

THE CARTER | Mondale CONNECTION

APRIL 2026

Volume 1 No. 1

Wisconsin Primary Night: Everyone Remembers the Photo Here's the Story Behind the Come-from-Nowhere Win

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

Carter '76 campaign veterans will never forget the famous AP photo of their candidate in the early morning hours of April 7 at the Phister Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The headline on the first edition of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* ended up notoriously wrong. How did it happen?

When Is a Beauty Contest Not a Beauty Contest?

The '76 Carter Campaign's strategy was based on a simple principle: Run everywhere a one-term former Georgia Governor could win delegates. In his now-famous campaign memo, Hamilton Jordan initially tabbed the Wisconsin primary as one of a small group of possible secondary campaign targets after Iowa, New Hampshire, and Florida.

That assumed there would delegates to win there. But as the Democratic National Committee's Compliance Review Commission formalized the delegate selection rules and the primary/caucus calendar took shape, Wisconsin looked like it would be left out in the early April cold.

That's because Wisconsin was an open primary, which allowed voters to choose either party primary regardless of registration—and the post-McGovern reforms had outlawed open primaries. As author Arthur T. Hadley wrote in

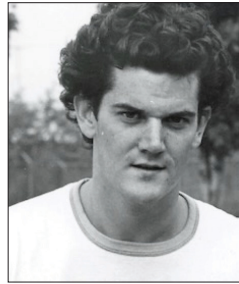
continued on page 17



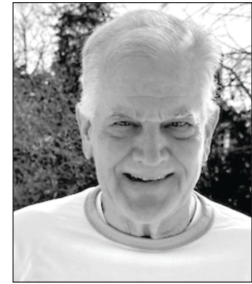
Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, with wife Rosalynn at his side, flashes that famous grin—and the notoriously wrong early edition of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* after the April 6, 1976, Wisconsin primary. Carter addressed his weary crowd of supporters in the early morning hours April 7 after CBS News correctly called the tight race.

Photo credit: Paul Shane, Associated Press

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



Jim Gammill
1977



Jim Gammill
2026

I'll confess. In 1977 I rolled my eyes when I heard stories of the Johnson White House ... good thing I've matured a bit since then.

The Carter-Mondale years hold special memories for us. While we went many different ways afterward, we've kept the friendships, and we've stayed in touch.

And now, with the blessing of The Carter Center, we are excited to launch a new effort—*The Carter-Mondale Connection*—dedicated to connecting the folks who served, supported, and campaigned with Jimmy Carter during the years 1972 through 1981.

Mark Cohen and Sheila Fyfe have already stepped up to lead a quarterly newsletter, and their energy and experience are exactly what this needs. Mark and Sheila have been with me from the start, and it's been great working with them.

We are also hosting www.cartermondaleconnection.com as a growing archive for all things related to the Carter-Mondale era. For instance, you will find all the issues of the *The Carter-Mondale Letter* that Jay Beck and Dianne Bryant and other Carter Center staffers worked so hard over 20-plus years to publish.

We can't wait to see our connections grow. We are here for everyone, so reach out to family and friends (and even former adversaries—hey, it was a long time ago), and encourage them to join us too.

Thanks for your interest and support!

Jim Gammill

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| <p><i>The Carter-Mondale Connection</i> is published quarterly by volunteers in the interest of sustaining the community of Carter-Mondale Campaign and Administration alumni and friends.</p> | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Publisher</td> <td>Jim Gammill</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Co-Editor</td> <td>Mark Cohen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Co-Editor</td> <td>Sheila Fyfe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Graphic Design</td> <td>Veronica DeBoisbriand</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>The Carter-Mondale Connection</i> is not affiliated with The Carter Center or the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum. © 2026 <i>The Carter-Mondale Connection</i> LLC.</p> | Publisher | Jim Gammill | Co-Editor | Mark Cohen | Co-Editor | Sheila Fyfe | Graphic Design | Veronica DeBoisbriand | <p>Subscribe</p> <p>Contact Us</p> <p><i>All rights reserved.</i></p> |
| Publisher | Jim Gammill | | | | | | | | | |
| Co-Editor | Mark Cohen | | | | | | | | | |
| Co-Editor | Sheila Fyfe | | | | | | | | | |
| Graphic Design | Veronica DeBoisbriand | | | | | | | | | |

LETTER FROM THE CO-EDITORS



Mark Cohen



Sheila Fyfe

We loved reading every issue of the *The Carter-Mondale Letter* from The Carter Center, and were sad to learn that the October 2025 issue would be the last.

So it was welcome news when one of our friends at The Carter Center told us that a group of Campaign and Administration veterans, led by Jim Gammill, were working to keep it going. And would we be interested in joining the effort? We couldn't say no.

We've both enjoyed rewarding careers in public relations, communications, and marketing, so writing and editing a newsletter is right in our wheelhouse.

We plan to report and write much of the copy ourselves, treating this as a journalistic enterprise to ensure we publish consistently interesting copy while maintaining a dependable publication schedule.

We welcome your suggestions for a future article (whether you're volunteering to write it or not), along with your comments and questions. You can reach us at connect@cartermondaleconnection.com.

In planning the launch of the first issue of *The Carter-Mondale Connection* newsletter and its website, we've benefited from the advice, counsel, and memories of a host of Campaign and Administration veterans. We thank Lori Baux, Jay Beck, Chris Brown, Paul Costello, Doris Crenshaw, Stu Eizenstat, Les Francis, Jim Free, Rex Granum, Jay Hakes, David Hales, Alicia Smith, and Phil Wise. Curt Kohlhaas and Jenny White at The Carter Center have provided great guidance and insights. And two non-Campaign, non-Administration individuals—John Leary of the Untold Stories Project and Tom Feran, who is now retired after a distinguished career at *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland)—have generously lent their knowledge, talent, and experience to our start-up efforts.

Thanks for your interest and support. We look forward to hearing from you and bringing you Issue No. 2 this summer.

Mark Cohen
Sheila Fyfe

Rosalynn Carter in Iowa: The Soft, Smart Power of the Ultimate Campaign Surrogate

By Sheila Fyfe, Co-Editor

“Without Rosalynn Carter, I don’t believe there would have been a President Carter,” journalist Judy Woodruff said when she spoke at Mrs. Carter’s 2023 memorial service.

