

THE CARTER | Mondale CONNECTION

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Volume 1 No. 3

1976: America Elects a President from Plains



President-elect Jimmy Carter hugs daughter Amy in celebration as the television networks call the 1976 election for Carter-Mondale.

L to R: Ken Hays, Steve Selig, Nan Powell, Nancy Moore, Herky Harris, Frank Moore, Phil Wise, Vicki Rogers, Rick Hutcheson, Landon Butler

Photo courtesy of Rick Hutcheson

691 Days,
461,245 Miles,
1,029 Cities & Towns Visited,
1,495 Speeches

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

I don't recall exactly when Assistant Press Secretary Betty Rainwater gave me the assignment in the '76 General Election press office in Atlanta, but it would have been the last week or two of the General Election campaign.

Press Secretary Jody Powell was looking ahead to providing the media something newsy, something unique, for their stories that would run on Election Day. Jody, Rex Granum, Betty, or someone else came up with the idea to try to put some hard numbers on how long and

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America Elects... continued from page 1

how hard Jimmy Carter had campaigned to reach election day on Nov. 2.

So off I went.

From Susan Clough, I gathered copies of the schedules Governor Carter carried with him (and sent to Susan after every campaign trip), starting with the Dec. 12, 1974, announcement in Atlanta. I then cross-referenced the schedules with the exhaustive newspaper clipping files we maintained in the press office, trying to determine whether Candidate Carter had delivered remarks at each scheduled stop.

The result: a fact sheet the press staff on the campaign planes could give reporters as they were gearing up to write their stories for the Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning papers.

Rex remembers that the press corps welcomed the unique fact sheet: "I remember how pleased we were to have fresh material to provide a press corps that by that point had heard the Carter stump speech so often, hundreds of times in some cases, that more than a few could recite the wording in perfect unison with the candidate, dramatic pauses included."

Here's what AP Writer Lynne Olson—now the highly respected author of 10 books, focusing primarily on World War II politics, diplomacy, and unsung heroes, including *Those Angry Days*—wrote for the Election Day papers:

Carter Back Home

By Lynne Olson, Associated Press Writer

PLAINS, Ga. (AP)—Jimmy Carter, who began his presidential odyssey in this Georgia hamlet 22 months ago, returned home early today to await the nation's verdict on his bid to become the 39th president of the United States.

Carter planned to vote early today, then return home until early evening.

"I'm glad it's over," said the candidate late Monday night as he sank into an airplane seat opposite several reporters on the way home aboard his campaign jet, Peanut One.

He had made his last speech of the 1976 campaign and, as his plane skimmed through the Northeastern night toward his Southern homeland, Carter traded his proper suit coat for a casual grey sweater. Relaxing, he said he had

enjoyed the campaign, despite its "tedium" and the fact that "you can never relax."

... Carter made his last campaign appearance Monday night in a crowded convention hall in Flint, Michigan, along with his running mate, Sen. Walter Mondale. The two men embraced in the steamy, overcrowded hall, and Carter drew cheers from some 7,000 persons as he spoke on familiar themes—unemployment, inflation, trust in government. He repeated, "It's time for a change in Washington."

... Since Carter began his long quest for the presidency in January 1975 (sic), he has given 1,495 speeches, visited 1,029 cities, and flown 461,245 miles, according to a memo issued by his staff.

For further reading:

This November 15, 1976, *New York Times* article mentions some of the data distributed to the press before Election Day [Carter, With a Long List of Campaign Promises, Now Faces the Problem of Making Good on Them](#)

Where In the World Was Jimmy Carter?

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

Peanut One, the chartered United Airlines 727, flew Jimmy Carter, Campaign staff, various dignitaries, and members of the media to 73 cities coast to coast during the General Election campaign that officially kicked off on Sept. 6, 1976.

United Airlines later presented the Campaign and staff with a framed route map and itinerary. If you're wondering where Candidate Carter flew to, wonder no more:

Albany, Georgia	9/6	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	9/13	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	9/24
Columbus, Georgia	9/6	Phoenix, Arizona	9/14	Houston, Texas	9/24
Florence, South Carolina	9/6	Billings, Montana	9/14	Dallas, Texas	9/24
Norfolk, Virginia	9/6	Bismarck, North Dakota	9/14	San Diego, California	9/25
New York, New York	9/7	Sioux Falls, South Dakota	9/15	Ontario, California	9/26
New London, Connecticut	9/7	Mankato, Minnesota	9/15	Long Beach, California	9/26
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	9/7	Minneapolis, Minnesota	9/15	Portland, Oregon	9/27
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania	9/8	Detroit, Michigan	9/16	Evansville, Indiana	9/27
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	9/8	Saginaw, Michigan	9/16	Albany, Georgia	9/30
Washington, D.C.	9/8	Indianapolis, Indiana	9/16	Buffalo, New York	9/30
Cleveland, Ohio	9/8	Baltimore, Maryland	9/16	Boston, Massachusetts	9/30
Columbus, Ohio	9/9	Washington, D.C.	9/17	Portland, Maine	10/1
Springfield, Illinois	9/9	Gulfport, Mississippi	9/17	Hartford, Connecticut	10/1
Peoria, Illinois	9/9	Hot Springs, Arkansas	9/17	Nashville, Tennessee	10/1
Chicago, Illinois	9/9	Albany, Georgia	9/19	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	10/2
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	9/10	Kansas City, Missouri	9/19	Washington, D.C.	10/2
Fort Lauderdale, Florida	9/10	St. Louis, Missouri	9/19	Albany, Georgia	10/4
Jacksonville, Florida	9/10	New York, New York	9/20	Denver, Colorado	10/4
Albany, Georgia	9/13	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	9/20	San Francisco, California	10/7
Birmingham, Alabama	9/13	Albany, Georgia	9/23	Salt Lake City, Utah	10/7

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Los Angeles, California	10/8	Albany, Georgia	10/18	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	10/28
Albuquerque, New Mexico	10/8	Tampa, Florida	10/18	Erie, Pennsylvania	10/28
El Paso, Texas	10/8	Miami, Florida	10/19	Cleveland, Ohio	10/28
Cleveland, Ohio	10/9	Winston-Salem, North Carolina	10/19	New York, New York	10/29
Indianapolis, Indiana	10/9	New York, New York	10/19	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	10/29
South Bend, Indiana	10/10	Albany, Georgia	10/21	Toledo, Ohio	10/29
Chicago, Illinois	10/11	New York, New York	10/21	St. Louis, Missouri	10/30
Eau Claire, Wisconsin	10/11	Newport News, Virginia	10/23	Tulsa, Oklahoma	10/30
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	10/11	Newark, New Jersey	10/23	New Orleans, Louisiana	10/30
Albany, Georgia	10/14	Washington, D.C.	10/23	McAllen, Texas	10/30
Rochester, New York	10/14	Albany, Georgia	10/26	San Antonio, Texas	10/30
Syracuse, New York	10/14	Columbia, South Carolina	10/26	Dallas, Texas	10/31
New York, New York	10/15	Marion, Illinois	10/26	Fort Worth, Texas	10/31
Detroit, Michigan	10/15	Moline, Illinois	10/26	San Francisco, California	10/31
Kansas City, Missouri	10/16	Chicago, Illinois	10/27	Sacramento, California	11/1
Cincinnati, Ohio	10/16	New York, New York	10/27	Los Angeles, California	11/1
Youngstown, Ohio	10/16			Flint, Michigan	11/1
Columbus, Ohio	10/16				

Note: We send thanks to Randy Lewis, who was aboard Peanut One for the duration of the campaign, for providing this information to *The Carter-Mondale Connection*.

The Playboy Interview: A Lot More Than Lust

By Sheila Fyfe, Co-Editor

It's been 50 years since *Playboy* magazine published *Los Angeles Times* National Correspondent Robert Scheer's interview with candidate Jimmy Carter—creating a media storm over Carter's admission, late in the interview, that he had lusted in his heart after other women.

The brouhaha had one unfortunate effect: It obscured the fact that the Scheer interview was one of the most forthright and intelligent ever given by a presidential candidate. As journalist Eleanor Clift told *The Carter-Mondale Connection*, "It was a substantive interview. And you know, the shame of it—how often does a candidate allow himself or herself to go into that kind of detail?"



Jimmy Carter with journalists Robert Scheer and Barry Golson

Photo credit: The Tampa Bay Times, courtesy of Barry Golson

Here are just a few of the topics that Carter covered:

Vietnam and the "Absence of Courage"

Carter used that phrase to describe what he felt was his own initial hesitancy to address issues like the Vietnam War and civil rights. Scheer asked, "Do you feel you spoke out at an early enough stage against the war?" Carter replied, "No, I did not. I never spoke out publicly about withdrawing completely from Vietnam until March of 1971.

"The American people were tremendously misled about the immediate prospects for victory, about the level of our involvement, about the relative cost in American lives," he added. "If I had known in the Sixties what I knew in the early Seventies, I think I would have spoken out more strongly."

Pardoning Vietnam-era Draft Evaders

Carter pledged to Scheer—as he did on the campaign trail and in the fall debate—to provide amnesty to Americans who had skirted military service rather than serve in Vietnam. "I'm not

capable of judging [people's] motives," he said, "so I'm just going to declare a blanket pardon.

"I just want to bring the defectors back to this country without punishment and, in doing so, I would like to have the support of the American people." He told Scheer he would issue the [pardon](#) in his first week in office. (And he did.)

Thoughts on Foreign Intervention

In a discussion of President Gerald Ford's handling of the SS *Mayaguez*, which the Cambodian Khmer Rouge seized in May 1975, Carter outlined how he would have responded differently from Ford—but was able to take the subject further when Scheer asked him his general thoughts about wielding U.S. power abroad.

"I would never intervene for the purpose of overthrowing a government," he said. "If enough

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were at stake for our national interest, I would use prestige, legitimate diplomatic leverage, trade mechanisms. But it would be the sort of effort that would not be embarrassing to this nation if revealed completely.

"Our government should justify the character and moral principles of the American people, and our foreign policy should not short-circuit that for temporary advantage."

Tax Reform and Corporate Profits

Scheer asked if Carter supported shifting the tax burden away from middle- and lower-income Americans and toward the wealthy and corporations—or if Carter was just interested in simplifying the tax code.

"It would involve both," Carter said, adding, "We should have a true progressive income tax, so that the higher the income, the higher the percentage of taxation.

"I'm not particularly anti-corporate, but I'd say I'm more oriented to consumer protection. One of the things I've established throughout the campaign is the need to break up the sweetheart arrangement between regulatory agencies and the industries they regulate."

Abortion Rights

Carter told Scheer that while he was personally opposed to abortion, "the Supreme Court ruling [in January 1973] suits me all right. I signed a Georgia law as governor that was compatible with the Supreme Court decision."



The Pressure of Being in Public Office and to Deliver Results

Scheer wondered if the presidency might be just too great a burden for its occupants—citing Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon as examples. Carter disagreed.

"I think the ability to accept oneself and to feel secure and confident, to avoid any degree of paranoia, to face reality, these factors are fairly independent of whether or not one is president. The same factors would be important if someone were chief of police, or a schoolteacher, or a magazine editor. The pressure is greater on a president, obviously, than some of the jobs I've described, but I think the ability to accommodate pressure is a personal thing.

"If I'm elected," he concluded, "there will be no delay in moving aggressively on a broad front to carry out the promises I've made to the American people. I intend to stick to everything I've promised."

From “Stop Wallace” to a Solid South: How Mississippi Put Carter-Mondale Over the Top

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

The challenge was clear: Jimmy Carter could only win the 1976 Democratic presidential nomination if he could beat Alabama Gov. George Wallace in their native South. But Carter also wasn't going to win in the fall unless he could persuade Wallace supporters to vote for him.

