## The original documents are located in Box 45, folder "Ford, Susan - Portrait" of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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October 30, 1975

Dear Mr. Fortuneta:

Thanks so much for your letter of October 15 and the generous offer to paint Susan's portrait.

In planning for the Asalea Festiful, however, we have agreed to permit the Chamber of Commerce in Norfolk, Virginia, to coordinate all gifts of this type. Therefore, I would suggest you get in touch with them if you wish to pursue this request.

Again, thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely,

Shella Rabb Weidenfeld Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

Mr. Den Fortunata 2228 Vantage Point Read #101 Virginia Beach, Virginia 23455



SAQ

Mrs. Ford's Press Office White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington, D.C. 20500

To the Staff:

By way of introduction, my name is Don Fortunato. I am a portrait artist working primarily in the Norfolk, Virginia area.

Each spring the Azalea Festival Commission meets to choose a Queen for the beautiful pageant held to commemorate the return of spring and the blooming of the area's beautiful azaleas.

Since the next Festival will also be held in celebration of the Nation's Bicentennial, it is only natural for this year's Queen to be the President's daughter, Miss Susan Ford. In this light then, I have been asked confidentially to prepare a portrait of Susan Ford for presentation to her should she be chosen as Azalea Queen.

It is my intention to draw Miss Ford from photographs so that the likeness will be at once flattering and completely accurate.

Any photographs that you might be able to release to me for this purpose would be greatly appreciated since the greater part of the media-type coverage has been unsatisfactory for portrait use.

The best type of photograph for this purpose would be that which is posed, in full color, and of course, showing Miss Ford at her best. All photographs will be handled with extreme care so that they may be returned if necessary.

Your aid is most greatly appreciated and any further information may be obtained by calling me in Norfolk at 804-460-1756.

Sincerely yours, Won Fortunata

the - Susan

Sheila --

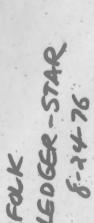
Everything I have underlined has been entirely fabricated.

The file with the <u>real</u> facts is attached. Whatever you want to do with it is fine with me.

Charlene von Pawel



Some items in this folder were not digitized because it contains copyrighted materials. Please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library for access to these materials.





## LARRY BONKO

AT LAST DON FORTUNATO'S portrait of Susan Ford as hanging in the White House. Probably in Miss Ford's bedroom.

He finished it months ago. Presented it to her in Norfolk months ago.

But when the Azalea Festival ended last April—Susan Ford was the Azalea Queen—she hurried off to the White House without the portrait.

Mail it to me, she asked Fortunato in a let-

what the U.S. Postal Service would do to a glass-covered work of art. 42 inches by 32 inch-

They are supposed to zip. But what if they zap? Fortunato shuddered at the thought of it.

daliver if said Kortunato

## /vite s ic

By BUZZY BISSINGER LedgesStar Staff Writer

VIRGINIE BRACH — Mrs. Clara Platt sat in her car Sunday morning on the fog-shrouded Ohio Turnpike, waiting for her husband, David to return.

He was helping, setting out flares. Mrs. Platt recalled today, trying to aid other motorists who were trapped in the soupy mist that had caused a 23-vehicle accident five miles west of the Pennsylvania-Ohio border.

Enrouse of the crash area about 8 area. Platt was hit and killed by a management of what had happened.

After an hour of waiting, just as the fog was beginning to lift, Mrs. Platt went to look for him. "He took good

care c

been walked

ou baccide was no hoped had ju mot he

told his there

husba

Mrs.

TORD, SUSAN/ Sulto The fortunate the artist, and we are the teller a desauther as

like to know where you decide to have it. What the Dear Don, a letter for your signature in a couple of

Many thanks for delivering my portrait safely to the White House. I'm sorry I wasn't able to see you when you arrived, but after a short vacation my schedule left me very little free

Mon and Dad are as pleased as Tyan with the portrait, and we intend to have it hung in our private living area.

Charlene mentioned you and your friend were on your way to Canada. I hope you had a great

Thanks for being so thoughtful, and.

Take care,

539 Austin Street

Norfolk Virginia 23503

CVP

RECEIVED

AUG 31 1976

SOCIAL FILES

Susan --

Don Fortunato, the artist, delivered this here today and said he would like to know where you decide to hang it. What can I tell him when I prepare a letter for your signature in a couple of days?? Thanks!

Charlene

It will probably be hung

safely. For Sam Curious to know exactly where it will hanging.

It will hanging.

I hank your for being so beautiful. Don

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

Vear Susan Ford, Finally here is your portrait. Very corry S Could not present it to you here at the White House in person. It was my pleasure to deliver the portrait safely. For Sam Curious to know exactly where it will hanging. so beautiful Don

Dear Mr. Fortunato,

After trying unsuccessfully for a week now to contact you by phone, I've decided I had better try the postal service.

Susan received your letter about your willingness to deliver her portrait in personand asked me to arrange to receive it for her. All you have to do is let me know a day shead of time when you will be in town so I can clear you into the building at the appropriate time. My telephone number is (202) 456-2520...

I look forward to seeing the portrait!

Best wishes,

(Sirs.) Charlene von Pamel Secretary

Mr. Don Fortunato 356 West Freemason Street Norfolk, Virginia 23510

CAP

FORD, SUSAN Chil June 3, 1976 Dear Don How I wish the azalea Pestival week had lasted longer with enough time to do everything! Unfortunately, that was not the case; and so many things, such as returning to pick up my portrait, just could not be worked out. If it is possible, could you please arrange to have the portrait mailed to me here at the White House. As you could tell, I was very pleased with your work and would appreciate having it here to enjoy. Please inow the enclosed photograph is sent with my hest wishes for your continued success. Sincerely. Susan Ford Mr. Don Portunato 539 Austin Street Norfoll Virginia RECEIVED JUN 9 1976 SOCIAL FILES DOD YEST RECENE It it is possible, could you please arrange to have the portrait mailed to me here at the White House. As you could tell, I was very pleased with your work and would appreciate having it here to enjoy.