President Carter, who was present, no doubt agreed. “That is literally true,” he had said years earlier, when *The Guardian* asked him about the 1976 campaign. “I was completely unknown, and I didn’t have any money. So I went to one state, and Rosalynn went to a different state. By the time the other, more famous candidates woke up, they had already lost.”

Today it’s not remarkable for spouses and families to hit the trail separately. But in the 1976 campaign, Mrs. Carter set the standard for



Rosalynn Carter at the lectern at the Hilton Airport Inn, as Tennessee Governor Ray Blanton’s wife Betty looks on.
Photo credit: Gerald Holly / *The Tennessean*

candidates’ wives by striking out on her own for weeks at a time—making her first big impact in the run-up to the January 19 Iowa caucuses.

“I was more a political partner than a political wife,” she wrote later in her 1984 memoir *First Lady from Plains*. In every state she visited, in both Presidential campaigns, Carter campaign staff saw that firsthand.

“Rosalynn was formidable,” said Paul Costello, who went on to serve as Mrs. Carter’s Assistant Press Secretary in the White House. “She became one of the most voraciously sought-after surrogates, because people realized that not only was she substantive, she was sharp about politics. She always knew what was going on in the states and districts she visited.”

Iowa campaign staffer Lori Baux agreed. “Anywhere Mrs. Carter went, she made a huge difference,” she said.



Rosalynn Carter signs the campaign shirt of Carter supporter Robert Everett in New Philadelphia, Ohio.
Photo credit: *Times-Reporter File Photograph*

continued on page 5



Rosalynn Carter greets people on the street in New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Photo credit: Times-Reporter File Photograph

continued from page 4

In 1975, candidate Carter was at just 1 percent in national name recognition. Other Democrats had bigger staffs and deeper pockets—and no one really knew if voters would be receptive to a Georgia Governor. With those challenges, Iowa campaign coordinator Tim Kraft was unsure about what kind of a difference Mrs. Carter could make. Hoping that he'd have the candidate himself, not necessarily his wife, Tim wasn't exactly excited about her first Iowa trip.

"Tim almost dreaded having her come, but then he fell absolutely in love with her," Lori said. "He told us, 'We all just need to sit back and learn from her.'" He later estimated that Mrs. Carter visited 105 Iowa communities over the course of the caucus campaign.

The Carter budget in Iowa was tight—only about \$18,000—and there was a lot Mrs. Carter could

teach about making an impact on a shoestring. Covering at least two-thirds of Iowa's 99 counties, she earned free media by showing up unannounced at local radio stations, television stations, and newspaper offices. (She later wrote in her memoir that the easiest way to spot a radio or TV station was to drive around and "look for the large antennas.")

The small outlets were intrigued by the soft-spoken Southern woman who showed up on their doorstep and said, "I'm Mrs. Jimmy Carter, and my husband is running for President. I thought you might want to interview me." They did.

The Carter team knew that a caucus system like Iowa's required candidates and their surrogates to make meaningful, personal connections with voters. Rather than appear at large rallies, Mrs. Carter spoke at numerous small gatherings in supporters' homes—"Coffees with Rosalynn Carter."

"She was in living rooms everywhere," Lori said. Voters could show up, learn about Jimmy Carter, and chat with his wife one-on-one. Mrs. Carter's approach was friendly and informal, focusing on building connections at the grass roots and learning everything she could about the people she met.

continued on page 6



Rosalynn Carter shaking hands at Opryland's Showboat Theatre.

Photo credit: Gerald Holly / The Tennessean



Rosalynn Carter greets campaign workers at the Carter Sacramento County headquarters.

Photo credit: Frank Stork, Sacramento Bee file

continued from page 5

"Remember, she kept the books for the Carter family farm in Georgia," Lori added. "She could talk to farmers in Iowa as a farm wife with marvelous grace. She knew what the markets were like, and what price supports and farm subsidies were. She could walk the walk and talk the talk."

Armed with supporters' names and information that they gathered, the Carters would write personal follow-up letters as they drove to campaign events around the state. It paid off: By the time of the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in October 1975—a rare event that the Carters attended together—the *Des Moines Register* straw poll conducted there landed Jimmy Carter in first place.

"From the beginning, in Iowa, [Carter's] campaign was oriented to the individual voter," journalist Jules Witcover wrote. "Supporters, once made, remained supporters, because they were not simply supporters made, but friends made."



"Before Hillary Clinton, There Was Rosalynn Carter"

Photo credit: Neal Boenzi, The New York Times

Rosalynn Carter made a lot of friends in Iowa in 1976.

"She never wanted to be an ornament," Paul said. "She was more comfortable being out on her own, doing her thing. To me, she broke new ground as a political partner and established herself as one of the nation's most influential presidential spouses."

LEARN MORE

[Rosalynn Carter—First Lady's Impact](#)

[Rosalynn Carter Honored](#)

[Carter Appears to Hold a Solid Lead](#)

[Rosalynn Helps Jimmy Carter Become President](#)

[First Lady from Plains](#)

NH Dems Gather to Commemorate 50th Anniversary of Primary Victory



By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

Concord, NH—Feb. 24, 2026—Five veterans of the 1976 New Hampshire Primary campaign, including the current party chair and a former state lawmaker, gathered here to honor the 50th anniversary of Jimmy Carter’s surprising win in New Hampshire’s First-in-the-Nation primary.

Attendees included New Hampshire Democratic Party (NHDP) Chair Ray Buckley, former state lawmaker Jim Splaine, and primary campaign veterans Dick Bouley, Margaret-Ann Moran, and Abigail Shaine.

“Carter’s victory serves as a timely and compelling example of how New Hampshire’s primary has battle-tested candidates and allowed voters to engage with candidates face-to-face,” the New Hampshire Democratic Party stated in a news release.

Neil Levesque, director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, moderated a roundtable discussion with the five at the NHDP headquarters.

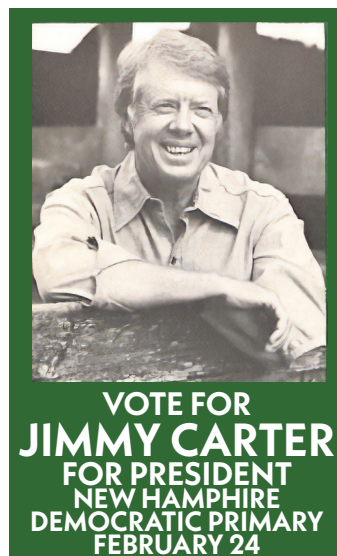
Early Carter supporters wore their support as a badge of honor, as this “For Carter Before New Hampshire” button from the ’76 primaries attests.

