because of something she had read and felt the person would make an interesting guest. Her many years in Washington and in public life gave her a wisdom both politically and socially that she did not bandy about.

When putting together a guest list for the approval of the President and the First Lady you had to be sure to invite people who should be invited, soothe those who are not invited but think they should be and don't invite people who should not be invited. As if all this was not a full time job in itself you also had the problems of space limitation.

The White House is much smaller than most people realize. The State Dining Room seats only 120 people. When you take into account the President and the First Lady, their honored guests and the official party as well as Administration officials who should be in attendance such as the Vice President and the Secretary of State -- you find yourself limited to inviting only 45 additional couples. You probably thought it strange when I earlier said the President would withdraw the name of a personal friend --- but 45 couples really didn't scratch the surface when you started considering people who should be there and people who would make for an interesting evening for your honored guests and for each other.

The problem of space limitation brings to mind an amusing incident. At one of the dinners a confused looking member of my staff approached me and inquired whether a certain Cabinet member had been invited --- I replied in the negative and he said " well, you may not think so but he certainly does." There as big as life -- and he was a " biggie " was Mr. Secretary. To this day we have not known with cer-

tainty what happened. An educated guess is that he was invited to the reciprocal dinner the following evening and confused the invitations. Well with just a few moments to go before seating the guests for dinner there was a bit of scurrying. We decided on an extra setting at the President's table (he was always understanding about things like that) a place card was written, a place setting was set, the extra chair squeezed in and we were home free --- once again relaxed, watching the guests being received by the President and the First Lady and their honored guests. Back came the same aide --- this time not confused looking but harried looking. He had just received a telephone call from Capitol Hill -- one of the Senators who been delayed because of a vote in the Senate was now unable to come until after dinner --- back to the State Dining Room --- off goes the extra place card, place setting and chair from the President's table --- Mr. Secretary's card replaced Mr. Senator's place card and we were once again relaxed and watching the guests be received. Situations such as these are referred to by some as crisis --- to us they were just part of an evening. Many would ask, why didn't you just leave an extra chair ? That's not the way it should be done at the White House.

Next comes a check with the State Department Desk Man to inquire of any dietary restrictions and likes or dislikes of our visiting guests. A call to the White House chef, Henry Haller with a request for two sample menus, usually fowl and meat. Whenever possible we tried to serve fowl as well as fruits and vegetables that were in season to try to keep costs down. Another call, this time to John Ficklin, the Maitre d' advising him of our needs for specific wines in quantity for a State Dinner. There is not room enough to maintain a wine cellar at the White House. Finding the wines we wanted in the quantity we needed always posed a problem. In keeping with the Ford's desire of representing everything American at the White House we served only American wines.

The White House Situation Room (Usually the scene of most important security meetings and discussions) was the setting for a briefing session which took place

prior to every visit. This meeting was chaired by the senior staff member of the National Security Council whose area included the country of our visiting dignitary. In attendance were State Department personnel including members of the Protocol Office and the aforementioned Desk man, National Security Council staffers, pertinent White House aides, the President's Military Aide and my office. Discussed were the purposes of the visit and the tone that should be set. These meetings pretty well covered any and all things that might occur during a visit. At this time requests were made for any additional information needed to make the visit more memorable.

From the State Department Desk Officer we had already secured the honored guests preference in entertainment --- suggestions are thought of for recommendations to Mrs. Ford. In this area she often had very definite thoughts of who she wanted and didn't want. A tribute to her judgment came in a Christian Science Monitor editorial entitled " Having Fun at the White House ". Describing the various artists who had performed at the White House during the Ford Administration it concluded by saying "It sounds like what they used to call a real nice clambake --- Just like the Fords."

A request was made of the Military Aide's office for the Social Aides and music for the dinner.

This leads to the theme for the State Dinner. The State Dinner was the vehicle Mrs. Ford chose to illustrate a novel idea she initiated at the White House. An idea that has great historical significance --- one she is very proud of and one that brought praise from many of our guests. Very simply, it was to colorfully and tastefully portray American crafts --- American antiques --- American arts --- to highlight everything American at White House gatherings. Each White House dinner had a theme --- this theme was built around Americana of one form or another and was displayed as centerpieces on the dining room tables in place of the usual floral arrangements.



I asked her one day how the idea had come to her --- she replied that several thoughts had prompted her --- the most important being the feeling she and the President shared about the White House --- the feeling that it was not their house but belonged to the American people --- that it should represent in everyway, everything good about America. Many times when we were working in the Family Quarters she would stop for awhile and look out the window at the tourists passing through the White House --- how surprised they would have been to know the First Lady was watching them. She was especially careful not to close the House to the public when we had special events. She did not want to disappoint or turn away people who had come great distances to visit the White House. We always or almost always managed to work around the hours the White House was open to the public tours. This too, was part of the feeling that the White House belonged to the people.

