

**The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “1976/03/09 - Dedication of Little Adobe School House, Mesa, Arizona” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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April 1976



**Hi, Betty!**  
**How Nice You**  
**Could Come**

**We Love**  
**Betty!**

*yes*



Planning his announcement

# Sombreros, Dances Liven Campaign

First Lady Betty Ford was visiting a senior citizen's home in southern California when she stopped to shake the hand of an elderly man living there.

"I want to meet you, Mrs. Ford," he said, "but I am blind."

The First Lady smiled and reached for the old man's hand, gently guiding it to her face.

The old man instinctively re-

turned her smile. His face lit up.

"You are a beautiful lady," he said.

Everywhere Mrs. Ford goes, the response is the same. Her warmth, her graciousness and her compassion penetrate her audiences.

"She has the rare quality of making people at ease in her presence," the Naples Daily News in Florida wrote in an edi-

torial. "It becomes quite normal to forget for the moment that she is, in fact, the wife of the President.

"It is precisely this quality — the common touch — that warms the hearts of those who meet her."

At every opportunity, the First Lady will stop to share a lesson or a bit of fun with school children.

"Betty Ford would have added an extra 1000 votes to her husband's victory margin here in Florida if the children at the two elementary schools she visited here had been able to vote," one newspaper reported.

"All along her motorcade route (near Jacksonville) scrubbed, smiling little faces lined up along the highway, waving American flags and exuding enthusiasm over meeting a real, live First Lady."

Mrs. Ford has been crisscrossing the country on behalf of her husband's candidacy. In San Diego, she presided over the opening of the President Ford Committee headquarters there, donning a large Mexican sombrero and dancing to the music of a mariachi band.

Later, at a senior citizens center in downtown San Diego, she accepted an invitation to dance with a white-haired man and changed partners three or four times before a hostess blew the whistle and called a halt to the round-robin dance.

"We don't want to wear our people out," she said.

And in New York City, honored by a group of Republican women at a luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria, Mrs. Ford graciously received a woman-of-the-year award.

Asked there about her own

campaigning, Mrs. Ford said, "It's pretty exciting, I admit. It's something I never experienced." Radiant, but obviously a trifle nervous at the crush of reporters, photographers and television cameramen, she said she had found her campaign audiences "warm and friendly and I get excellent vibrations."

But her campaign swings are not all lighthearted fun. Mrs. Ford has a message:

"Rejoice may be an old-fashioned word, but it captures what I hope we feel this year. We should rejoice in our individual freedoms, in our free enterprise system and in our representative government.

"In 1976, let us listen to the good, strong sounds of our country, so that we may be inspired to search and work for an even better America."



D R A F T

BK approved  
3/4/6

DEDICATION OF THE LITTLE ADOBE SCHOOLHOUSE  
MESA, ARIZONA

new typ  
added

In this special year, we are celebrating not only what happened in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, but our two-hundred years of progress in translating our ideals into reality.

The inalienable rights in the Declaration of Independence--life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness--have been expressed in many different ways by Americans through these years.

To some, the pursuit of happiness meant building, inventing or trading. And because of them, our cities and countryside are linked by highways and telephones and airplanes--all the visible signs of American ingenuity. To others, the pursuit meant writing, singing or dancing. And because of them, we have books and songs and plays--the visible expressions of the American spirit.

To many, many others, the pursuit of happiness meant freedom to build the good life for themselves and their families. And because of them, we have churches and schools and stores--the tangible symbols of our society.



But in whatever way our ancestors pursued their happiness-- they shared a love of freedom and its preservation.

I think you selected an important symbol of our American experience--the first school in your town. Whether the Pilgrims in Massachusetts or the pioneers of Arizona, the building of a school said: "We believe in ourselves and we are here to stay."

By building a replica of the first schoolhouse in Mesa, you shared some of the physical and emotional experiences of your ancestors. You learned about adobe bricks, clothing, and books and gained a sense of the past. Today you must feel as those first Mesa settlers did in 1880--pride of accomplishment. But you can see something more in looking at this adobe schoolhouse and comparing it to your own school, you can see the progress we've made in America.

In Philadelphia, the first citizens had great expectations about what freedom would mean. Today we know our successes and our failures. We can take courage from both and celebrate our own expectations about America.

Yet as we look back with pride and forward with hope, we must seize the present and use our time in America's history wisely and well.

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# Final Draft Ulesca

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Mesa Bicentennial School

How proud ~~them~~ <sup>the early Arizona</sup> ~~these first~~ settlers must have

been the day they finished the adobe schoolhouse! Just

<sup>RS</sup>  
~~like~~ you are today. You know how much work and

effort & it takes to put together a building, <sup>and the price</sup>  
<sup>that accompanies completion.</sup>

By working on this project, you are ~~is~~ celebrating  
the Bicentennial in a ~~very~~ grand way, because our history  
is much more than dates and documents. It's the story  
of thousands and thousands of people with the imagination  
and energy to travel to new land and start a town by  
building churches, schools and stores.

This year we want to remember ~~Americians~~ past  
Americans---whose work, worry and courage made our country  
great.

That's what you are doing. You built a place where  
many others can stop to remember Americans during another  
time. I'm sure you ~~learned~~ learned many interesting  
people who lived in ~~the~~ Mesa almost one hundred  
things about ~~the~~ ~~building~~

years ago, ~~how~~ and through this museum  
you'll be sharing that knowledge.

You've made a special memory for yourselves and your  
city, and for many years to come, you'll remember the







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