“Just over 50 years ago, we saw how New Hampshire’s First-in-the-Nation primary launched a presidency built on grassroots support,” Ray told *The Carter-Mondale Connection*. “It was a privilege to begin working for President Carter on his 1976 campaign in New Hampshire at just 15 years old, and it’s an honor to know his legacy of service found its beginnings here in New Hampshire.”

During the roundtable discussion, Jim observed, “It was the one-to-one, person-to-person, eye-to-eye contact that President Carter had that made the difference.”

Dick added, “We do it right here in the primary. In my opinion, we do a good job in making sure that it’s fair. Everybody’s got an equal chance. If not, Carter would never have won.”

How many volunteers sent out how many of these postcards with a personalized message in the run-up to the February 24 primary?



From left to right: Jim Splaine, Ray Buckley, Dick Bouley, Neil Levesque (director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, who moderated the roundtable), Abigail Shaine, and Margaret Ann-Moran

Coverage Lookback

How the News Media Covered Jimmy Carter as a Front-Runner in 1976

By Tom Feran

First in an occasional series examining real-time news coverage of the Carter Campaigns and Administration.

Fifty years ago, in the spring of 1976, a fluid field of both declared and dithering candidates was working through 30 primaries on the road to the Democratic National Convention. Jimmy Carter's early victories made him the front-runner, which brought the double-edged sword of intensified coverage and scrutiny bordering on suspicion.

Journalists struggled to come to terms with what *Washington Post* columnist David Broder, the dean of the campaign press corps, called the "Carter phenomenon."

Besides being relatively new to national politics, Carter had "invited the application of higher standards," wrote *Post* political reporter Jules Witcover. "A man was asking for closer scrutiny if he said he would never lie to the voters or even mislead them ... Carter had thrown down the gauntlet. His was a different, attention-catching pledge. But the price he paid was a particularly tenacious press corps that had been lied to by experts for years."

Reporter Charles Mohr wrote on the front page of *The New York Times* that Carter was dogged by questions about "his credibility and whether he is evasive on the issues."

"When anybody tried to pin him down," said the Associated Press chief political writer Walter Mears, Carter "wanted to avoid saying anything."

To *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, however, Carter "is not more vague on issues than

other candidates; he just refuses to give one-sentence answers to complicated questions."

The press, he said, was dealing with "the sudden realization that Jimmy Carter has to be taken seriously," while his intelligence, religious faith and Southern heritage made him "a specimen we've never known."

Looking for clues to his character, the *Call & Post* (Cleveland, Ohio), the nationally respected Black community newspaper distributed throughout Ohio, noted Carter "comes from a section of Georgia that is steeped in racism," and questioned if he "can overcome his 'Georgia cracker' image." Managing editor Charles Loeb, regarded as the "dean of Black newsmen," placed Carter in a field with Henry Jackson, George Wallace, and Fred Harris, "none of whom is any great improvement over Lester Maddox in matters racial."

Carter's caution was well-founded. Campaign coverage turned sharply negative in early April over Carter's initially overlooked remarks on low-cost housing to the *New York Daily News*. They reached the front page of *The New York Times* on April 7 under the one-column headline, "Carter defends all-white areas: Says government shouldn't try to end 'ethnic purity' of some neighborhoods."

Reflecting the impact of the comments, the

continued on page 9

continued from page 8

follow-up story, "Carter issues an apology on 'ethnic purity' phrase," appeared under a two-column headline at the top of page one.

Introducing a five-minute lead story on "CBS Evening News," Walter Cronkite said voters had "witnessed a rare if not unique treat, a politician eating his own words." Some thought "ethnic purity" had a "disturbingly segregationist ring," Cronkite added.

Carter apologized for "ill-chosen words" whose use had been a "very serious mistake." Rep. Andrew Young, a Black Georgian and longtime Carter ally, said the incident would be "a red flag in the minds of almost all liberals. It'll probably be less of a red flag in the minds of Blacks because Blacks tend to function on a kind of personal radar in relationship with white candidates ... This is a trap for him and he's got to get out of it."

In the *Times*, columnist Tom Wicker said Carter's remark "could destroy his carefully built but exceedingly fragile political position." Broder called it the first major crisis of the campaign. *Post* humorist Art Buchwald wrote in an uncharacteristically straightforward coda to his column that Carter "struck a chord in every ethnic city kid who ever made the mistake of wandering into somebody else's ethnically pure neighborhood."

A day later, the *Times* reported, "Carter elaborates

on his 'ethnic' view" while bringing his "still off-balance" campaign to Ohio. "His remarks seemed to have particular relevance in Cleveland," the story said, and "the issue is likely to play a role" in primaries in Ohio and neighboring Pennsylvania.

Cleveland's Black-owned *Call & Post* made the remarks less of an issue, reporting Carter apologized for his "slip of the tongue," in a front-page story headlined, "Jimmy Carter receives good reception here."

"Most Blacks interviewed did not hold the remark against Carter," the story said, including among them the powerful Black City Council President George Forbes.

A month later, the paper called Carter's rise among Black people "meteoric" and "almost unbelievable." "The Georgian," wrote once-skeptical editor Loeb, "is the only candidate in the race who has had the courage to make a direct appeal for Black support."

The issue receded. The next major primary came April 27 in Pennsylvania, where R.W. Apple reported in the *Times* that a "decisive victory" established Carter "as the most likely Democratic nominee."

Deep into the story, on the jump page, he noted, "By all indications, Mr. Carter's comments about neighborhood 'ethnic purity' played little role in the outcome."

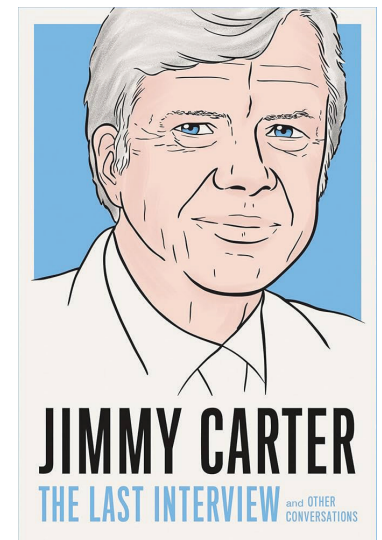
Tom Feran was an award-winning reporter, editor, and columnist for 45 years in Ohio and Connecticut. He says having Jimmy Carter as a Harvard roommate for one night in 1975 was one of many benefits of rooming with Jim Gammill.