She also thought the art objects displayed as centerpieces would have the added benefit of serving as good conversation pieces.

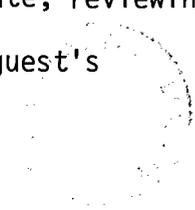
Another reason that prompted her initiation of this novel idea was the fact that she had been attending White House dinners for years, when the President was a member of Congress and Republican Minority Leader --- there seemed to be a certain sameness to every dinner --- she wanted to make it more interesting for their guests. My feeling, although never confirmed by Mrs. Ford was that there was a time when being entertained at the White House, though always an honor --- was not always a joy.

Providing a theme for each dinner was very interesting but very time consuming. Whenever possible we tried to tie the theme to an interest of the honored guests. Most of the suggestions came from Mrs. Ford --- she was constantly sending me ideas that we would research for future dinners. Many of the articles we used were loaned to us from museums and private collections. It seemed most appropriate that during our Bicentennial year so many American treasures should be displayed at the White House.

With the groundwork laid and options ready I was prepared to meet with Mrs. Ford to discuss the Sadat Visit. Although I had beautiful offices in the East Wing of the White House overlooking the grounds and Pennsylvania Avenue (these offices are now occupied by Mrs. Carter) I always met with Mrs. Ford in the family quarters on the second floor of the White House to discuss plans for upcoming visits. She had converted one of the rooms into an office for herself but it seemed we always ended up in the living room with our papers and diagrams spread on the floor. Several times when we were working late and the President would come home, he would jokingly offer to let us move into the Oval Office. Liberty and Misty, the Ford's Golden Retrievers, were not always as patient as the President and many times Mrs. Ford and I were the one's retrieving papers scattered by the mischievous canines.

Betty Ford is an easy person to work with. She is very knowledgeable and gets very much involved and into everything she does. She amazed me with her deep interest in and understanding of the smallest detail --- the design of a fabric, the need to dip the vermeil, discovering a new desert --- after all she was the First Lady and a very active First Lady with many other responsibilities and worthwhile projects on her mind. She has a way about her that makes you feel you and your problem are her only concern. She also has an uncanny sense of understanding when people have problems - both personal and professional. I often thought staff burdened her unnecessarily with their problems. We were there to assist her but in many instances she was the one who did the assisting.

To begin with we would discuss the welcoming ceremony and reception which was the first official event of a state visit. Even though it was late in October we felt the weather was such that the welcoming ceremony could be held outdoors. This official greeting by the President and the First Lady was a very impressive occasion which included the herald trumpet greeting, honors to the President, Ruffles and Flourishes, both national anthems, a 21 gun salute, reviewing of the troops, the welcoming remarks of our President and the honored guest's



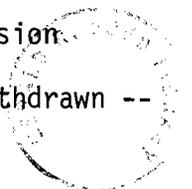
response. Some criticize this ceremony as having too much pomp -- a sign of an Imperial Presidency --- I disagree completely. Perhaps I disagree so wholeheartedly because I am a first generation American - my parents both coming to this country from Greece --- this may have given me a better understanding of the mentality of our foreign friends. In their homeland, millions of our guest's countrymen would be scrutinizing the manner in which their leader is received --- the respect shown --- the guests present --- all these details and many others are looked upon as significant symbols.

After the welcoming ceremony a small reception is held in the Blue Room of the White House from which the President and the head of State proceed to the Oval Office for their meeting. Mrs. Ford and the visiting First Lady usually take this opportunity to become better acquainted and to have a personal visit. This part of a visit was much the same for every dignitary coming to our country for a State visit.

Next Mrs. Ford checked the sample invitation. We discussed the dress for the dinner. The Egyptian government had requested business suits for the men. Of course we obliged. The ladies wore long gowns. There have been very few State Dinners that are not either Black Tie or White Tie, the exception usually being the Communist countries, again at their request.

She then reviewed the suggested menus deciding on the fowl. She was very particular about what we served and put a great amount of care into every part of the dinner. She loved to match her thoughts of the guest with the food served. The wines met with her approval.