That seemingly impossible task became real when early in the morning on Wednesday, Nov. 3, the networks called Mississippi for Carter-Mondale and declared Jimmy Carter the president-elect.

Democrats didn't get anything near a solid South again until 1992. How did it happen?

The Primaries

The first stop was Florida, where a band of young McGovernites had taken over several key county parties and, eventually, the Florida Democratic Party itself. The group embraced the same early goal as the Carter Campaign: Stop George Wallace in a state that was considered a near-lock for him (he had won 75 of the state's 81 delegates in 1972).

The group decided they would look at all the Democrats interested in running in Florida's March 9 primary and unite around a single candidate, according to Susan Vodicka, one of the key Democratic leaders in Dade (now Miami-Dade) County.

"We weren't sure about Carter, but knew we could stop Wallace," Susan told *The Carter-Mondale Connection*. "But we needed to keep everyone else out of the state. (Former North Carolina



Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter and Rep. Mo Udall (D-AZ) enjoy a laugh with Gov. George Wallace at a 1976 campaign event in Detroit.

Photo credit: Tony Spina

Governor Terry) Sanford came to South Florida. Mo Udall came to South Florida. We liked Mo. We liked Birch Bayh.

"But what really happened was Jimmy Carter was Jimmy Carter. He kept coming back to Florida," Susan said. Carter impressed them with his intellect and his integrity. "We developed real affection for Jimmy Carter."

The other candidates who had been eyeing Florida slowly sloughed off throughout 1975, except Washington Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson, Susan noted.

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That proved decisive. Carter won 34 percent of the vote to Wallace's 31 percent. Senator Jackson trailed in third with 24 percent.

Two weeks later, on March 23, North Carolina Democrats handed Carter his first majority win in a primary state, as Carter defeated Wallace 53 percent to 35 percent, with Jackson winning only 4 percent.

As longtime North Carolina Democratic strategist Dewey Sheffield recalled, many on the Carter team went to the Wallace election night party to show their respect and congratulate them on a hard-fought campaign. "We knew we'd need them come November," Dewey told *The Carter-Mondale Connection*. "It was the right thing to do before we celebrated our own win for Jimmy."

Wallace was one of many leading Democrats who united behind Carter after Super Tuesday, releasing his 173 Convention delegates and endorsing Carter in an announcement in Mobile on Wednesday, June 9.

The General Election

The winning Carter-Mondale coalition in the South was built on a three-legged stool: overwhelming support from the Black community, votes from white progressives in pockets throughout the South, and Wallace Democrats.

But it was a challenge to convince Wallace voters—and conservative Democrats in the South who did not align with Wallace—to support the Carter-Mondale ticket, according to Mississippi and Tennessee General Election Coordinator Jim Free. Throughout the primaries and General Election, Jim frequently worked out of an office at the Muscle Shoals (Alabama) Sound Studio—

home to so many legendary soul, R&B, and rock recordings—courtesy of owner and Carter supporter Rick Hall.

"Southern culture" was key, Jim said. "There had never been a (national) candidate who integrated Carter's cultural likes—music, Capricorn Records, Muscle Shoals, gospel music, religion. It was a cultural thing."

Jim is convinced today that Hamilton Jordan's request that Wallace hold two General Election rallies for Jimmy Carter was crucial to the Campaign's success in the South.

"It was amazing that we were able to get George Wallace to come out publicly and campaign for him," Jim said. "Hamilton and (Southern States Regional Coordinator) Phil Wise asked him to do two things: Campaign in Jackson, Mississippi, and in the Florida Panhandle. He did. And the news was carried throughout the South."

Meanwhile, Georgia State Rep. Ben Brown, an important Campaign adviser, was crucial to organizing Black state legislators, pivotal movers in Southern Democratic politics, to actively support the ticket, added Doris Crenshaw, who helped organize the Mississippi General Election campaign with Jim.

"The Black community was the deciding factor in terms of the grass roots in the South," Doris explained. "We canvassed. We spoke. Labor, the churches, and the legislators were all key to the effort. We had a lot of women volunteering and organizing."

After the election, Jim's longtime GOP friend Haley Barbour—the future RNC chair—told him that as important as it was for Carter to hold so

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much of the Wallace vote, the huge Black turnout was just as decisive in pushing Carter-Mondale over the top in Mississippi. The margin of victory was just 14,000 votes.

Doris marveled at the united front that the Campaign put together. "Jimmy Carter was able to build a strong coalition of Democrats in his Campaign—we had two co-chairs, one Black and one white. We'd never done that before in Mississippi."

For further reading:

The New York Times, March 10, 1976:

[Ford Defeats Reagan in Florida; Carter is Winner over Wallace in Democratic Vote](#)

The New York Times, June 12, 1976:

[Old South Bows to New As Wallace Meets Carter](#)

To learn more about Muscle Shoals Sound Studio:

You can stream a documentary about *Muscle Shoals* on Prime Video, The Roku Channel, and YouTube

Review by *The New York Times*: [The Hits Flowed From a Famous Studio](#)

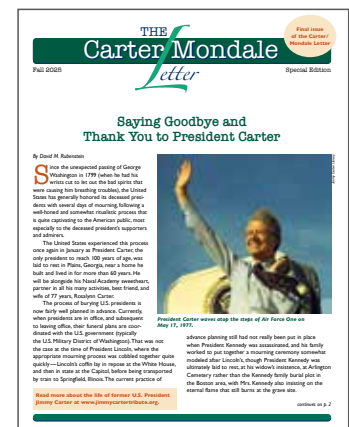
Review on [Roger Ebert.com](#)

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Every issue is now archived under the Library tab on *The Carter-Mondale Connection* website.

Take a look!

cartermondaleconnection.com



How You Can Help

The Carter-Mondale Connection is a volunteer-led 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 Campaign and the Administration who want to safeguard the Carter legacy. We also hope to engage the children and grandchildren of Carter-Mondale alumni who feel a kinship with Jimmy Carter.

So, how can you help?

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.

Share your memories and thoughts with us. If you have some interesting/fun photos from the Campaign or Administration activities, 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.

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

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.

Enjoy *The Carter-Mondale Connection*!

The Carter-Mondale Connection is published quarterly by volunteers in the interest of sustaining the community of Carter-Mondale Campaign and Administration alumni and friends.

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- Relatives and friends who are fans of what the Carter-Mondale Administration accomplished and the work of The Carter Center

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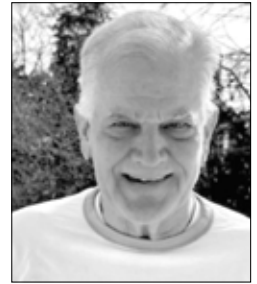
LETTER FROM THE PUBLICATION TEAM



Mark Cohen



Sheila Fyfe



Jim Gammill

Celebrating '76

November 2, 1976, stretched into the wee hours of Wednesday the 3rd as Carter-Mondale staff, volunteers, and supporters across the country anxiously waited. Just one more state needed to fall into the Democratic column to seal an Electoral College win for Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. It came at approximately 2 a.m. Eastern Time, when the networks called Mississippi for Carter-Mondale.

In this, our third issue of *The Carter-Mondale Connection*, we look back at the General Election Campaign, not to create a detailed play-by-play—which you can find in any number of excellent books on the Campaign—but to capture a handful of humorous, poignant, under-the-radar moments from the people who lived the daily grind of the 50-state effort.

It was fun to engage so many Campaign veterans in this issue. We trust you'll like the lookback.

With this issue, we welcome Mary Dixon, a member of the White House speechwriting staff, as a Contributing Writer for *The Carter-Mondale Connection*. Look for Mary's byline on the articles about Rosalynn Carter's mental health initiative and on Georgia Southwestern University being named the official host of the First Ladies Day Commission.

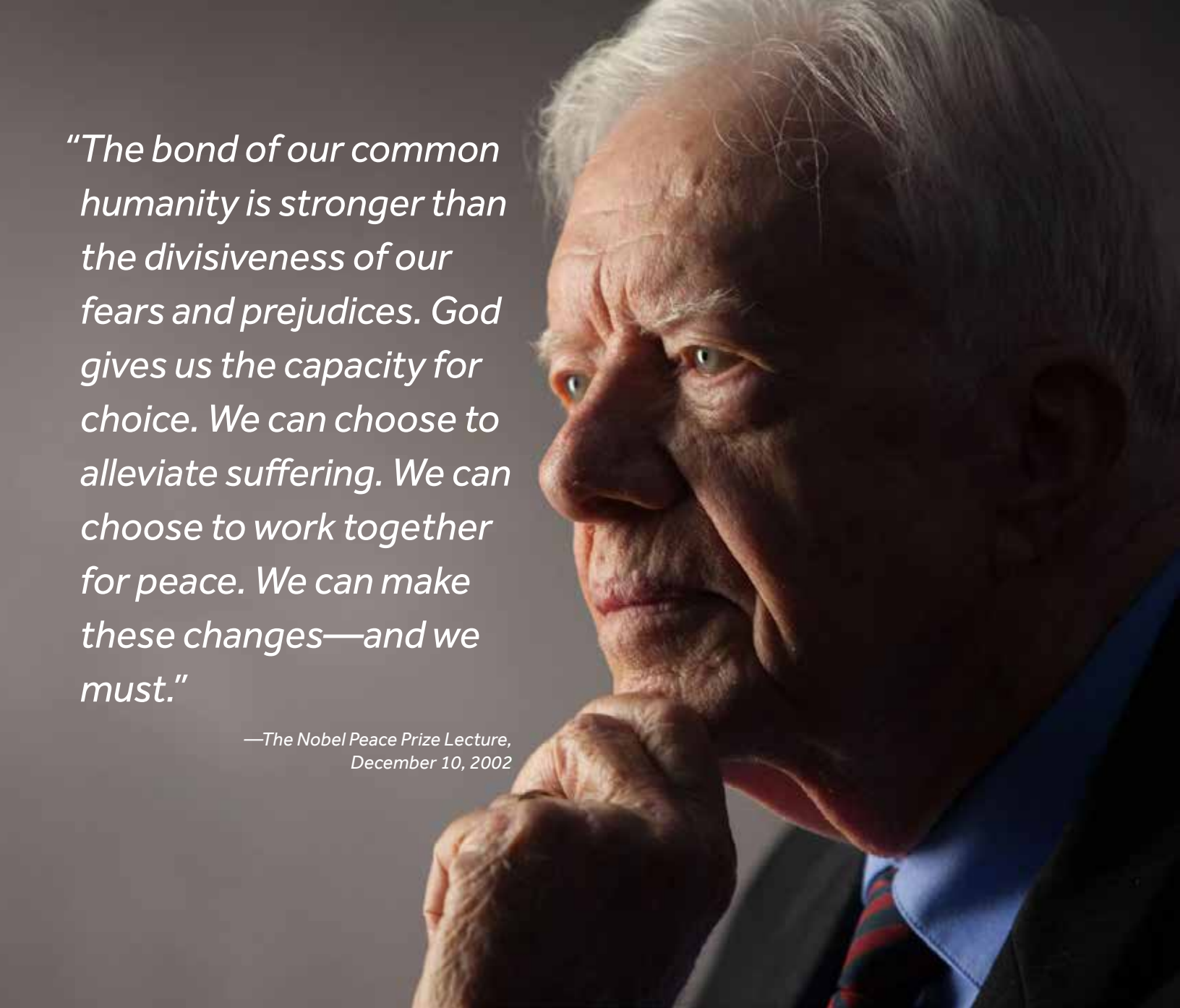
Reminder: *The Carter-Mondale Connection* is a volunteer-led effort. If you haven't yet hit the subscribe button, please do. We'll never sell ads in the newsletter, and never sell our subscription list. But we would like to make sure everyone sees every issue.