GREAT READS

Jimmy Carter: The Last Interview and Other Conversations

©2023 by Melville House Publishing

By Sheila Fyfe, Co-Editor



If you'd like to spend some time with President Carter, look no further than [Jimmy Carter: The Last Interview and Other Conversations](#), a fascinating and readable compilation of interviews that he gave from 1976 to 2021.

Published by Melville House, [The Last Interview series](#) offers dozens of conversations with politicians, jurists, writers, and artists—including important figures like John Lewis, James Baldwin, Frida Kahlo, Toni Morrison, and Julia Child. Each book gathers and places in a single volume interviews from over the breadth of its subject's career. President Carter's is particularly interesting since it takes the reader from the cusp of his Presidency to just a few years before his and Mrs. Carter's deaths.

Feel free to sprint past the first offering in the book, a "Firing Line" confab with the ever-officious William F. Buckley, and go straight to then-candidate Carter's original *Playboy* interview from November 1976.

Conducted by *Los Angeles Times* National Correspondent Robert Scheer, the interview is striking 50 years later, and not just for the famous Carter admission of committing adultery in his heart. For those who are first-time readers, the adultery reference occurs spontaneously and only at the end, with an unnamed aide jumping in to remind the candidate that the tape recorder is still running. (Also, don't miss President Carter sewing a rip in his jacket while he talks to Scheer, and biting off the thread with his teeth.)

Sadly, the media furor after the magazine published ended up crowding out President Carter's candid and intelligent answers to everything else. (How many presidential candidates name-drop Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich?) But overall, the impression is that Jimmy Carter was one of the smartest men ever to serve as commander in chief.

continued on page 11

continued from page 10



President Carter expresses regret for the *Playboy* contretemps in the next interview, conducted by Jim Lehrer in 1989, but he also makes some fascinating comments about Iran and the Middle East that are sadly relevant today.

Ditto for his “Cold War: Backyard” interview with CNN that same year, in which he discusses the 1979–80 Iranian hostage crisis and its devastating effects on his Presidency.

The President is forthcoming about his faith in a 2005 interview, “The Gospel According to Jimmy” for *GQ* magazine, and firm in his convictions about civil rights and justice in a Q&A aired by C-SPAN in early 2016. And now that he’s left us, his 2015 press conference about his melanoma diagnosis makes us newly appreciative that we still had him around nearly a decade more.

The chapter that gives the book its name is a PBS appearance by President and Mrs. Carter on the occasion of their 75th wedding anniversary. The Carters tell news anchor Judy Woodruff their secrets to a happy marriage, as well as what they view as their proudest accomplishments in their long and eventful lives.

Although the PBS interview dates from 2021, the President’s words about the nation’s challenges still apply: “I believe,” he said, “that we have overcome even worse and more serious problems in the past than we have to face today.”

It’s an excellent message of hope for the future. Give this book an easy-to-reach-for place on your library shelf.

TAKE A POLL

After Jimmy Carter’s hard-fought victories in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Florida, the 1976 Democratic primary calendar accelerated quickly. Although the Carter Campaign didn’t enjoy the benefit of the intensive, long-running campaigns that marked each of the first three states, impressive wins followed—driven by momentum, campaign-hardened staff, and ever-growing ranks of volunteers.

The Question

Among the big primary campaign victories that came after the March 9 Florida win, which one do you think was most important on the road to the 1976 nomination? [Click here](#) to rank them first, second, and third:

- _____ Illinois (March 16)
- _____ North Carolina (March 23)
- _____ Wisconsin (April 6)
- _____ Pennsylvania (April 27)
- _____ Texas (May 1)
- _____ Ohio (June 8)

Tell Us More

Tell us your thoughts about your pick(s). Were you there? Was it personally important to you? Share your memories, analysis, or why this primary mattered.

The Carter Presidential Records: What's Available and How to Find It

By Jay Hakes

The archives at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library are a treasure trove for historians, journalists, and veterans of the Carter Administration who want to double-check and enhance their sometimes-fading memories of the period.

The resources are immense. The archives contain about 27 million document pages, approximately half a million photographs, and hundreds of hours of audio, film, and videotapes.

The question for many curious people is how much information can be found on the web. The bad news is that most of the material is not available on your computer and, therefore, access to much of the archives requires a trip to Atlanta. The good news is that the digitization so far has prioritized the most essential parts of the records.

The most useful collection of digitized material can be found in the Presidential Files from the Office of the Staff Secretary—known to Carter insiders as “the Rick Hutcheson files.” It contains all the documents that reached the President’s desk. No surprise: The amount of material he personally reviewed is stunning. Adding value, the President often penned annotations in the margins. Sorting through the “containers” can be a slog. The materials, however, are in chronological order. If you have an approximate date for your search, you can usually find what you’re looking for without too much trouble while in the comfort of your office.

HELPFUL LINKS

[Jay Hakes](#)

[Jimmy Carter’s Presidential Files](#)

[Jimmy Carter’s Daily Diary](#)

Another valuable tool online is the President’s Daily Diary, which is the President’s very precise daily schedule—often with lists of meeting attendees and supporting materials appended. I have used it extensively to determine what happened and when it happened. (This “diary” should not be confused with the daily summaries that President Carter recorded each night, which were also known as diaries. Those were transcribed and shared extensively in two of his books.)

The library staff also has focused its digitization on several special topics, such as the Panama Canal treaties and Presidential (National Security Council) Directives. These can be found on the website at [Additional Resources](#).

Time in the library’s research room will yield additional discoveries. A personal favorite is the legislative files maintained by Frank Moore. You can see which members of Congress the President contacted, and his report on the outcomes of his conversations. The documents reveal a much more effective effort to pass difficult legislation than is sometimes portrayed by those who have done little research.

The National Archives exercises extensive control over the finding aids at the Carter Library, which are somewhat clunky by the standards of modern search. As a result, it is often a good idea to take the recommendation on the website to contact an archivist for any help you might need.

Jay Hakes served in the Agency for International Development and the Department of the Interior during the Carter Administration, and directed the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta from 2000 to 2013. Jay is an expert on U.S. energy and environmental policy and the author of numerous articles and books on energy and environmental history.