She asked me to make sure when I briefed the Social Aides to ask them to circulate among the guests, engage them in conversation and introduce them to other guests. This was prompted by something extraordinary that I have seen happen at the White House time after time. There is a strange feeling which overcomes most people when they come to the White House. Call it awe --- perhaps veneration is a better word. You could see a very familiar face---one you might see on your television set nightly with the evening news --- this person is unusually quiet and withdrawn --



almost shy. At any other time you know he would be very outgoing and talkative. Mrs. Ford realized this happened to many people--- her concern was that their guests be put at ease and have a good time as well as experience that unforgettable mystique that comes over you. It's a wonderful feeling --- one that cannot be adequately described --- it happened to me every morning when I walked through the White House gates. Helen Thomas, veteran U.P.I. White House correspondent, ^{only} that everytime she enters the White House it is like the first time.

I would usually review the proposed guest list with Mrs. Ford at this time -- this was sort of a dry run before she and the President made their decisions. The list was broken down into categories such as the official party; Congressional; business; sports; arts, etc. This made it easier for them to make any additions or deletions. The President usually reviewed his copy of the same list with his Chief of Staff Dick Cheney before he went over it with Mrs. Ford. Mentioning the President's Chief of Staff brings to mind a great rivalry that had existed at the White House. Don't ask me why or when it started -- but it seems to be an ill all Administrations (Republican and Democrat) have been afflicted with. That is the war between the East Side (East Wing) and the West Side (West Wing). It seems the President's staff always want to get their fingers into the cookie jar --- the cookies being the guest lists for all social events but especially the State Dinner list. Well, apparently Mrs. Ford caught the boys in the cookie jar and raised uncharacteristic hell. This was shortly before I was made Social Secretary. In fact, one of the questions Mrs. Ford asked me when she interviewed me for the position was if I could go to battle with the West Side. It was a very thorough and very interesting interview spanning nine hours over three different occasions. She was convinced I could go to battle if necessary but better still she knew we wouldn't have to. Before going to the East Wing I had worked in the West Wing. Dick Cheney was a very reasonable, fair person. He reminded one much of the President. If you were right and doing your job well you had his complete support. Some of my predecessors were not as fortunate.

In Washington protocol is a measure of power and taken very seriously. The seating of a dinner had to be given very careful consideration. It was something that had to be done the day of the dinner but was discussed earlier by Mrs. Ford and myself. The story of seating a state dinner could be a story in itself. This chore was done in my office behind a closed door and my assistants would testify there was much agonizing but also much laughter.

The Ford's use of round tables at the State Dinners was another good example of the way they liked to entertain. It enabled them to break away from strict rules of protocol that one finds in formal seating arrangements and made it possible to have an interesting group at each table. Their guest lists were quite diversified and included people from the world of art, business, sports, Congress, government and politics. To mention a few.

The President and the First Lady sat at separate tables during the State Dinners to enable more people to share their company. The head of state was seated to Mrs. Ford's right and his spouse to the President's right. The remaining guests at the table were from various walks of life which tend to make for interesting conversation. Mrs. Ford being an advocate of women's rights included many women in the guest list, women of merit. This seating arrangement gave us the opportunity to seat these women in more prestigious positions and still be correct by protocol.

The Ford's manner of entertaining was reflective of their own personal life style. It was relaxed but correct. They always wanted everyone to feel at home, to feel welcome and to enjoy themselves.

Mrs. Ford felt the best way to make your guests feel at home was to learn of their fondnesses and try to be as accomodating as possible. She learned that President Sadat had a deep appreciation of America's old West and was a Zane Grey buff. This brought to her mind the beautiful Remington and Russell bronzes we had at the White H0use and particularly Bronco Buster which the President kept in the Oval Office. Through research we discovered the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth, Texas which houses the world's finest collection of Remington and Russell

bronzes and paintings. We contacted the museum and they were good enough to lend us their entire collection of bronzes. Mrs. Ford decided to use these famous sculptures as the theme for the Egyptian dinner. They were used as centerpieces on the table in the State Dining Room. A natural habitat of American wild flowers and dried grasses complimented each piece. The tables were draped in a bright American Indian Navajo print. Additional Remington and Russell bronzes were placed throughout the other rooms on the state floor.

Mrs. Ford later told me that during the dinner President Sadat expressed great pleasure with the centerpieces and inquired of them in great detail. After dinner he took the time to personally view each sculpture. Bronco was moved from the Oval Office for the occasion. He was placed on the State Dining Room mantle under the watchful eye of Abraham Lincoln whose portrait hangs in that place of honor.

Not only were our guests of honor pleased but many of our American guests took special pride in the display of our country's art. We were delighted to see that Mrs. Carter admired Mrs. Ford's idea so that she is carrying on the theme idea of Americana at the White House.