If you enjoy this issue, please pass it along to anyone who may be interested. Subscriptions are free and open to anyone with an interest in the Carter Campaigns and Administration.

And please send us your letters, comments, and photos. We hope to have the newsletter and website become a community of interest. But that only happens if you help start a dialogue.

Enjoy Issue #3 and thanks for reading (*and subscribing*)!

Mark Cohen	Sheila Fyfe	Jim Gammill
Co-Editor	Co-Editor	Publisher



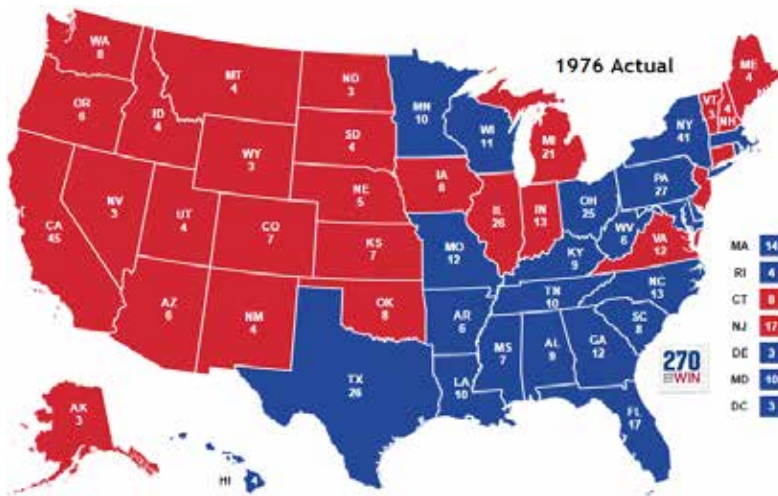
"The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes—and we must."

—The Nobel Peace Prize Lecture,
December 10, 2002

Photo credit: Getty Images

His Legacy Endures

Jimmy Carter would have turned 102 on October 1, 2026. The first U.S. President to observe a centenary birthday, he is remembered as our 39th commander-in-chief, founder of The Carter Center, democracy defender, humanitarian, and Nobel laureate.



Votes

297 Carter

240 Ford

** 1 Faithless Elector voted for Ronald Reagan instead of Ford*

Who Ran What State in '76?

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

Some were experienced political operatives. Others had never run a political campaign in their lives—but had lengthy experience in public policy or movement politics. Some had long track records in their states, while others had never been to their states until they landed there in August. Some had been with Jimmy Carter in the primaries—or worked for other candidates. Still others were among the first women to run a state for a major party presidential campaign. One even went on to become president himself.

But they had two things in common. They were all-in on the effort to restore honesty, integrity, and faith in government after eight years of Nixon-Agnew-Ford. And all were hand-picked by General Election National Field Director Tim Kraft for their assignments.

From the first post-Convention retreat in Georgia (including a meet-the-nominee bus trip to Plains) to the moment at 2 a.m. (Eastern) on Wednesday, November 3, when Mississippi put Carter-Mondale over the top, the regional and state coordinators were responsible for what today would be a distinct oddity—a genuine 50-state campaign.

Take a trip down memory lane to review the list of the leaders of the grassroots General Election campaign.

Mid-Industrial Region

Regional Coordinator	Diana Rock	
State Coordinator	John Billett	New Jersey
State Coordinator	Dan Horgan	Ohio
State Coordinator	Joe Timilty	Pennsylvania

Border States Region

Regional Coordinator	Charlotte Wilmer	
State Coordinator	Carla Reames	Delaware
State Coordinator	Randy Kinder	District of Columbia
State Coordinator	Arnie Miller	Maryland
State Coordinator	Tim Smith	Virginia
State Coordinator	J. B. Bleckley	West Virginia

Southern Region

Regional Coordinator	Phil Wise	
State Coordinator	Lou Odum, Bill King	Alabama
State Coordinator	Bill Clinton	Arkansas
State Coordinator	David Dunn	Florida
State Coordinator	Dot Padgett	Georgia

Southern Region

State Coordinator	Dan Rambo	Kentucky
State Coordinator	Gary Smith	Louisiana
State Coordinator	Jim Free	Mississippi
State Coordinator	Joel McCleary	North Carolina
State Coordinator	Russ Marane	South Carolina
State Coordinator	Jim Free	Tennessee

Midwest Region

Regional Coordinator	Malcolm Dade	
State Coordinator	Paul Sullivan	Illinois
State Coordinator	Doug Coulter	Indiana
State Coordinator	Don O'Brien	Michigan

Great Lakes Region

Regional Coordinator	Arvonne Fraser	
State Coordinator	John Devereaux	Iowa
State Coordinator	Mike Freeman	Minnesota

Mid-Plains Region

Regional Coordinator	David Hales	
State Coordinator	Bob Vincent	Kansas
State Coordinator	John Eade	Missouri
State Coordinator	Jim Humlicek	Nebraska
State Coordinator	Karen Voight	North Dakota

Mid-Plains Region

State Coordinator	Chris Delaporte	Oklahoma
State Coordinator	Gordon Werner	South Dakota

Southwest Region

Regional Coordinator	Art Delgado	
State Coordinator	Wellington Webb	Colorado
State Coordinator	Alfredo Gutierrez	Arizona
State Coordinator	Ben Alexander	New Mexico
State Coordinator	Chuck Parrish	Texas

Rockies Region

Regional Coordinator	Joe McCarter	
State Coordinator	Carol Humphrey	Idaho
State Coordinator	Garry South	Montana
State Coordinator	Kay Christenson	Utah
State Coordinator	Bernard Phelan	Wyoming

Pacific Region

Regional Coordinator	Chris Brown	
State Coordinator	Terry O'Connell	California
State Coordinator	Gary Caufield	Hawaii
State Coordinator	Dick Hamm	Nevada
State Coordinator	Angus Duncan	Oregon
State Coordinator	Jay Pearson	Washington
State Coordinator	Diane Anderson	Alaska

And to all the Regional Coordinators and State Coordinators: A 50-year-old heartfelt thank-you for a job well done!

New Videos: What's Happening in Plains and at the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park

If you haven't been to Plains recently, a couple of new videos will give you a look at what you've been missing.

The National Park Service has released a brief video previewing the Carter Gardens, adjacent to the Carter family home, which opened to the public on July 11, 2025. The Carter Gardens were personally designed by Rosalynn Carter, the video notes. "Together, the Carters wanted to invite visitors to experience their simple lifestyle here in Plains."

The gardens offer visitors two opportunities: A quiet place for contemplation and reflection at the Carters' pastoral, pondside burial site, and a recreational area where the Carters hoped visitors would enjoy time with family and friends.

The Carter Gardens are now open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily free of charge.

The National Park Service video notes that work is underway to prepare the Carter family home for small-group guided tours in the future.

WALB-TV, Albany, Georgia, dedicated the July 30 edition of its hometown video magazine, "Town and Country," to the opening of the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park and plans to renovate and grow the Carter sites in and around Plains. The 22-minute video traces Jimmy Carter's southwest Georgia roots, his accomplishments as president, and the Carter's post-presidency humanitarian work.

In opening the program, reporter Kandace Blake said, "Today we're exploring how values born here—faith and family, service and humility—not only shaped the president but one of the world's most respected humanitarians."

Blake interviewed Mark Minick, Chairman of the Friends of Jimmy Carter, who explained the nonprofit's work to preserve the legacy of Jimmy Carter and showcase Plains to the world, including the work alongside the National Park Service to open the Carter family home.

The program takes you on a tour of the Carter Gardens, details how Mrs. Carter developed a butterfly trail to support the monarch butterfly, and previews plans for a celebration at the Plains train station on November 2 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Carter-Mondale victory.



Watch

[National Park Service Video](#)

["Town and Country" broadcast](#) from Plains

You can learn more about the work of the [Friends of Jimmy Carter](#) and upcoming events in Plains



Do You Remember the Claymation Video of Jimmy Carter Lip-Synching “Georgia On My Mind”?

Long before AI slop, a trio of creative geniuses produced a brilliant—and moving—three-minute Claymation animated video of a Jimmy Carter caricature lip-synching Ray Charles’s famous recording of “Georgia On My Mind.”

The cartoon reflects a homesick Jimmy Carter pining for Georgia from the White House; the sentimental portrait reflects the warmth and affection so many had for the 39th president and the Georgia roots that grounded him.

Conceived by Robert Grossman, Jimmy Picker, and Craig Whitaker, and directed by Picker, *Jimmy the C* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Short.

You can link to it anytime from the [Carter-Mondale Connection](#) website.



View

[Jimmy the C](#) on YouTube

Read the

[IMDB page on Jimmy the C](#)



Photo credit: The McMahan Photo Archive

CAMPAIGN LOOKBACK

What You Won't Read in the Books about the '76 Campaign

Compiled by Mark Cohen and Sheila Fyfe, Co-Editors

The campaign coverage by reporters like Jules Witcover report the play-by-play and dive into the behind-the-scenes decisions that define campaign wins and losses. But some of the most interesting and funny events in a campaign rarely make into the daily reporting or the campaign books. They're stories cherished over the years by the folks who showed up seven days a week for months on end, often working in dingy storefront headquarters, doing all the little things on the ground that add up to victory.

As we celebrate the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Carter-Mondale General Election win, *The Carter-Mondale Connection* asked a handful of Campaign veterans to share a story or two from a little-known, one-term Georgia governor's stunning defeat of a sitting president.

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Candidate Carter addresses a rally in Pittsburgh, with a sign in the crowd noting his support for reproductive rights.

Photo credit: Getty Images

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On the Ground with the State and Regional Coordinators

Margaret McKenna, Rhode Island, on running her first campaign:

I had been a movement person—civil rights, women—as opposed to having been involved in specific campaigns. So, all the state directors came to Georgia. And I said, are we going to hear from the candidate? And all the people who had run, like, 100 campaigns looked at me like I had two heads. “What’s that got to do with anything?” Right? But I said, “Well, shouldn’t we know that this is a really good guy?” I’d asked what everyone else would call “a citizen question,” as opposed to a political-operative question. Weren’t we going to talk to him about what he believes in, and whatever? And people were like, nah.

Finally, they said, OK, you advance it. I did and we got lost.

Tim Smith, Virginia, on the one Southern state that got away:

We narrowly lost Virginia by about 20,000 votes, and I think there were various reasons for that. We were in the middle of a huge party split and most of the professional Democratic activists appeared to care more about the gubernatorial race, which, as you know, was in an odd year. So they were all sticking knives into each other for 1977, and it was hard to get them to concentrate on '76.

John Devereaux, Iowa, on the intricacies of the selection of state coordinators:

I didn’t grow up in Iowa. I had just moved there after I went to LSU and got a master’s degree in journalism and then took a job as a PR person at a little Methodist college in northwest Iowa and ultimately got involved in politics there. It was in a little rural county up in the northwest, which was not a Democratic area. How in the world Tim Kraft decided to ask me to be the Iowa state coordinator for the '76 General Election, I really have no idea.

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Mike Freeman, Minnesota, on the lifelong impact of two-and-a-half months as a state coordinator:

I don't know if this is true for you all, but some of my very best lifelong, personal and political friends are the ones I met during the Mondale '72 senatorial campaign and the Carter-Mondale campaign in '76. This was really our chance to bring a new generation into politics—people were really committed to these two, Carter and Mondale, and wanted to do it, and do it right. It was a privilege to work for two really classy, committed, ethical people at a time when the country really needed it—after all the Richard Nixon stuff and Gerald Ford pardoning Nixon, which we couldn't accept. You have to accept responsibility.