THE UNTOLD STORIES PROJECT

Getting the Full Story: The Carter-Mondale Untold Stories Project

By John F. Leary

It started, as many good ideas do, at a party.

On New Year's Eve 2023, Stu Eizenstat and Landon Butler found themselves in conversation about a gap in the historical record: the real story of the Carter-Mondale Administration, told by the people who lived it. That exchange sparked what has become one of the most ambitious oral history and archival projects ever undertaken for an American presidency.

The Carter-Mondale Untold Stories Project is a groundbreaking initiative to capture, curate, and preserve the firsthand experiences of those who served. Led by Stu, Les Francis, and John Leary, Untold Stories aims to offer a richer, more human portrait of presidential decision-making—one that blends policy, personality, and principle in ways that traditional histories rarely do. The project has been generously funded to date by Stu, Landon, David Rubenstein, and Orin Kramer. (Although Untold Stories enjoys access to and support from the staff at the Carter Presidential Library, it is an independent, non-government project.)

With no time to waste, the project has moved quickly and built an extraordinary foundation of source material. To date, the team has conducted

and recorded 113 new interviews in high-definition video. Those are combined with transcripts from the 350 interviews Stu conducted for his landmark book on the Carter Presidency, 112 interviews conducted by Georgetown Professor Colin Campbell, as well as dozens of existing oral history transcripts, such as those housed in the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, giving the project access to an unparalleled depth of firsthand testimony.

The project's archival work extends well beyond oral history interviews. The team has conducted research at the Carter Presidential Library and consulted with the Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State, assembling a comprehensive digital research base that draws on the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series, the Public Papers of the President, presidential daily schedules, Hamilton Jordan's and Charles Kirbo's confidential memoranda, President Carter's handwritten annotations, and numerous other primary and published sources. To make sense of this vast collection, the project employs advanced artificial intelligence tools to analyze and synthesize material at a scale that would have been impossible in earlier eras of historical scholarship. The goal is to translate all of this into products that matter: a book with insights urgently relevant to the challenges facing American democracy today, and potentially a podcast series and streaming video series that bring these stories to broader audiences. And, not insignificantly, a robust archival record that will be a rich civic resource for future generations.

"This is a legacy project for President Carter and Vice President Mondale, for the Administration they led, and for the thousands of public servants whose work deserves to be remembered fully and fairly," Stu said.

continued on page 14

THE UNTOLD STORIES PROJECT

continued from page 13

If you served in the Carter-Mondale Administration and would like to participate, we'd love to hear from you. It takes just a few minutes to complete our [online interest form](#). Your story matters—and there's never been a better time to tell it.

John F. Leary is managing partner at Dotgov.com, which helps people more easily access and use essential government services through leading-edge digital technologies. He is principal researcher for the Carter-Mondale Untold Stories Project, gathering and preserving the recollections of former Carter-Mondale officials to capture a comprehensive historical record.

Guinea Worm Disease Nears Eradication

President Carter famously said, "I'd like for the last Guinea worm to die before I do."

He came very close to getting his wish. Following his death in December 2024, the numbers of human cases of Guinea worm have continued to drop: Only 15 cases were reported that year—and now, [just 10 cases have been reported in 2025](#), according to an update from The Carter Center.

That's down from the estimated 3.5 million cases in 21 Asian and African countries that were occurring when The Carter Center launched the Guinea Worm Eradication Program in 1986.

Final eradication will make Guinea worm the first human disease to be eliminated since smallpox in 1980. It will also be the first parasitic disease to be eradicated, and the first eradication accomplished without the use of a vaccine.

The program uses very simple tools. People at risk of contracting the disease strain their water using fine mesh-filter cloths or filter pipes distributed by the Center. Filtering prevents humans from ingesting the worm larvae thereby breaking the parasite's life cycle and preventing spread of the disease.



Photo credit: The Carter Center

However simple its tools, this effort requires extensive education, teamwork, and advocacy. A network of more than 30,000 volunteers, community partners, and local health ministries help promote behavioral changes by teaching people to filter all drinking water and keep infected people and animals away from water sources.

The eradication program will continue its work until the number of human cases reaches zero, according to Carter Center Board Chair Jason Carter.

About *The Carter-Mondale Connection*

The Carter-Mondale Connection is a work in progress. It's an all-volunteer effort by a handful of Campaign and Administration alumni who want to keep our community—and the incredible story of the 1976 Campaign and the wide-ranging accomplishments of the Carter Administration—alive.

While our numbers are dwindling with time, there are still thousands who contributed to the Campaigns and the Administration who want to safeguard the Carter legacy. We also hope to engage the children and grandchildren of Campaign and Administration alumni who feel a kinship with Jimmy Carter.

How you can help?

First: Spread the word.

If you're still in contact with friends and colleagues from the Campaign and/or Administration, share this newsletter with them. We're building our mailing list from scratch, so don't assume we have the same names and email addresses you have. And that includes the relatives of those who served in the Campaign and the Administration.

Second: Share your memories and thoughts with us.

If you have some interesting/fun photos from the Campaign or Administration, send us a usable digital copy (or a hard copy that we'll scan and return to you). If you have an idea for an article for the newsletter, let us know. We hope to cast as broad a net as possible.

Third: Participate.

We'll be posting questions and polls in the newsletter. Be sure to respond at connect@cartermondaleconnection.com.

Fourth: Volunteer.

We'd welcome some research help, and if you're interested in going through the publicly available archives to find editorial and photographic content that would be of interest to our readers, please let us know at connect@cartermondaleconnection.com.

Fifth: Enjoy *The Carter-Mondale Connection*!



LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

As this is Volume 1 No. 1, we obviously don't have any letters to the editors. Or the publisher.

But we've called this endeavor "*The Carter-Mondale Connection*" because, after 50 years, we'd like to keep building a community of shared enthusiasm for what we accomplished on the campaign trail, in the Georgia Governor's office, and the Carter Administration.

So... Connect!

Send us a note to connect@cartermondaleconnection.com.

You may want to comment on an entry in Passages or a feature we ran in the previous issue. Or maybe share a memory spurred by something you read in *The Carter-Mondale Connection*.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Planning a trip to Jimmy Carter's hometown of Plains? The town hosts tours and special events throughout the year. Visitors can enjoy the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park, services at Maranatha Baptist Church, the Rosalynn Smith Carter Childhood Garden, and more. Here's what's around the corner right now:

Sat. April 11

Downtown Car Show

Sat. June 27

Plains, Trains, and Fireworks
+ Peace, Love, BBQ Cookoff

Visit www.jimmycarterfriends.org for more information.