Every State Dinner is followed by a performance of an American artist. Again the entertainment is based on the honored guests preference. Originally a country western singer had been invited to perform for the Sadats. Two nights before the dinner he became ill and was hospitalized. As if the short two day period was not bad enough, it also happened to be a weekend when it was next to impossible to locate anyone. Well, as usual Mrs. Ford came to the rescue, as the White House cowboys would like to say. She called her old friend Pearl Bailey. Pearl performed for us and of course was magnificent. The year before she had been awarded the First Order of Arts and Sciences of Egypt by President Sadat. It was a reunion of two friends.



My Very Special Lady -15

Once Mrs. Ford had made her decisions regarding a State Dinner there was much to do but the most hectic time of all and well worth taking a minute to discuss was the afternoon of a dinner day. The state floor looks like a tornado* has swept through and you never believe everything will be in place by dinner time. Workers are wheeling in trees and shrubberies to decorate the foyer --- butlers are setting tables --- volunteers are all over the state floor assisting the florists with the centerpieces and decorations--- the artist who will be performing that evening is rehearsing in the East Room --- the network people are in the State Dining Room setting up and adjusting the television lights --- the phones are ringing off the hook and regular business is going on as usual. In the midst of all this Mrs. Ford comes down to thank everyone and to make a final check. A table has been set for her to see in it's final form. She is very pleased with everything and makes one last circle of the room to admire the sculptures. Several of the volunteers ask to have their picture taken with her . She knows many of them well by now as they come in to assist with every dinner.

The seating of the dinner is usually done during this afternoon and when I return to my office I resume that chore. Time had slipped away from me and I asked not to be interrupted until I finished as there was still much work to be done after I had ~~completed~~ my part of it. This of course is when what might be considered a crisis would occur. My assistant knocked on the door frantically and said, "Maria, you have got to help Mr. Graves." Mr. Graves being the actor Peter Graves who with his wife were dinner guests. They were at Dulles Airport having flown in from California just for the dinner. They arrived but their luggage didn't -- it had been lost with all of their clothing and personal items intact. It was 5:30 in the evening and they were broken hearted and ready to get on the next plane back to California. We persuaded them to get into a taxi instead and for Mr. Graves to stop at a local formal wear rental store which we had contacted for him. They had just closed their store but were good enough to wait for him to get in from the airport.

We didn't know what we were going to do about Mrs. Graves - but we had faith and knew that somethings would work out. We asked her to call us from the hotel as soon as she arrived there. Mind you Dulles Airport is an hours drive away from the White House and we were all getting a little nervous. I was just about to call my husband and ask him to bring in one of my dresses when Mrs. Ford called. When we explained our dilemma she said "You have enough to do, leave Mrs. Graves to me. Have her come upstairs and I'll have several dresses waiting for her to try on!" Well, Mrs. Graves couldn't have looked lovelier in her own dress than she did in one of Mrs. Ford's gowns. They all had a lovely evening and even the seating was finished on time.

After putting so much time and effort into a dinner it was good to see how much Mrs. Ford enjoyed them. Actually they both enjoyed their own parties. They usually stayed on into the wee hours long after the honored guests had departed, dancing and mingling with their other guests. In many instances these other guests shared an interest with the guest of honor. To cite examples the Sadat dinner guest list included Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Murphy, Chairman of General Motors Corporation who was also Chairman of the U.S.-Egyptian Business Council; C. Douglas Dillon, President, Metropolitan Museum of Art - the museum was building a new wing to accomodate the Temple of Dendur, a gift from Egypt to the U.S.. It was also announced during this Sadat visit that the Tutakhaman treasures of Egypt would tour the U.S.. Other guests included the Vice President and Mrs. Rockefeller; Egyptian born actor, Omar Sharif; The Chief Justice and Mrs. Burger; Mrs. Charles Engelhard, philanthropist; former Senator and Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and Mrs. Mansfield (Now U.S. Ambassador to Japan) Edith Head, fashion designer; George Allen, football coach; Mr. and Mrs. John Swearingen, Chairman, Standard Oil of Indiana; Mrs. Penny Tweedy, owner of Triple Crown winner, Secretariat and Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Howar, President, National Association of Arab Americans.



My Very Special Lady - 17

The Sadat dinner was my initiation --- my " trial under fire ". Thanks to Mrs. Ford it was a real success. Many state dinners and other entertainment that was my responsibility followed but the Sadat dinner will always be special.

It was like watching an old friend when Mike Wallace interviewed President Sadat on 60 Minutes. ~~the other evening~~. He spoke of wanting to see his country pioneered as America's old west was and of his admiration for that spirit. Do you suppose he remembers that very special evening with my very special lady? I'm sure he does.

Betty Ford left the White House a legacy of memorable entertainment and unforgettable hospitality.