Joel McCleary, North Carolina, on putting together a winning coalition:

My objectives as campaign manager were pretty simple. I needed to placate the Hunt group (Lt. Gov. Jim Hunt was running for governor) and they were a little suspicious of Carter. We just wanted to make sure the Hunt people were doing whatever needed to be done. Of course, we had the evangelicals at that time. And we had the Black community. Andy Young and the Kings would come to North Carolina and we'd hold these great rallies. The other person who helped us was Ford, because he knew he wasn't going to win North Carolina, so he didn't spend time there. Although in 1976 you could see Reagan coming on. (Sen. Jesse) Helms didn't really want Ford to win. They were getting ready to get behind Reagan.

Chuck Parrish, Texas, on putting together a winning coalition:

The Texas Democratic party was totally split. One faction was the activist progressives. Then there was the whole Democratic establishment. We reunified the party, with the help of Sen. Lloyd Bentsen's team. We had Carter co-chairs from both factions in every county.

Michael Cardozo, Connecticut, on the consequences of in-state Democratic infighting:

Carter should have carried the state, but he lost it by a small margin. It was really due to the active antipathy of organized labor (Connecticut at the time was a very heavily unionized state) because State Sen. Gloria Schaffer, the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate against Lowell Weicker, had cast the decisive vote in the State Senate against an important piece of labor-backed legislation. They were furious with her.

My other very vivid memory is of a difficult, domineering, cantankerous governor, Ella Grasso, who thought she should run the Campaign. And that there was no need for any outside assistance.

Chuck Parrish on the impact of the *Playboy* interview:

It was huge. Lady Bird Johnson and others from Lyndon Johnson's orbit were all fired up about it. Carter handled it well. But we didn't get Lady Bird's endorsement until near the end of the campaign.

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Candidate Carter works between campaign stops on board Peanut One in September 1976.

Photo credit: Getty Images

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Diana Rock, Mid-Industrial States (New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania) Regional Coordinator:

I didn't join the Carter Campaign until the General Election. In the primaries, I worked for the labor union AFSCME and had a region of about 12 states assigned to me. The one in which I connected to the Carter people was Pennsylvania, so I felt like I had been working for the Campaign already. But I got off to a bad start with (Ohio State Coordinator) Dan Horgan. He didn't like unions and didn't take them seriously to help with the Campaign. He was disliked by a lot of the (union) leadership in Ohio. He knew I was from the unions.

Chris Brown, Pacific (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington) Regional Coordinator:

The 1976 General Election was humorless, just grinding through voter-contact tasks. The lightest moment of fall 1976 was personal. I flew back from L.A. to Albuquerque for (my daughter) Jamie's birth on September 20. Our young OB/GYN enthusiastically noted, "It's a girl, and look, she's holding a peanut in both hands!" In the 1979-80 re-

election, the *Union Leader* (Manchester, New Hampshire) ran photos of Rosalynn holding three-year-old Jamie wearing the green-and-white "I Am a Peanut for Carter" top that Georgia had made.

Margaret McKenna on the 51.3 initiative:

I became the state director in Rhode Island, the smallest state. We called them the girl states, did you know that? It was the first time women were state directors in a presidential campaign. And we called them the girl states. We were all the littlest states—Alaska, Delaware, Idaho, North Dakota, and Utah. It was a first, though. There had never been women in state (coordinator) jobs before, so I ended up in Rhode Island, where I'm from.

In the Air with Peanut One

The View from Peanut One Rex Granum, Press Director, on the real heroes who kept the campaign aloft:

The real heroes of all this are not the people like us, traveling with the candidate. It's those people on the ground who have worked days like crazy to get ready for an event. The event means everything to them, means everything to the Campaign. And then we show up and we're there for an hour and a half or two hours, and then we're gone. And they have exhausted themselves to make that happen. They've done all the work, and we're there for the high, and then we say goodbye. I think the real heroes are all those people throughout the country doing the work that so many of them did. And not those of us who just kind of showed up.

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Eleanor Clift, Atlanta-based reporter for *Newsweek*, on the trajectory of the General Election Campaign:

I covered the primaries, which were—I don't know—smoother. And had more joy—you actually went into the states, you met with people. With the General Election, basically, Carter had to campaign everywhere, so there were a lot of airport stops, a lot of plane travel. The main anecdote that I remember from the General Election was that it wasn't going well for Carter. He had started with a substantial lead, and Gerald Ford whittled it down. So, it didn't feel like a cruise to victory at all. It felt like Carter was just trying to hold on to this improbable lead. So, when a baggage cart hit Peanut One, and the networks that night led with it, the image of the collision was sort of a symbol of everything going wrong. Carter was so incredibly frustrated by that. He called an off-the-record meeting with reporters who covered him to basically, as I recall, plead that this was a serious campaign and to please treat it seriously. And of course, then everything leaked about that. I felt enormous sympathy for him.

Rex Granum on the mood on Peanut One:

Spending two months crammed into a flying tube is a good description of what being on the Campaign plane felt like. I would say the mood was surprisingly good, not at all flawless. But I think on balance, the coverage was positive. After all, Carter was able to get elected. And this was in a period of time when we felt it was in our interest in the press office to largely get along with the press—as opposed to the current practice of castigating everybody who's trying to cover you.

Randy Lewis, Press Aide, on the daily grind of a two-month campaign:

The press corps was starting to get pretty edgy due to the nonstop pace. It may have started to affect the coverage. So, toward end of the campaign, on one of our last coast-to-coast flights, the Campaign pulled out all the stops for the press on the plane. They removed one row of seats and installed an early electric piano, which Jim Wooten from *The New York Times* played during the flight. We had a white tablecloth service from United Airlines—the best the airline

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Photo courtesy of Randy Lewis



Photo courtesy of Randy Lewis



Photo courtesy of Randy Lewis



Photo credit: Source unknown

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could provide. China. Fine crystal for wine. Steak. Linen tablecloths and napkins. It was a way for the campaign to say, "We know we kept you guys on the bag lunch thing for too long." We were making nice with the press after forcing them to keep up with a Jimmy-Carter-kind of schedule.

Kass Cohen, who handled expenses for the traveling Campaign team:

Doing three, four, five events a day, flying to a couple of cities, overnighting—when you're young you can do it. Today, it would kill me. But you know, I enjoyed it. It became a routine, but an enjoyable one.

Gail Harrison, Mondale Speechwriter, on the difference between the two campaign planes:

I got to do one leg of a trip on Peanut One. And Carter's speechwriter, Patrick Anderson at that time, flew on the Mondale plane. Our plane was raucous. Theirs was very quiet and businesslike. They didn't have rubber chickens (hanging out of the overhead bins) and nuts being tossed all over the joint.

Kevin Gorman, Press Aide and Radio Actuality Producer, on the *Playboy* interview:

The *Playboy* interview came out in late September. And Carter's birthday was Oct. 1. A couple leaders of the press corps told Jody they'd like to throw Carter a birthday party. Jody agreed. Jimmy agreed. Rosalynn was flying in for Carter's birthday. Ed Rabel (CBS), Jim Wooten (*New York Times*), and Marty Schram (*Newsday*) got together and wrote a parody to the tune of "Peg O' My Heart." At the party that night, they came out in straw boaters like vaudevillians to serenade the candidate with their song: "Lust in My Heart." Believe it or not, it went over great. Even with the candidate.

Eleanor Clift, on Jody Powell:

Everybody loved Jody. You knew that when you talked to him, you were channeling Carter's brain. Jody knew what Carter was about and what he was thinking. And Jody was also not a creature of Washington or of decades in politics. He actually spoke like a human being. You didn't get canned comments.

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In the Air on the Minnesota Fritz

Ted Mondale on his new job as a baggage and media wrangler

I was on the Mondale plane for, I would say, 85 percent of the General Election. I transitioned from my produce job at Giant Food (in Washington, D.C.) to working on the vice-presidential plane. It was a natural progression. We never lost one bag throughout that entire campaign. Perfection. I think it was key to Carter's victory.

Jim Dyke, Mondale Political and Domestic Adviser, on reacting to the *Playboy* interview:

At one point we were about to take off and got a fax from the Atlanta headquarters saying, "We want to give you a heads up. *Playboy* is about to release an interview with Jimmy Carter in which he talks about lusting in his heart. Mondale is going to be asked about this, and he has to deal with the press." I went up to tell the senator what had happened and I said, "You're going to have to deal with this when we land." He looked up at me and said, "Jim, do you think it's possible that we could just sort of fly around up here until Election Day, and then land the plane?"

Ted Mondale on Candidate Mondale's relationship with the traveling press corps:

My dad had a pretty good, respectful relationship with the media. We had Brit Hume, Bill Plante, some pretty serious reporters (on the campaign plane). My

dad was pretty outgoing and open and, if anything, overly honest, and was open to intellectual conversations with people. So, I don't think there was that traditional friction of "We're going to manipulate you," which of course drives the media crazy. I think the relationships they made were genuine, with a feeling of mutual respect and admiration on both sides.

Gail Harrison on Candidate Mondale's relationship with the traveling press corps:

The press loved Mondale. He was very accessible and not fake-smart. Incredibly smart and funny.

Gail Harrison on big-city campaigning:

We had a crazy event at the convention center in Chicago. There were huge crowds outside, and horns, and the convention center was filled. It was incredible. We left an hour and a half later, and there was nobody around outside. I said, "Where did all the people go?" And they said, "Well, they're only paid for an hour."

Jim Dyke on "Just Stokes":

We were doing an event in Cleveland with Congressman Louis Stokes. It was a major event at a Black church. The place was packed. We were in a holding room getting ready to go out, and suddenly our advance guy came in and said, "Oh, my goodness, we have a problem. There's this huge sign out there that says 'Just Stokes.' And everybody in room said, "Oh, God, is he backing away?"

Turns out that Lou Stokes had hired a sign maker and said, "I want to have a really big

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sign that says Carter-Mondale-Stokes. And I want another sign that says just Stokes." The guy took him literally and had this big sign that said "JUST STOKES." Everybody had a great laugh. But after that, every time Mondale and I would see the congressman, we would refer to him as "Just Stokes."

High Atop Colony Square with the Desk Coordinators and Other Staff

The field office desk staff system was created by Tim Kraft and was brought back for the 1980 re-election campaign. Each desk person was responsible for states in a certain region of the country, coordinating information from the field staff and conveying their states' needs to the War Room. They worked from the top floor of the campaign headquarters at Colony Square in Atlanta.

The Carter-Mondale Connection brought the surviving desk officers and Tim Kraft lieutenants Lori Baux and Alicia Smith together for two video calls to reminisce about the ups and downs, joys and frustrations, of an intense two-month campaign.

Alicia Smith:

I think the field desk system did its job really well. I think you guys did a great job. You all knew exactly what was happening out in the field and were of great value to our people out there.

Lori Baux:

You guys were handed complicated issues. The field directors told you stuff—they didn't have to talk to Tim about everything. There were a lot of complicated political challenges out there that you guys relayed. Things really filtered up through you. The state directors trusted you to carry information and get it dealt with well.

Rob Firth (Western states):

But I always said, if you really wanted to know what was going on in the campaign, talk to Lori and Alicia.

Alicia Smith:

And everybody listened to Rob. So, Lori and I printed up a sign that we taped to our lovely folding table (that served as a desk) that cut you off as you were trying to head to Tim's office. And it said, "NO, WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE HE IS. NO, WE DO NOT TAKE HIS MESSAGES. NO, WE DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO TELL YOU. NO, GO AWAY."

Tim Davis (parts of the Midwest):

A little side story: Jim Free had a problem in the South. The wife of a governor wanted to run a state for us. And she was pretty much disliked in her state. So Free was trying to figure out what the hell to do with her, and he came to me and asked if I would take her. And that's how Hillary Clinton got sent to Indiana (to be deputy state coordinator). Anyway, Hillary was fabulous to work with. I mean, she was absolutely terrific in a state that we had no hope of winning. But she was really good, really good.

