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JULY 20, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
SHIRLEY TEMPLE BLACK
UPON BEING SWORN IN AS
CHIEF OF PROTOCOL

THE CABINET ROOM

2:37 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Shirley, it is a great honor for me to have the opportunity of asking the Ambassador to swear you into this very important post. It is a great reward for the outstanding service that you have given, first as a representative at the United Nations, and more recently in Ghana in Africa.

Your record in each case was superb. You have a great challenge here, and I am absolutely certain that with your training in the various areas of diplomacy, plus your long experience in trying to serve the public in various causes, your service here will be the kind that will be in the best interest of our country.

We are delighted to have you back. We will be seeing a good bit of you, as the Ambassador knows, and we look forward to those opportunities, and I am sure you are going to be with us tonight, are you not?

AMBASSADOR BLACK: Yes, indeed.

THE PRESIDENT: We have to swear you in first, but we are looking forward to that.

Mr. Ambassador, will you please swear in Shirley Temple Black as the new Protocol Officer?

(Deputy Chief of Protocol Stuart Rockwell administered the oath of office.)

AMBASSADOR BLACK: Mr. President, it is a high honor indeed that you have bestowed upon me. It is a great honor to be the first woman Chief of Protocol for the United States of America.

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I don't know why, Mr. President, it took 200 years for one of us to get the job, but I will do all my very best work to try to fill all the various assorted sizes of shoes of the distinguished men who have been Chief of Protocol.

I also want to say, Mr. President, I think I met you first almost ten years ago, and it is a very extreme honor for me to be serving during our Bicentennial year, serving a man who I consider to be one of the most honest, most important men I have known in my life.

So, for that reason, I again thank you for this appointment and also for the last appointment as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana.

I have to tell you, Mr. President, one more thing, that in order to take this job, I had to go to my African chief in Cape Coast Ghana because I was an honorary Abonson Dahamey, or a deputy chief for the Oguai traditional area. I went to the chief on July 4 of this year, and I said, "May I have your permission to not only remain as your honorary African chief but I am now going to be Chief of Protocol." He smiled, he was very pleased, and wished me will.

I thank you, Mr. President. I am honored to serve. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me further explain Shirley's first meeting with me. She dared the Congressional route to Washington, following Art Younger, and Shirley was one of several candidates and I thought she would make an excellent Member of the House of Representatives, but fate didn't turn it out that way, so you went the diplomatic route in your efforts to come to Washington.

You have been so successful in the latter it is probably better you didn't win it before. (Laughter)

AMBASSADOR BLACK: Mr. President, I think you are an excellent President. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It is real nice to see you, and the very best to you.

END (AT 2:43 P.M. EDT)