Wisconsin Primary Night

continued from page 1

The Invisible Primary, which went to press even before the first caucus attendee stood up in a high school gym in Iowa, “At present the Wisconsin primary will be a ‘beauty contest’ only, with no delegates selected ... The delegates will be chosen in a series of caucuses probably held in June.”

That didn’t stop Arizona Rep. Mo Udall, whose campaign reportedly started organizing in Wisconsin in March of 1975. He, Sen. Birch Bayh, Sen. Fred Harris, and others focused early on the state with its liberal tradition and unionized workforce. To the Carter Campaign, however, it looked like a poor allocation of resources in a time when the entire 1975 campaign budget totaled less than \$1 million.



President Harry S. Truman gleefully shows off the early edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* at St. Louis Union Station on November 4, 1948.

But as the campaign season got rolling, Udall supporters in Congress and a handful of unions began lobbying the DNC to make an exception for Wisconsin, given its historic role as the nation’s first presidential primary in 1912. Wisconsin Gov. Patrick Lacey added his support. And just as the presidential campaign was barreling toward the March 9 Florida primary, the DNC overrode its reforms and decided—with only about a month to

go—that the Wisconsin delegates indeed would be selected based on their state’s primary vote.

Meanwhile, the Carter Campaign in Atlanta had been collecting names of people in Wisconsin who said they wanted to help. It wasn’t a big list.

Florida and New Hampshire Campaign Veterans Parachute into Uncharted Territory

With three recruits from Chris Brown’s victorious New Hampshire staff, Campaign Manager Phil Wise reassembled much of his Florida field staff in Milwaukee the weekend after the Florida primary. They had a sheet of paper with a couple dozen names. And a map of the state.

Undaunted, Phil started assigning staff to every major population center. But how do you run a campaign in three weeks when your opponent has been there a year?

“I was blessed to bring a group that had worked with me for months and months in Florida,” Phil explained. “They knew what they had to do, they were self-starters. While we only had three weeks to do it, we had people with months of experience to make it happen.

“But there wasn’t time to do any great organizational work,” Phil added. “It was a wonderful exercise in what momentum can do for a campaign.”

With its yearlong head start, the Udall campaign had racked up some serious endorsements statewide—starting with five members of the state’s congressional delegation and many of the state’s most important unions.

continued on page 18

continued from page 17

“Because we were late to the game, we couldn’t rely on local endorsements,” Phil said. “It actually complemented Carter’s image as the outsider running to restore trust in government. We were able to turn a negative into a positive.”

An Important Outside Endorsement

The ’76 Democratic presidential field was filled with U.S. Senators past and present: Birch Bayh from Indiana, Henry “Scoop” Jackson from Washington, Oklahoma’s Fred Harris, Idaho’s Frank Church, Hubert Humphrey from Minnesota, Lloyd Bentsen from Texas, and West Virginia’s Robert Byrd. So, it was noteworthy when 33-year-old Joseph R. Biden from Delaware became the first sitting U.S. Senator to endorse Carter at a rally in Madison on March 25. “I think Carter’s the guy who can win,” Biden told *The New York Times*.

Western Wisconsin: Iowa Rides to the Rescue

Was Carter’s secret weapon the battle-tested field staffs from Florida and New Hampshire that fanned out across the state? Was it the momentum from the March primaries in Florida, North Carolina, and Illinois that propelled the Carter Campaign into Wisconsin? Or was it the infighting and strategic mistakes that reportedly tripped up the Udall campaign?

Perhaps the secret weapon was the influx of Carter supporters from eastern Iowa, who poured across the border to leaflet and door-knock any place they could find in Wisconsin’s rural western third and seventh congressional districts.

They came with leftover leaflets and signs from the caucus. The Iowa campaign office didn’t have the money to charter buses, according to Lori

Baux—the lone staffer who had remained in Des Moines to coordinate the county, congressional district, and state conventions. So, the Iowa volunteers loaded their own cars and drove to Wisconsin. In large numbers.

Lori credits word-of-mouth among Carter supporters and the work of the impressive steering committees that had been assembled. “All had organized for the precinct caucuses,” she explained, “many may have been delegates to the county convention, but all remained eager to help in any way possible. We put a really big organization together. We gave a lot of that work to the local steering committees.”

Conveniently, the Wisconsin primary fell between the county and congressional district conventions. “Our supporters would have been looking for more to do after the county conventions,” Lori noted. “They would have come primarily from Dubuque, Waterloo, Clinton, Cedar Falls, and Marshalltown, along with smaller towns scattered mostly through Iowa’s second congressional district.”

“We needed all the help we could get,” Phil said of the influx of Iowans into the resource-starved, three-week campaign.

When the Iowa volunteers inundated Eau Claire and La Crosse, they were sent off to some of the smaller cities and towns in western Wisconsin—like Prairie du Chien, Viroqua, and Westby.

Those areas proved decisive when the votes were counted.

continued on page 19

continued from page 18

The Results

It was a squeaker. Carter won 271,220 votes (36.63%) to Udall's 263,771 (35.62%)—a difference of just 7,449 votes out of a total of 740,528.

Udall, as expected, swamped Carter by a 2–1 margin in liberal Dane County (Madison), and was slightly ahead in the heavily unionized industrial cities of Kenosha and Racine. The campaigns were virtually even in Milwaukee. And based on those early returns, ABC and then NBC called the race for Udall. While CBS's Walter Cronkite kept saying the race was too close to call, the Udall team chose to go down to the ballroom at Milwaukee's Marc Plaza Hotel at around 10:15 Central Time to declare victory—hoping to make the late-night newscasts and early edition newspapers on the East Coast. "Oh, how sweet it is," Udall told his cheering supporters.

But in 1976, much of Wisconsin's third and seventh congressional districts still used hand-counted paper ballots. And as *those* results trickled in, Udall's lead diminished until Carter pulled ahead. CBS called the race for Carter, but the first edition of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* was already on the press. And the rest is history, as captured by AP photographer Paul Shane.



WISCONSIN PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| CARTER | 271,220 | 36.63% |
| Udall | 263,771 | 35.62% |
| Difference: | 7,449 | |
| Total Votes Cast: | 740,528 | |

Jackson, Udall, and Uncommitted may have beaten Carter in the delegate-rich New York primary the same day. But the news media focused on the Wisconsin results, adding to the momentum resulting from Carter's impressive post-Florida showings in North Carolina on March 16 and Illinois on March 23.