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Sandy Libby (parts of the Midwest, Great Plains and Mountain States):

During the General Election, I had almost every state west of the Mississippi. I had to keep in touch with the Campaign people in the states every day. What were they seeing in the field? What kinds of problems were they having? What did they need? What did we have to send them? What kind of scheduling or advance issues did they have? I had a lot of states—so I was doing a lot of calls every day. I think we were getting to the office at around eight. I don't remember getting there much earlier than that, but we didn't leave until, like nine o'clock at night or later. I always felt like I was almost like a mother hen, but I had all these state coordinators, and I was their point person. I was in touch with those people almost every day. It was set up that way that they were going to be a funnel of information in and out of the headquarters. I think it worked pretty well.

J. Wade (Southern states):

One of the things I love that we did, because we didn't have that many supporters in different cities, but we wanted to have a big presence—whatever event or fair or whatever, we would have everybody go stand on a street corner with signs, and then it would make us look like we had a lot of presence. Big impact.

Ted Celeste:

I don't think that there was any fallout in Ohio from John Glenn not being picked as vice president. I think that Ohio was a natural state for Jimmy because of the I-70 divide (part Southern, part Midwest, part Northeast)—it was unique in that way, I think, among the other states. And the presence of the Peanut Brigade made a difference because people could identify with them. That was extraordinarily successful.

Tim Davis:

We had to get resources from each other. There were constant fights over resources among the desk people.

Sandy Libby:

I was John Eade's (Missouri) desk person. He was the toughest one, actually—not tough, like hard to get along with, but really demanding. And I remember that he was the only one that absolutely required that all his staff people got paid on time. I actually had to prove that the money had gone out. He'd probably had problems with funding in other campaigns.

Lori Baux:

I'm pretty sure it was John Eade who had Insomniacs for Carter—a team of people who looked up phone numbers all night for phone banks and then had the phoners make the calls in the daytime.

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Tim Davis:

I loved working with Tim Kraft. I thought he was so much fun to work with. He was really good—a really talented politician. He could see people, he could get people, and he was really popular. He could raise a crowd. I thought he was really terrific.

Lori Baux:

He (Tim) was occasionally grumpy with Alicia and me, but I don't think he was too often with you guys. One thing I always appreciated about Kraft was that he understood being in the field. He was a field guy. He had a lot of respect for people who are on the ground.

More '76 Campaign Memories?

We canvassed a lot of folks to put together this dialogue. But, obviously, not everyone. If you have a story to tell about the Campaign, please send it to us at connect@cartermondaleconnection.com. And we'll continue the dialogue on *The Carter-Mondale Connection* website.

Inside the War Room

Hidden away, in the top reaches of Colony Square, squirreled away in a windowless room in the maze of offices and desks that was the field office, was what today would be called the War Room. Manned by Rick Hutcheson and Bill Simon, it was a place that few had access to. For that's where Rick and Bill pored over the latest poll numbers, reports from the field, daily news clips, and other intelligence to provide Hamilton Jordan and Tim Kraft with the insights they needed to plot the course of the General Election campaign.

Rick Hutcheson:

It wasn't a secret room, but there was limited access to it. We had maps up on the wall as we were scheduling and pulling information, so I think we wouldn't have wanted a lot of random traffic through there. Knock on the door, and you might or might not have been admitted.

Bill Simon:

It was a lot of coordinating and updating of information and data points. It was collaborative with the desk staff, the state coordinators, regional coordinators—all of them. My recollection is that there was a lot of reacting to people's hair being on fire, concerns coming out of the field operations.

Rick Hutcheson:

We weren't strategizing so much as providing information to help strategize. Hamilton was always looking for opinions from other people. He was very collaborative in that respect. It wasn't, like, I have it all going on in my head. He frequently sought out views of other people as he made the final decisions.

Bill Simon:

I remember it as a sort of 60-day blur.

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Election Night: From Minneapolis to the World Congress Center to Plains

Barry Jagoda, Media Adviser, on how Election Night dragged on:

The hours slipped by and we missed the window for Carter's speech in time for the 11 o'clock news in the East. And then midnight came and we missed the window for the 11 o'clock news in the Central Time Zone. Now we're coming up on 2 a.m. in the East. We were all nervous as hell. Although, typically, Carter was calm—showing his 11 years in the Navy. One of the things we have to always remember about Jimmy Carter was that you had to be on time. You couldn't be late. So, we were standing by waiting for when Carter would speak to the many thousands of people gathered at the World Congress Center. I mean, at some point you knew there would be a result, and when that result was announced, we hoped we'd win.

Rex Granum on giving the press time to file their stories before the traveling party left for Plains:

It was a nail-biter election. Who won was not known until well into the morning. So the press was filing. We had to let them file. And Carter goes on to the airport with some of the traveling press and the direct aides with him, and I stay behind with the others, mostly print press. We eventually got there, but far later than Carter wanted. (After the election was called and he delivered his speech) Carter really wanted to go home. He just liked to keep on time. But we had to let the press corps file their stories. The time dragged on. At one point, Jody had to exit the plane to keep it from taking off without some of the



L to R: President-Elect Carter, a Secret Service agent, Jim Dyke, and Gail Harrison in Plains on Thursday, November 4, 1976.

Photo courtesy of Jim Dyke

press. But Jimmy Carter was one unhappy person—and he'd just been elected president of the United States. He was obviously totally exhausted. He wanted to go home to his friends in Plains, and he knew they were there waiting for him—waited all night.

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Keith Reisman, Campaign Advance, on the loneliness of Election Night:

I was the only campaign advance person in Plains Election Night. The local supporters had decked out the Train Depot and set up for the media. By the time we got to the early morning, Plains was like a deserted town. No one was there. There was a storefront on Main Street near the peanut warehouse that had a small TV on. And that's where I watched the returns. I was like the only person there. But you know, somebody had to hold down the fort. Finally, the election was called. And then somehow, somebody got to me to tell me we (the volunteers who drove the staff and pool cars) needed to go to Albany to meet Peanut One, so we piled into cars to go to Albany. On the drive back to Plains, we're not far from there, and we drive through an intersection where two rural roads met. But even there, the intersections were controlled. So, there's a Georgia state trooper who's standing out there at the lonely intersection. And as we're driving by, he salutes. That's the first time I saw anybody saluting Carter as president-elect."

Ted Mondale's reflection on Election Night:

Election Night in Minneapolis was so surreal. I think there was a feeling that we were going to win this back and defeat the whole Nixon thing. Carter was going to be an honest president, and the country was going to change. There was just an incredible amount of enthusiasm, and it was completely surreal that night. If you think about it now, how the hell did someone from Elmore, Minnesota, and someone from Plains, Georgia, become vice president and president? That is never going to happen again. I mean, certainly not those two towns, where their combined population has got to be 2,000 or something, right? The similarities were powerful.

Relive the 20th Anniversary Carter-Mondale Reunion at the *Carter-Mondale Connection* Website

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

Were you among the 700 Campaign veterans, Administration staff, and Peanut Brigaders who gathered in Atlanta the weekend of October 17–19, 1997, for the Carter-Mondale 20th Anniversary Reunion?

Whether you were there or not, *The Carter-Mondale Connection* website has a special treat for everyone. We've posted the video presented during the Saturday evening dinner and a copy of the 36-page newsletter that The Carter Center published after the event.

The video features hundreds of photos contributed by Carter-Mondale Campaign and Administration alumni: Jay Beck, Scott and Rhonda Burnett, Casey Cornell, Tread Davis, Becky Hendricks, Nancy Konigsmark, Dot Padgett, Bob Russell, Carolyn Shields, Rita Thompson, and J. Wade. Producer/Director Jay Beck also received assistance from Charles Rafshoon as well as Dave Stanhope and the Carter Library Audio Visual Department.

The newsletter features scores of photos, including photos of every table at the Saturday evening banquet. If you were there, your name and possibly your photo will be found somewhere within.

The Carter-Mondale Connection extends its grateful appreciation to Jay Beck, who provided a copy of both the video and the Reunion newsletter from his personal collection.

Take a look and take a trip back 30 years ago.

View the [Carter-Mondale 20th Reunion video](#)

View the [Carter-Mondale 20th Reunion newsletter](#)



President Carter holds up Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act after signing it into law on Dec. 2, 1980.

Photo credit: Associated Press

Carter-Mondale Connection Follow-Up

Court Strikes Down Illegal Izembek Land Exchange, Protects ANILCA

By Deborah Williams, Contributing Writer

An Alaskan Federal District Court judge has vacated the Secretary of the Interior's decision to authorize a land exchange involving the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

As *The Carter-Mondale Connection* reported, that illegal land exchange would have jeopardized both Izembek and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), one of President Jimmy Carter's most significant domestic accomplishments.

After the Trump administration attempted once again to undertake a land exchange for purposes of building a road through the heart of Izembek Wilderness, conservation and Alaska Native groups filed three separate lawsuits.

On August 17, Judge Sharon L. Gleason ruled that the land exchange violated ANILCA, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act, and voided it. As a result, the Army Corps of Engineers immediately suspended the permit to build the road, and this critically important land—within one of the most significant wetlands in the world—is once again protected public land, owned by all Americans.

The battle to keep this land in public hands and to protect ANILCA is likely not over: Judge Gleason's decision probably will be appealed to the Ninth Circuit. With determination and skill, Alaska Native tribes, conservation groups, and others will continue to fight to safeguard President Carter's legacy and these irreplaceable lands and waters going forward.

To learn more, visit:

[Court Blocks Road Through Alaskan Wildlife Refuge](#)

[Support the Fight to Defend Our Wildest Public Lands with Americans for Alaska!](#)

Read [Jimmy Carter's Amicus Brief to the Ninth Circuit](#)

The Carter Center's 2025 Annual Report Goes Online

The Carter Center 2025 Annual Report is now available online.

"For The Carter Center, its people, and its programs, 2025 was a year full of challenges. But in every case, we rose to meet the moment," write Board of Trustees Chair Jason Carter and Chief Executive Officer Paige Alexander in their introductory letter.

"Affairs in the U.S. government took an unexpected turn early in the year with the sudden dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development, which historically provided significant funding for several of our peace and health programs," they continued. "In response, we developed other sources of funding, enhancing our financial resilience. In some cases, we found ways to leverage our long-standing relationships to do more."



Major accomplishments detailed in the report include:

- 40 million treatments provided for river blindness in the eight countries the program serves
- 818,000 water filters distributed to protect communities against Guinea worm disease
- 47 international election observers monitored voting in Guyana
- 1,600 citizen election observers were trained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 13 journalists were awarded mental health reporting fellowships
- 126 women leaders were trained in Sri Lanka on digital safety and media literacy

It won't be a surprise for all who recall President Carter's focus on budgetary efficiency that The Carter Center devoted 93 percent of its \$430 million budget to programs, and only 4 percent to administrative overhead and 3 percent to fundraising efforts.

For Further Reading:

To read or download the [2025 Annual Report](#).



Photo credit: The Carter Center

Ten Guinea Worm Cases Reported Last Year, Lowest on Record

Only 10 human cases of Guinea worm disease were reported worldwide in 2025—the lowest number ever recorded—bringing the ancient parasitic disease closer than ever to eradication.

The provisional figure marks a 33 percent decline from the 15 cases reported in 2024, continuing the momentum championed by President and Mrs. Carter and The Carter Center. (Having made eradication a personal mission, President Carter often said he wanted to outlast the last Guinea worm. He very nearly did.)

Of the 10 cases, four were detected in Chad, four in Ethiopia, and two in South Sudan. Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Mali each reported zero human cases for the second consecutive year. These figures reflect a more than 99.99 percent reduction, putting Guinea worm close to becoming only the second human disease eradicated in history, after smallpox, and the first achieved without a vaccine or medicine.

"This campaign reflects the values that shaped my grandparents' lives—the conviction that hope, hard work, and respect for everyone can change the world," said Jason Carter, chairman of The Carter Center Board of Trustees.