Please know the enclosed photograph is sent with my best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Susan Ford

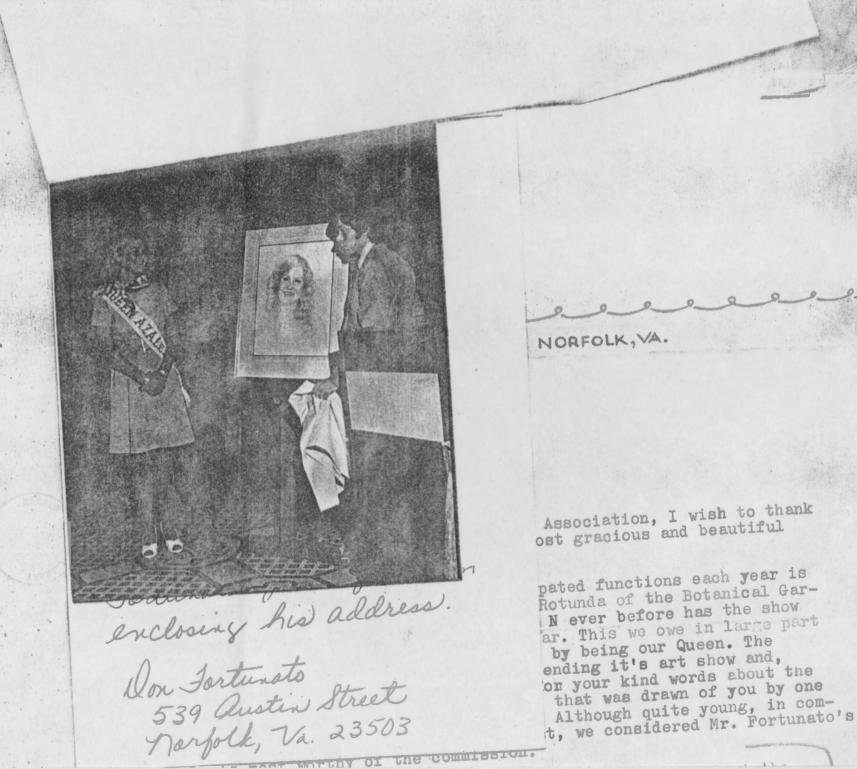
FROM
E WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Don Fortunato
539 Austin Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23503



arlain raed which potamitro - To Dan Turbus

Susan Tord



NORFOLK, VA.

Miss Ford, In Case you would Care to write to Don Fortunato yourself, I am enclosing his address.

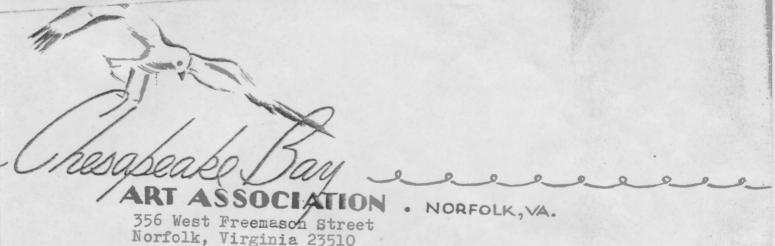
Non Fortunato 539 Questin Street narfolk, Va. 23503

Association, I wish to thank ost gracious and beautiful

pated functions each year is Rotunda of the Botanical Gar-N ever before has the show ar. This we owe in large part by being our Queen. The ending it's art show and, or your kind words about the that was drawn of you by one Although quite young, in comt, we considered Mr. Fortunato's

talents most worthy of the commission,

During the course of the presentation of the portrait at the Tantunato understood that you would try to



Miss Susan Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Miss Ford,

On behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Art Association, I wish to thank you for coming to Norfolk and being a most gracious and beautiful Queen Azalea XXIII.

One of the associations most anticipated functions each year is the Spring Art Show it sponsors in the Rotunda of the Botanical Gardens during the annual Azalea Festival. Never before has the show achieved such success as it did this year. This we owe in large part to you and the popularity you generated by being our Queen. The Association wishes to thank you for attending it's art show and, convey it's most sincere appreciation for your kind words about the work in the show and about the portrait that was drawn of you by one of our youngest members, Don Fortunato. Although quite young, in comparison to many of Norfolk's fine artist, we considered Mr. Fortunato's talents most worthy of the commission.

During the course of the presentation of the portrait at the luncheon on Friday, Don Fortunato understood that you would try to pick up the portrait before your departure sometime on Sunday. After arriving very early that Sunday morning, Don waited eagerly all day anticipating your arrival for the receipt of your portrait. Words cannot convey his disappointment, when Sunday's art show drew to a close and you had not arrived for his work.

The Association understands that your busy schedule prevented for you from being able to return to the art show for the portrait. We have been would like to make armends to Don Fortunato by sending him to Wash- were attended ington to deliver his portrait to you personally, at your convenience.

In this, an election year, we understand how busy your schedule his that must be; however if you will contact me at the address shown below, compact every attempt will be made to arrange a time and delivery date most a attack suitable to you. In the meantime, please accept my personal thanks there for making this a wonderful Azalea Festival.

Chesapeake Bay Art Association 356 West Freemason Street Norfolk, Va. 23510 Sincerely, you!

Cla Liverney 485, Man &

Ola Gurney RECENTER

IN PERSON