"Not only had Carter avoided defeat in a primary the polls had indicated he would win; he managed through sweet serendipity somehow to seem heroic in eking out the oft-beaten Mo Udall," concluded Jules Witcover in his touchstone book on the 1976 campaign, *Marathon*.



Photo credit: Matthew Pearson/WABE

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Jesse L. Jackson | 21 |
| Sybil Lenora Spires Carter | 22 |
| Rob Caughlan | 23 |
| John P. Comerford | 24 |
| H. Kent "Kenny" Daniel | 25 |
| Charles Palmer Harriman | 26 |
| Nathan Landow | 27 |
| Evelyn J. Small | 28 |

INTRODUCTION TO PASSAGES

By all accounts, the Passages section of *The Carter-Mondale Letter* was widely read and appreciated by all. While we were saddened to read each obituary, it was comforting to know the decedent's contributions to the Campaign and/or the Administration remained a point of pride after 30, 40, 50 years. It also was an opportunity to reflect on those with whom we had worked and how valuable each person's contribution was.

In publishing *The Carter-Mondale Connection* we hope to continue the original newsletter's legacy of remembering our former colleagues. Our tributes will focus on each decedent's contributions to the Campaign and/or Administration. In many cases, we'll try to include relevant information or a quote from sources in the Carter-Mondale network. And we'll include links to newspaper obituaries and paid death notices, funeral home postings, and online tribute books when we have them.

While internet search engines and word of mouth can capture much of that news, we could use some additional assistance. When you hear of someone from the Carter-Mondale team who has died, please drop us a line, send us a link, so we can share the news with our readership: passages@cartermondaleconnection.com.

We'd be grateful for the thoughtful assistance.

Jim Gammill
Mark Cohen
Sheila Fyfe

Jesse L. Jackson

(October 8, 1941–February 17, 2026)

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, civil rights powerhouse and friend of the Carter Administration, died on February 17 in Chicago at the age of 84.

His memorial service on March 6 was attended by three former U.S. presidents, two former first ladies, a former vice president, and numerous artists, athletes, and other celebrities who had been touched and inspired by the two-time presidential candidate and founder of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Rev. Jackson played a significant role in advancing the Carter Administration's commitment to expanding opportunities for minority businesses.

"He worked closely with us to identify and engage minority leaders from across the country to participate in the White House Conference on Small Business," said Doris Crenshaw, President Carter's Deputy Director of Minority Affairs for the historic conference.

"His advocacy helped inform legislation that became Public Law 95-507, which required



Photo credit: Bob Daugherty/AP

The Rev. Jesse Jackson speaks with President Jimmy Carter at the White House in April 1979. Carter was impressed by Jackson's work to support Black students and his Administration helped fund Jackson's education program.

federal agencies to include minority businesses in government contracting opportunities. This law was an important step toward expanding economic inclusion."

Rev. Jackson's commitment to President Carter extended beyond policy. During the 1980 election, he campaigned tirelessly for Carter-Mondale—often working nearly 20 hours a day, seven days a week to mobilize support. The Campaign chartered a plane so Rev. Jackson could travel throughout the South and Midwest, energizing voters and strengthening grassroots support.

On Election Night, Rev. Jackson stood at President Carter's side as the President delivered his concession speech—a testament to his dedication and close partnership with the Carter Administration during that consequential time.

"Rev. Jackson's service, advocacy, and commitment to expanding opportunity left a lasting mark on the nation and on those of us who had the privilege of working with him," Doris said. "His legacy will long be remembered, and he will be deeply missed."



Photo Credit: Bettmann/Getty Images

Sybil Lenora Spires Carter

(November 21, 1938–March 4, 2026)

Sybil Spires Carter, 87, wife of Billy Carter and sister-in-law to President Jimmy Carter, died at Sumter Retirement Center in Plains, Georgia, on March 4.

Born in Clayton, Alabama, to William and Lucille Spires, Sybil was the youngest of three. When the family moved to Plains, Sybil caught the eye of a tow-headed, blue-eyed boy who lived around the corner. That was when her adventure with Billy Carter, the love of her life, began.

Sybil and Billy worked together through the ups and downs of 33 years of marriage. Along the way, they added six children to the family: Kim Carter Fuller, Jana Kae Carter, Buddy Carter, Marle Carter Usry, Mandy Carter Flynn, and Earl Carter.

Sybil's life was filled with music, her love of reading, her church, and most of all, her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She never met a stranger, and if she called you a friend, her affection would never waver. Her loving support of those around her served her well through her years of working in the family business, Carter's Warehouse, Syb's Restaurant, the Plains Flower Shop, and Habitat for Humanity.

Sybil is survived by 11 grandchildren: Billy Carter, Mandy Barr, Will Carter, Luke Usry, Bud Fuller, Maddie Carter, Cassie Branum, Anna Person, Trey Flynn, Cameron Herbert, and Carter James. Her 10 great-grandchildren will also help keep her stories alive.

Sybil was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Lila Ruth Howard, her brother Louis (Sonny) Harrison, her husband Billy Carter, and her daughter Jana Carter.

"We know that our daddy met her at the gate as soon as she got there," the Carter family said. "He hasn't let her out of his sight, and now they're all sitting around listening to her stories of everyone she left behind. And she's just as happy as she can be."

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Rush Physical Therapy in Americus, Georgia.

[Sybil Carter Obituary](#)



"Sybil and Billy worked together through the ups and downs of 33 years of marriage"

Rob Caughlan

(February 27, 1943–January 17, 2026)

Rob Caughlan, environmentalist, political consultant, and avid surfer, died in San Mateo, California, on January 17, just four days after the death of his wife Diana. Rob had been undergoing treatment for cancer, but his daughter Christy said that after losing his partner of 62 years, he “died of a broken heart.”