For more information, visit:

The Carter Center's [Guinea Worm Disease Eradication Program](#)

AI Boosts Carter Center's River Blindness Eradication Efforts

With artificial intelligence opening new possibilities for global health, The Carter Center is putting innovation into action. The Center's Ambassadors Circle hosted an August webinar on how its Innovation Hub and Innovation Pathway initiatives are adding AI to combat river blindness (onchocerciasis) in Ethiopia. The [webinar](#) is available on YouTube.

For more information, visit:

The Carter Center's page on [River Blindness](#)

50 Years of Rosalynn Carter's Dedication to Improving Mental Health

By Mary Dixon, Contributing Writer

It's been said that Jimmy Carter was the first president of the 21st century.

His vision and policies for energy, education, and disaster relief put the federal government at the heart of

issues that would shape the U.S. economy for the latter part of the 20th century—and which still dominate public discourse today.

For more information, visit:

[America 250: Rosalynn Carter's 50-year Fight for Mental Health](#)

If President Carter seemed far ahead of his time, First Lady Rosalynn Carter similarly led the way on the issue closest to her heart: mental health care.

From challenging her husband in 1966 about what he would do as governor on mental health care, to serving on the Governor's Commission to Improve Services for Mentally and Emotionally Handicapped when he was elected in 1970, Mrs. Carter took the initiative at every opportunity. Once she entered the White House, opportunities to expand her influence around the nation only blossomed.

America's 250th birthday is a good time also to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ways mental health care has changed over those years, thanks in large part to her efforts.

Over a 10-month period as Georgia first lady, Mrs. Carter made surprise site visits to state mental health facilities such as the massive Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, as well as to community health centers and hospitals in Augusta and Savannah. In those visits, she would speak with and listen to patients, families, and care providers. One of the Carter cousins had been confined at Central State, and the Carters had visited him there. Mrs. Carter took those experiences with her and used them to inform her advocacy for mental health services and treatment for the rest of her life.

The Governor's Commission report, "Helping Troubled Georgians Solve Their Problems," favored community-based solutions for the mentally and emotionally challenged and argued against large, long-term institutions—making it easier for public agencies to provide help without resorting to hospitalization. Those changes led to a 30 percent drop in state hospital admissions.

As First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Carter no longer could make surprise visits to mental health providers. But in addressing a Senate panel in 1979, she said, "The people with these (mental health) problems are ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and our friends."

The Mental Health Systems Act of 1980 was passed a month before that year's presidential election. Mrs. Carter continued to lead on mental health through her work at The Carter Center, always reminding us that "mental health is health."

Mrs. Carter's Alma Mater to Host First Ladies Day Commission

By Mary Dixon, Contributing Writer

When you hear the term “first ladies,” your thoughts may turn to Eleanor Roosevelt, whose policy activism over the years led to her recognition as a diplomat in her own right. Or, seeing wild flowers along highways may remind you of Lady Bird Johnson’s efforts to beautify and preserve the environment. “First ladies” also may bring thoughts of traditional luncheons, afternoon teas, high fashion, and holiday decorations.

In fact, America’s first ladies have been a remarkably diverse group of women who were expected to glow supportively at the side of their presidential spouses. It was, and is, a tough job—regardless of personal preferences or private goals.

In recognition of the unique role of presidential spouses, the Society of Presidential Descendants and the Reverend Nicholas W. Inman founded the National First Ladies Day Commission (NFLDC) in 2021. The commission created a national day of service to “recognize their contributions to American history, culture, and civic life.” First Lady Rosalynn Carter was the first presidential spouse to publicly recognize National First Ladies Day.

This past July, Mrs. Carter’s alma mater, Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW), and the NFLDC announced a formal partnership that positions GSW as the commission’s official academic home for the study, preservation, and celebration of America’s first ladies.

“What an honor for the legacy of Rosalynn Carter and Georgia Southwestern,” said Paul Costello, who served as Mrs. Carter’s assistant press secretary in the White House, in an email to *The Carter-Mondale Connection*. “This is a tribute to the important role of Mrs. Carter as one of history’s remarkable first ladies. Rosalynn Carter was a first lady of substance and significance.”

Through the agreement, GSW and the NFLDC will explore development of one of the nation’s first academic programs dedicated to the study of America’s first ladies. Potential initiatives include undergraduate and graduate curriculum pathways focused on leadership; historical preservation and civic engagement; and programs that highlight the influence and contributions of first ladies throughout U.S. history.

GSW will serve as the official archival home for the commission, preserving documents, records, and memorabilia. Events, fundraising initiatives, and public programming designed to expand awareness of the impact of first ladies will also be part of the partnership.

THE UNTOLD STORIES PROJECT

The Dollar and CO²

By John F. Leary

Since our last report, the Untold Stories Project has crossed a threshold: Thanks to the leadership of Stu Eizenstat and Les Francis, we have now completed more than 132 original, on-camera interviews—and, just as important, we can finally search all of them at once.

That second part is less glamorous than the first, but it may matter more. Every recorded session has been converted from raw machine captions into clean transcripts, with each speaker identified and every exchange time-stamped and archived alongside the original video. A question that used to take days of listening now can be answered in minutes. Ask who was in the room when a decision was made, and the answer comes back with names, dates, and the words actually spoken.

Those transcripts now sit alongside the documentary record in a single research base: the Public Papers, the Foreign Relations of the United States diplomatic volumes, the Carter Library's Staff Secretary and Chief of Staff working files, four other oral history collections, and a shelf of memoirs and histories we are scanning as we go. It's roughly 50 million words, indexed and searchable.

"This rigor, discipline, and documenting the record reflects who Jimmy Carter was, and some of the traits that led to his many achievements—both in and after leaving office," Les said.

That discipline is at the heart of the method: retrospective memory proposes, the contemporaneous record disposes. An interview tells us where to look. The documents written at

the time tell us what was true. Two stories from this summer show what the method turns up.

The Dollar Rescue

Consider the week of Nov. 1, 1978. The dollar was in free fall, and the Administration answered with a rescue package built around an instrument that had never existed before: Treasury securities denominated not in dollars but in German marks and Swiss francs—"Carter Bonds," as they came to be known.

Getting there required a legal breakthrough that had eluded the previous Federal Reserve chairman, followed by a series of quiet shuttle trips to the Bundesbank and the Swiss National Bank to arrange the auctions. Roger Altman, then an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, insisted the bonds be auctioned rather than placed privately—a decision that gave the operation its credibility.

The story comes to us from Edwin M. "Ted" Truman, who was the Federal Reserve's senior international finance official throughout the Carter years and who sat for an interview with us in June. He has since shared draft copies of his own history of the period. His account includes the sort of detail that never makes it into the official record.

Most importantly, the package worked. The dollar steadied. And the episode has gone almost entirely unrecorded outside the memories of the handful of people who ran it—many of whom are no longer with us.

continued on page 36

The Dollar and CO²... continued from page 35

The Last Act on Climate

A second story is the Administration's final word on a subject nobody was yet calling by its current name.

Gus Speth, who chaired the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), sat with us in November 2025 for what became a near-complete oral history of the Administration's climate work. He traces it to Frank Press's memo of July 7, 1977—six months into the term—warning President Carter that the carbon dioxide hazard had to be taken seriously.

What follows in the record is a steadily increasing focus: the National Climate Program Act of 1978, the four-scientist assessment commissioned through CEQ in 1979, the Global 2000 Report in 1980, and a president who raised the carbon dioxide buildup twice in a single address that February.

The last act came after the election was lost. In January 1981, in its closing days, the Administration issued an analysis proposing what Speth calls a "prudent upper bound" for atmospheric carbon dioxide—a ceiling roughly 50 percent above the preindustrial level.

As far as we can determine, it was the first time a U.S. government document proposed a numerical limit on the gas. It was published days before the transition, and the incoming Reagan administration subsequently disregarded it. Jay Hakes, who ran the Energy Information Administration, puts the counterfactual plainly: Had the pedal stayed to the metal, solar would have arrived 15 years sooner.

Why This Matters

Neither episode was reported at the time in any way that stuck. Both are documented in the

contemporaneous record.

That is the whole reason for the Untold Stories Project. We are drafting the book's outline over the next month, with a first full draft planned by the end of the year.

If you served in the Carter-Mondale Administration, or know someone who did whose story has not yet been recorded, we would like to hear from you. The online [Untold Stories Project form](#) takes just a few minutes to complete.

Thank You to Our Supporters

We are deeply grateful to the Untold Stories Project's financial supporters: Stu Eizenstat, David Rubenstein, Landon Butler, Steve Simmons, Maxine Isaacs (in honor of Jim Johnson), Orin Kramer, Bert Carp, Rick Hutcheson, Bob Litan, John Deutch, Jim Gammill, Richard Cavanaugh, Wayne Granquist, Rex Granum, Jack Watson, Terry Adamson, Jim Free, Terence Straub, Kurt Schmoke, Kathy Fletcher, Gus Speth, and Jim Tozzi.

Their generosity has enabled us to make substantial progress, and we have now raised nearly 40 percent of our fundraising goal for the year. **We still need to raise approximately \$120,000 to support the work planned for the balance of the year.** If you'd like to become a donor, contact John Leary at john@dotgov.com or at (703) 362-3737.

We're very appreciative of the Carter Administration alumni and friends who have helped sustain this effort and preserve this important history.

John F. Leary is managing partner at DotGov Communications and principal researcher for the Carter-Mondale Untold Stories Project.

TAKE A POLL

What's Your Best Memory of Inauguration Day 1977?

By Mark Cohen, Co-Editor

Rather than poll on a question or issue that came up during the General Election with this issue's poll, we've chosen to look ahead to the January 1977 Inauguration and simply ask:

What do you best remember from that cold January day? What stood out to you? What made you laugh or cry? What made you finally understand that all the work and sacrifice over the past months indeed had been worth it?

Tell us by answering our third Carter-Mondale poll

TAKE A POLL

Results of Our July Poll

We asked readers: "What is your best memory of the 1976 Democratic National Convention?" Here's a sampling of the comments we received:

"On behalf of the Campaign, I was in a meeting with a couple of dozen activists—leaders of traditional liberal organizations. Someone walked into the room and announced Carter had just chosen Mondale for VP. The room went wild with joy; Carter was the new kid and a bit of a stranger; Mondale was family, and he legitimized the strangers from Georgia."
—Orin Kramer

"At age 19, I was the youngest delegate to the Convention in New York City. Having worked on the Campaign in New Hampshire, Florida, and Pennsylvania, it was quite the experience to see the Campaign from the perspective of a delegate. That honor and privilege has remained with me over the years, as have some of the friendships I made at the Convention."
—Marcel Veilleux

"Thank you all for doing this! I was an Iowa delegate pledged for Mo Udall, who was widely beloved throughout the party. (We bonded early because we were both blind in one eye and I knew all the jokes.) After Mo endorsed Jimmy Carter, he was invited to address the Convention. He made his way across the floor to the stage amid wild cheering. Our delegation was seated near the front. He saw me, came over, put his arm around my shoulder and said, 'You know, Tom, I went everywhere in the country telling people that in the land of the blind, one-eyed men are kings, but they're not ready for us yet.'"
—Tom Higgins

"Helping organize arrangements before the Convention and backstage during it. And (my) wife Kit managing the Carter's hotel suite."
—Evan Dobelle

"I was surprised there was a point when I had done what I could to get the Campaign staff ready, and now it was up to them. I didn't have much else to do (at the Convention) after that."
—Jim Gammill

"The sheer joy that greeted the announcement of Sen. Mondale as Jimmy Carter's running mate."
—Mark Cohen

"I watched it with a group of friends in Albany, Georgia. We'd watch the returns for each primary night, and Hamilton's parents often would be there as well as many of his friends from high school shouting with joy at the TV—as this was as close as they could get to him."
—Jay Beck

GREAT READS

From “*Malaise*” to *Madness*: *How America Proved Jimmy Carter Right*

by Steve Schmidt

The Warning with Steve Schmidt on Substack



“*What the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?*” *Jimmy Carter, America’s “Malaise,” and the Speech That Should Have Changed the Country*

by Kevin Mattson

©2009 by Bloomsbury USA, New York

Review by Sheila Fyfe, Co-Editor

Two assessments of President Carter’s July 1979 Crisis of Confidence speech—one of the most misunderstood episodes of his Administration—have recently become fascinating companion pieces, even though they were written 17 years apart.

The first is by Steve Schmidt, who ran John McCain’s 2008 Presidential campaign, co-founded The Lincoln Project in 2019, and continues today as a fierce foe of Donald Trump. In a June posting on his Substack, *The Warning* with Steve Schmidt, he looks back at the Carter speech with renewed appreciation.

The 11th installment of Schmidt’s weekly series, “The Cause”—which he launched to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States—cites the Crisis of Confidence speech as proof that Jimmy Carter was a visionary.

“President Carter’s speech is interesting to read from the perspective of 2026 and the grave crisis facing American society that he clearly saw coming,” Schmidt writes. “Jimmy Carter talked to the nation in a way no president before—or since—has. He asked something of the American people in a speech that has not been asked since.

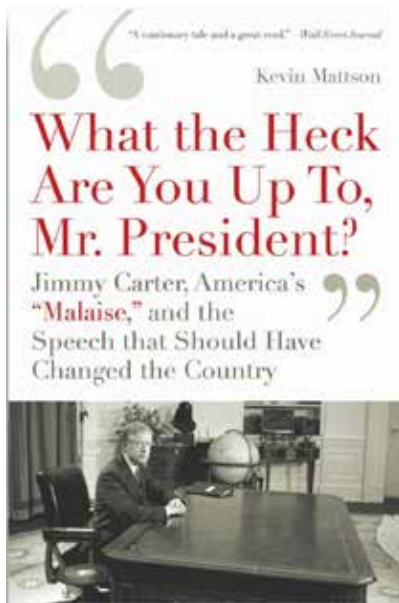
He asked for national introspection.

“Jimmy Carter reached out to the American people, and spoke a truth that hurt him politically, but this speech was among the most profound an American president has ever given about the American spirit. He diagnosed a growing lassitude that was driven by consumerism and emptiness... His wisdom should be better known.”

Kevin Mattson comes to a similar conclusion about the political damage that the speech inflicted—in fact, he wrote an entire book about it, *What the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?* Published in 2009, *What the Heck* explains how the nation in 1979 was enduring an energy shortage, gas lines, and trucker strikes—precipitated by the Iranian Revolution earlier that year. But Carter’s instinct was that something bigger than oil was the problem. “There’s more to it than energy,” he told his staff. His response was to gather ordinary citizens at Camp David to help him diagnose and respond to America’s problems, and the Crisis of Confidence speech—which stressed the need for the nation to reflect on and question its priorities—was the result.

continued on page 39

Great Reads continued from page 38



As Mattson recounts, the speech was a hit—at first. The President's approval ratings shot up 11 percentage points and the media were generally impressed. But Mattson also notes that Carter stepped on the positive narrative by quickly asking for resignations from his Cabinet, giving the impression that the Administration was out of control.

In the end, however, Mattson writes approvingly of the speech, and like Schmidt, notes its continued relevance. "Consider the speech's major insights in light of the present," he says. "We are still a nation dependent on foreign sources of oil and lacking a national energy policy that searches for alternatives."

Or, as Schmidt points out, "The issue of the day was energy, but it is remarkable how little has changed between 1979 and now."

Mattson ends *What the Heck* by giving some grace to Jimmy Carter.

"Carter...held a profound ambivalence about the world of politics and an abiding love for the world of citizens...The speech hinted at a new possibility of Carter's rebirth if he re-entered the world of citizens; the November 1980 election forced the decision.

"He became a megacitizen."

For more information, visit:

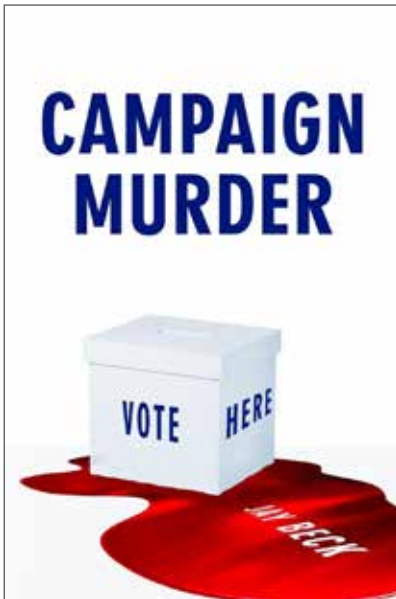
[The Warning with Steve Schmidt](#)

[*What the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?* by Kevin Mattson](#)

["Speech Lifts Carter Rating to 37%; Public Agrees on Confidence Crisis"](#)

The New York Times, July 18, 1979

FUN READS



Campaign Murder

©2026 by Jay Beck

Review by Sheila Fyfe, Co-Editor

If you've ever wanted to commit murder while working on a campaign (just kidding!), you'll appreciate Carter-Mondale alum Jay Beck's 11th novel, the most recent in of his tales of people killing other people.

Campaign Murder plunges you into a criminal inquiry swirling around a Georgia governor's race, in which both candidates are suspects. In addition to the diligent team from the Georgia Bureau of Investigations, you'll meet members of the state legislature, lobbyists, journalists, and many quirky characters from the campaign staffs—all of whom have competing, murky, and sometimes sinister agendas.

"There are no innocents," Jay said with a wink.

This fun read and Jay's other books are available on [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#) in both print and electronic form. You can also visit jaybeck.net to tour his complete library.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to Honor Stu Eizenstat October 26

Carter White House Chief Domestic Policy Adviser Stu Eizenstat will receive the National Leadership Award presented by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at its annual Northeast Tribute Dinner in New York City on Oct. 26.

"Stu's dedication to Holocaust survivors and his relationship with the Museum goes back to its very conception," the Museum said in its announcement.

While serving as Domestic Policy Adviser, Stu recommended that President Carter name a Presidential Commission on the Holocaust. This commission, chaired by Elie Wiesel, led to the legislation which Stu helped draft to create a permanent memorial to Holocaust victims in Washington, D.C. The museum opened in 1993.

For more information about the event, visit:

[2026 Northeast Tribute Dinner](#)

In Plains

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's hometown of Plains has some truly special events on tap from now until the end of the year—kicking off with a premiere of the film "Carter Country: Happy Birthday, Mr. President!" on Thursday, Oct. 1.

Planning a trip? Be sure to also mark your calendar for:

Downtown Trunk or Treat—Halloween
Saturday, October 31

Christmas in Plains
Saturday, November 28

Wreaths Across America
Saturday, December 19

New Year's Eve Peanut Drop
Thursday, December 31

Plains also hosts tours and special events throughout the year. You can enjoy the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park and the Plains High School Visitor Center & Museum, attend services at Maranatha Baptist Church, and step back into time with a stay at the Plains Historic Inn & Antiques Mall.

For more information, visit:

[Friends of Jimmy Carter](#)

[The City of Plains Georgia – Official Site](#)

[Jimmy Carter National Historical Park](#)

There's Still Time to Help Our Carter-Mondale Alums

For some alums, life after Carter-Mondale has meant running for office themselves.

The Carter-Mondale Connection checked in with three Carter-Mondale alums who are on the ballot in November. (We ran our Q&As with Amy Klobuchar and Tick Segerblom in our July issue.)

We wanted to know how their experiences with the Carter Campaign and Administration informed their subsequent careers in politics and public service. We've also included handy links if you'd like to donate to their campaigns.

See Marcy's responses to our Candidate Q&A on page 43!

Click below if you'd like to donate to their campaigns.



Photo credit: Congress.gov



Photo credit: David Swanson/Reuters



Photo credit: Tick4Nevada

Marcy Kaptur

Running for
re-election
in OH-09

Amy Klobuchar

Running for
Minnesota Governor

**Tick
Segerblom**

Running for re-election
as Clark County,
Nevada, Commissioner

Running for Something, Part II: Countdown to November

Carter-Mondale Alums on the November Ballot



Photo credit: Franmarie Metzler
U.S. House Office of Photography

Marcy Kaptur, U.S. Representative (OH-09)

Q: Where were you in life, and how did you get involved with Carter-Mondale?

A: I was recruited to work in the Carter-Mondale Administration while I was serving as a city planner in Chicago. I had served as a city and regional planner for a few different areas across the Great Lakes region, including my hometown of Toledo, Ohio, over the previous 15 years before interviewing for a domestic policy adviser role with the Administration.

In Chicago, I worked under Monsignor Geno Baroni, who went on to serve as Assistant Secretary for Neighborhood Development, Consumer Affairs, and Regulatory Functions at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It was an honor for him to suggest that I could serve in an important role in the Administration and for our nation, and I accepted without hesitation. It was a privilege to learn from President Carter and his entire team—lessons that have stayed with me during my time in Congress.

Q: What did you do in the Campaign or Administration (or both)?

A: I served as a domestic policy adviser to President Carter, mainly focusing on housing and urban policy initiatives. I am honored to have helped pass 17 housing and neighborhood revitalization bills through Congress. Following the turmoil of the 1960s, we undertook priorities to help rebuild neighborhoods in cities across America.

Q: What is your best personal memory of the Carter-Mondale experience?

A: Having the opportunity to bear witness to such an incredible display of true patriotism remains one of my greatest memories from my time with the Administration. From how President Carter fought for the everyday American living in poor neighborhoods to how he diplomatically negotiated some of our nation's toughest agreements in the Middle East, President Carter always put the American people first.

He served our nation until the end of his life, a reminder that public service was never just a job to him.

continued on page 43



Rep. Marcy Kaptur on the campaign trail earlier this year in Toledo, Ohio, with Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin.

Marcy Kaptur continued from page 43

My fondest memory is standing on the White House lawn to witness the signing ceremony of a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel that President Carter helped to broker between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Q: How did the experience affect your life?

A: Working with the Carter-Mondale Administration did not just affect my life. It changed my life. President Carter inspired me to devote my life to public service, standing up for my fellow Ohioans, and to help make a better world. His steadfast dedication to his roots and his home state is a model for how I seek to show up for the people of Northwest Ohio.

I ran for my first time in Congress shortly after I finished my role in the Carter White House. Now, I serve as Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee, a position that would not be possible without President Carter's creation of the modern Department of Energy during his Presidency.

Donate to Marcy's Grassroots Campaign for Congress

Click to [help her get there!](#)



One of the goals of *The Carter-Mondale Connection* is to help us keep our conversations going—sharing our memories of the campaign trail, the Georgia governor's office, the Carter Administration, and the post-presidency.

We welcome your letters, so send us your thoughts. In other words, connect!

Write us at

connect@cartermondaleconnection.com.

Share This Newsletter

We're still building our email list.

Please share this link with others in your network:

- Fellow Carter-Mondale alumni
- Relatives and friends who are fans of what the Carter-Mondale Administration accomplished and the work of The Carter Center

cartermondaleconnection.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors:

I read the last newsletter about the '76 Convention and the arduous work of so many Carter Campaign folks.

There clearly was elation and exhaustion. There was another side, too.

For us, the Udall staff, it was the end of the road, and sadness. I was 22, just out of graduate school, when I joined the Udall campaign. I'd been an activist on social issues but had never been in a presidential campaign. Right after Christmas in 1975, I was sent off to Iowa, and thus began my life as an advance man for Mo.