Photo credit: Diana Caughlan

Dubbed by *Vanity Fair* as a “Golden State Eco-Warrior,” Rob was co-founder of the nonprofit environmental organization Friends of the River, a role that first brought him in contact with then-Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter. Rob helped organize Conservationists for Carter in the 1976 campaign, serving as the group’s California chairman. Following President Carter’s election, Rob served as Special Assistant to the Deputy Administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

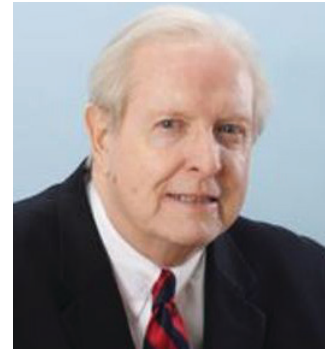
Rob worked on the White House Solar Energy Task Force, and was a member of the team that produced *The Global 2000 Report to the President*, released by the Council on Environmental Quality and the U.S. State Department in 1980. This comprehensive overview of the pressing issues of climate change, conservation, and energy scarcity helped lead to legislation like the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which President Carter signed into law that same year.

Rob first learned to surf at age 16, and later wrote about his political experiences in *A Surfer in the White House* and *Other Salty Yarns*, his unique collection of insightful and amusing memories of politics and conservation work. “Rob always contended that the best surfer was the one having the most fun,” fellow Carter alum and close friend Bob Friedman wrote on Facebook. “I will miss his stories, his generous friendship, and ready laugh. Let’s us all try to surf life as well as he did.”

[Rob Caughlan](#)

[The Carter White House and Rob Caughlan](#)

John P. Comerford



(November 16, 1948–November 17, 2025)

John P. Comerford died on November 17, 2025, in Seattle, Washington. He began his political career in Boston government and later joined the Carter Administration, serving as the Confidential Assistant to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Juanita Kreps. He was Associate Director of the White House Conference on Economic Development and, at age 29, was appointed by President Carter as the founding president of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank.

After the Carter Administration, John continued to be active in politics. In Washington State, he won the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Congress in 1992 and 1994, and he ran for state treasurer there in 2016.

John founded and served as CEO of two commercial banks, including The Bank of Massachusetts. Later in his career, John served in executive positions in the investment and insurance industries, and consulted on financial, health, and human resource issues, primarily with the University of Washington and the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

John received several appointments to state and national boards for retirement, health care, and economic development. He was active in many community, religious, and political organizations, including as a co-founder of the Queen Anne Food Bank in Seattle.

John's family requested that donations in his memory be made to the Queen Anne Food Bank at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Seattle.

[John Comerford Obituary](#)

[Sacred Heart Seattle.org](#)

H. Kent “Kenny” Daniel

(November 20, 1947–February 26, 2026)

H. Kent “Kenny” Daniel, longtime agent with the U.S. Secret Service who protected President Carter for six years, died at his home in Powder Springs, Georgia, on February 28.

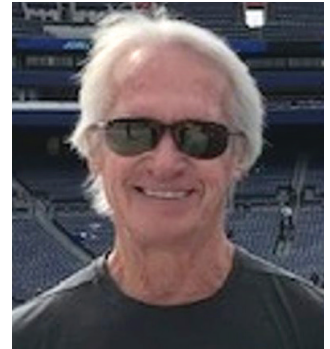
Kent began his career in federal service by joining the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms in 1971. In 1975, he was hired as a special agent with the Secret Service and assigned to the Charlotte Field Office.

His first assignment to a presidential detail was with Gerald R. Ford. Kent later transferred to the New York City Field Office before being assigned to President Carter’s detail in Plains in 1980.

In 1986, Kent transferred to the Atlanta Field Office, where he remained until his retirement from the Service in 1997. He later worked with the Food and Drug Administration until 2003, after which he joined the Department of Homeland Security as a special agent with the Transportation Security Administration.

In total, Kent devoted 39 years of honorable and distinguished service to his country.

[H Kent “Kenny” Daniel](#)



Charles Palmer Harriman

(June 6, 1933–February 19, 2026)

Businessman, community leader, and Democratic fundraiser Charles Harriman died while under hospice care in Scarborough, Maine, on February 19, 2026.

A stockbroker and investment adviser whose career spanned 55 years, Charlie and his late wife Ann Rees Harriman made their home in Falmouth, Maine, where Charlie served on the Town Council and the School Board. At the state level, he served as a member of former Governor Joseph Brennan's Cost and Management Committee. In the 1976 presidential campaign, he was State Finance Chair for Jimmy Carter for President.

Charlie was also a founding member, president, and trustee of Camp Susan Curtis, a free summer camp created in 1974 by former Maine Governor Ken Curtis. The camp serves children of Maine families facing economic hardship and food insecurity.

Ann Harriman, a prolific Democratic fundraiser herself, served with Charlie as a co-chair for the Carter Campaign in Maine. She died in September 2005.

[Charles Harriman Obituary](#)

[Ann Rees Harriman Obituary](#)

susancurtis.org



Nathan Landow

(October 22, 1932–December 30, 2025)

Former Chair of the Maryland Democratic Party and Carter appointee Nate Landow died at his home in Potomac, Maryland, on December 30, 2025.

President Carter appointed Nate to be U.S. Alternate Representative to the United Nations 35th General Assembly in 1980. Nate served as Maryland Democratic Party Chair from 1988 to 1992, and chaired the Maryland delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1992.

Nate was one of the Washington, D.C., area's most prominent commercial real estate developers, with a career that spanned 67 years. The Landow Company's many building projects include the Prospect House in Arlington, Virginia, The Promenade in Bethesda, Maryland, and the Dulles Jet Center at Dulles International Airport.

A leading philanthropist throughout his life, Nate was a generous donor to the Mayo Clinic, and established the Landow House assisted living facility at Charles E. Smith Life Communities in North Bethesda, Maryland. His memorial service was held January 4, 2026. The Landow family asked that donations made in his memory be directed to the Charles E. Smith Life Communities.

[Nathan Landow Obituary](#)

smithlifecommunities.org



Evelyn J. Small

(March 17, 1948–October 26, 2025)

Evelyn Jean Small served as Director, Congressional Communications in the Carter White House before going on to a distinguished 25-year career at *The Washington Post*. As personal researcher to *Post* publisher Katharine Graham, Evelyn researched and helped edit Graham's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir *Personal History*.

Evelyn later moved to the *Post*'s former Book World section, where she served as contributing editor. She also continued her work as a researcher and copy editor, working with writers such as *Post* journalist Sally Quinn.

Evelyn died of complications of Alzheimer's disease at a Salt Lake City memory care center. "Ev was an extraordinary person made up of stories, people, places, and joy, and fueled by unending curiosity and the ability to lead with love at every turn," her family said.

[Evelyn Small Obituary](#)