I didn't join Udall '76 for any specific policy issues or even knowing much about the candidate. Yet this kid from the South Side of Chicago, whose first taste of presidential politics was being a McCarthy volunteer at the famed Chicago convention in '68, was on his way to a wondrous path.

Unlike the Carter folks who were working 24/7 in New York, we were, umm, a bit relaxed as our schedules were mostly empty. Yet for this idealist who came to appreciate Udall and his many facets, including a wild and wicked sense of humor, the convention was an end—I thought at the time. A dark period. I was hurt. Angry. Jobless.

Soon after, the Mondale folks reached out to Mo's advance team and offered us jobs in the Carter-Mondale Campaign. Elated. I was back on the road.

Thus began another part of my career, which eventually brought me to the White House as one of Rosalynn's press aides. It was a path I never knew I would walk.

—Paul Costello, San Mateo, California

PASSAGES



Photo credit: Matthew Pearson/WABE

The Carter-Mondale Connection is continuing The Carter-Mondale Letter’s legacy of remembering our former colleagues from the Campaign and the Administration. In Passages, we strive to focus on each decedent’s contributions and, in many cases, include relevant information or a quote from sources in the Carter-Mondale network. We also 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.

As always, we’re grateful for the thoughtful assistance.

Jim Gammill
Mark Cohen
Sheila Fyfe

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All 445 Passages from 20 Years of *The Carter- Mondale Letter* Are Now Searchable

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

Over the years, *The Carter-Mondale Letter* published 445 obituaries. Thanks to AI, you now can do a name search of Passages on [The Carter-Mondale Connection](#) website. They're indexed in the Library tab under the Passages menu [here](#).

Your search will indicate the issue in which the subject's Passages obituary ran. From there, you can go to the Newsletter Archives menu in the Library tab and read the Passages article for which you searched.

They Were Fans. Of Each Other.



Photo credit: Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

"The Carter Center mourns the loss of Dolly Parton — a legendary artist and dedicated humanitarian whose talent and generosity touched the lives of millions. Her legacy of compassion and service will inspire generations to come. We extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, and the fans who will always love her."

James T. Laney

(December 24, 1927–August 13, 2026)

Dr. James T. Laney, president emeritus of Emory University, ambassador to South Korea during the Clinton administration, and important early friend of The Carter Center, died on August 13 at age 98.

An ordained minister and missionary teacher, Dr. Laney became dean of Emory's Chandler School of Theology in 1969, and was appointed to university president in 1977. During his 17-year tenure, he recruited many prominent people to the Emory faculty—including President Carter as Distinguished Professor in 1982—doubled the school's endowment, and transformed Emory into one of the nation's leading universities.

He also oversaw the birth of Emory's 40-plus-year partnership with The Carter Center—which, the university says in its online tribute, “has fostered an extraordinary community of scholarship and



With President Carter greeting students on campus in 1981

Photo credit: Emory University



President Carter and President Laney after a breakfast at Emory's Houston Mill House in 1983

Photo credit: Emory University

practice whose impact across the world has advanced peace and improved health.”

“He was a great friend and supporter,” said Phil Wise, former Carter Center vice president of operations. “I don’t think The Carter Center would exist without his early support.”

In an official statement, The Carter Center and Board of Trustees Chair Jason Carter praised Dr. Laney's leadership and service.

“From the Center's earliest days, Ambassador Laney helped shape its vision and strengthen its mission to promote peace, preserve democracy, protect human rights, and improve health,” the Center's statement said. “He also played a vital role in fostering the enduring partnership between The Carter Center and Emory University.”

“His legacy will continue to inspire our work for years to come,” Jason Carter concluded.

For further reading:

[Carter Center Statement on the Passing of Ambassador Jim Laney](#)

[Remembering Emory President Emeritus James T. Laney](#)

[Dr. James Thomas Laney Obituary, A.S. Turner & Sons](#)

Anna Mae Mulcahey

(July 16, 1938–July 28, 2026)

Anna Mae Mulcahey of Durand, Illinois, died at home on July 28. She was 88.

Anna Mae's life work reflected her deep commitment to others. She devoted her career to advocating for the disabled through the Illinois Attorney General's Office and as a board member for the Illinois Special Olympics. She served as an alternate delegate for President Carter and Vice President Mondale at the 1980 Democratic National Convention.

A native of Iowa, Anna Mae is survived by her husband of 68 years, Richard Mulcahey, their six children, 27 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren.



Photo credit: Legacy.com

For further reading:

[Anna Mae Mulcahey Obituary](#)

R. James Woolsey, Jr.

(September 21, 1941–July 21, 2026)

R. James Woolsey, Jr., an Oklahoman who served as Undersecretary of the Navy from 1977 to 1979 during the Carter Administration, died July 21 at his home in Washington, D.C. He was 84. Cause of death was a stroke, according to his wife, Conchita Sarnoff Woolsey.

A graduate of Stanford University and a Rhodes Scholar, Jim obtained his law degree from Yale Law School and then served a tour in the U.S. Army.

He was a military aide to arms control negotiator Paul Nitze in the 1970s and later served as general counsel to the Senate Armed Services Committee under Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Mississippi).

Jim is best known for his controversial 1993–1994 tenure as Director of Central Intelligence under President Bill Clinton. He fought congressional efforts to cut intelligence agencies' budgets and staffing following the end of the Cold War, and his leadership came under fire when the FBI arrested Aldrich H. Ames, a senior CIA counterintelligence official who had spied for nine years for Moscow. He subsequently was forced to resign his post.

His politics moved rightward over the years and in 2016 he endorsed Donald J. Trump for president and served on the Trump transition team before resigning in 2017.

He is survived by his wife, his three sons from his first marriage, two stepchildren, and 10 grandchildren.



Photo credit: Javier Rojas/Prensa Internacional/Zuma Press Wire/Shutterstock

For further reading:

The New York Times (July 22, 2026):

[James Woolsey, Embattled CIA Director Under Clinton, Dies at 84](#)

The Washington Post (July 21, 2026):

[James Woolsey, CIA director under Bill Clinton, dies at 84](#)

The Wall Street Journal (July 22, 2026):

[R. James Woolsey, Embattled CIA Director in Clinton Administration, Dies at 84](#)

The Wall Street Journal (July 23, 2026):

[Jim Woolsey's Bipartisan Life. His decadeslong career ran aground in the Clinton years.](#)

Brent Calvin Wynja

(April 12, 1951–September 10, 2026)

Brent Calvin Wynja, a stalwart of the 1976 Carter Campaign for the Iowa caucuses, died due to complications of diabetes on September 10 in Ames, Iowa. He was 75.



Photo credit: Adams Funeral Home

Brent helped coordinate a team of young field organizers for the Iowa Democratic Party's VIP (Voter Identification Program) in 1974. Lori Baux, who became Tim Kraft's right hand in the 1976 Iowa caucus headquarters, was one of those organizers.

"When there was money in 1975 to hire staff beyond Tim and me, we were so fortunate to get Brent onboard as the northwest Iowa field organizer, based out of his hometown of Sioux City," Lori said. "He covered a big section of counties but also could be a resource well beyond.

"I was lucky to have known him for 52 years," she added.

Brent was born on April 12, 1951, to Joe and Mary Jean (DeZeeuw) Wynja in Hull, Iowa, and grew up in Sioux Center, Iowa. He graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in economics and was selected into the Cardinal Key Society, ISU's top student honor society.

After working for the Iowa Democratic Party and the Carter Campaign, Brent served as a congressional aide from 1977 through 1984 for U.S. Rep. Tom Harkin in the Creston office (5th congressional district). He and his wife Maggie met in 1976 and married in 1978.

In 1985, Brent became a Financial Advisor for Morgan Stanley in Des Moines, retiring after 32 years. Brent and Maggie moved in 1988 to Ames, where he was active in the local Democratic Party and an energetic supporter of the C.Y. Stephens Auditorium for the Performing Arts.

Brent is survived by Maggie; siblings Les Wynja, Nancy Olivier, and Carl Wynja; sister-in-law Betty Marxen; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service for Brent was held Sept. 20 in Ames. Condolences may be left for the family online at: www.adamssoderstrum.com

Donations in Brent's memory may be made to: [Iowa Public Radio](#)

[The C.Y. Stephens Auditorium for the Performing Arts at Iowa State University, Ames](#)

For Future Reading:

[Memory Board: Brent Calvin Wynja](#)

LinkedIn Profile: [Brent Wynja](#)

PASSAGES **UPDATES**

The Carter-Mondale Connection is committed to recording as many deaths among our Campaign and White House alums as we can. This can include Passages that didn't reach us (or *The Carter-Mondale Letter*) at the time they occurred, as well as updates to previous obituaries. We're very grateful to members of our Carter-Mondale family who have continued to contact us with news and information.

Arnie Miller

Memorial Will Be Saturday, October 10

A memorial service for Arnold J. "Arnie" Miller, who served as Director of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel under President Carter and who died April 15, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 10 at 1 pm.

The memorial will take place at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Columbia Point, Boston. It will also be [available via Zoom](#).

The Carter-Mondale Connection honored Arnie and his life's work in its April 2026 issue. To [view the obituary](#), scroll to pages 37-38.



Stephen Elkins

(July 2, 1950–March 15, 2018)

Steve Elkins died from lymphoma on March 15, 2018, at the age of 67. A Georgia native, Steve grew up in Atlanta, graduated from the University of Georgia, and worked in the White House office of special assistant to the president Hugh Carter. It was at the White House that Steve met Murray Archibald, who became his life partner and eventually his husband.

Steve was a prominent LGBTQ+ rights advocate and the co-founder of the CAMP Rehoboth Community Center in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. He and Murray started CAMP Rehoboth in 1991 to offer a safe, positive space for the local community. Leading the organization for more than 25 years, Steve helped transform Rehoboth Beach into an inclusive destination.

“In many ways, we were as different as night and day, but that was our strength as a couple,” Murray wrote. “Our compromise point with each other helped us both to understand and create better relationships with others—and to do the work we do at CAMP Rehoboth.”



Photo credit: Photo courtesy of Murray Archibald

For Future Reading:

[Stephen Elkins Obituary](#)

[Stephen Elkins, an LGBT Pioneer](#)

Carla Reames

(April 12, 1944–March 11, 2025)

Delaware State Coordinator for the 1976 Carter-Mondale General Election Carla Marie Reames died Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at Mercy Hospital in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Carla was recruited to the Carter-Mondale organization by Cher Brooks, who was a member of the North Carolina campaign staff under Joel McCleary and who later worked at the Federal Aviation Administration during the Carter Administration.

“Carla was a good ol’ gal,” remembered Dewey Sheffield, a long-time North Carolina Democratic leader who resides in Wilson, North Carolina, and was a friend of both Carla and Cher. “Carla left a big impression on everyone she met,” he added.

Carla was born on April 12, 1944, in Fort Smith, Arkansas, to the late Carl Reames and Marquerite (Sax) Reames. She is survived by her friend, Robert A. Hogan, Jr. of Fort Smith.

Omi Gail Walden

(December 25, 1945–July 23, 2021)

Omi Gail Walden, an energy and environmental affairs specialist who served in both the Carter Administration and Georgia government, died July 23, 2021, in Savannah, Georgia.

Omi joined the Carter Administration in 1978 as Assistant Secretary for Conservation & Solar Applications in the new U.S. Department Energy. She previously served as an adviser on energy and environmental issues for both the Carter and Busbee administrations in Georgia.

Considered a pioneer in renewable energy development and of women in government, Omi was one of two female assistant secretaries at the time of the launch of the Energy Department.

After a lengthy career in public service, Omi founded Omi Walden & Associates, a public affairs and government relations consulting firm.

For Future Reading:

[History of Women at the Energy Department](#)

[In Loving Memory of Omi Gail Walden](#)