

THE Carter / Mondale Letter

Summer 2010

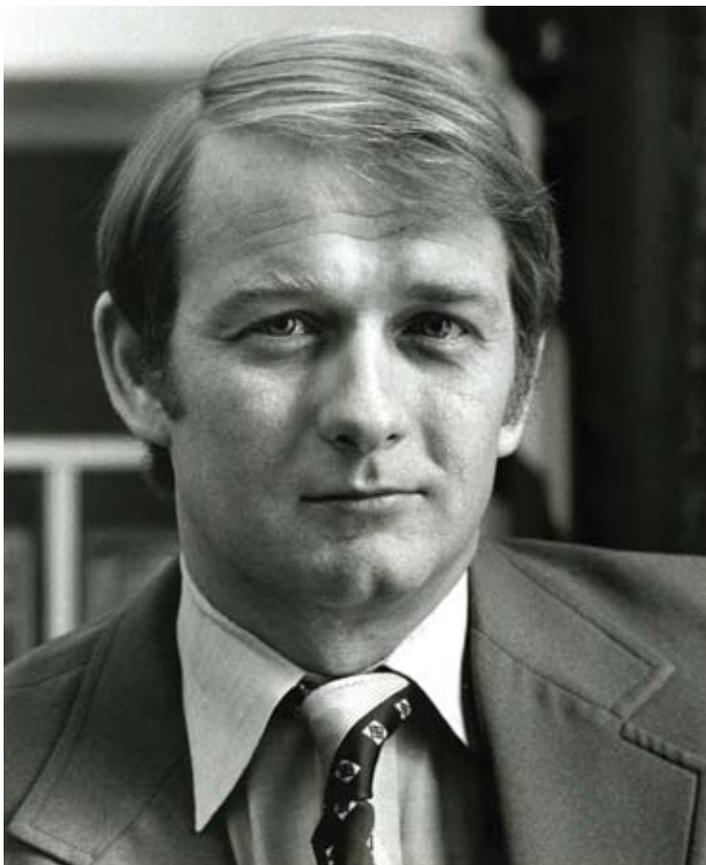
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Remembering Jody Powell 1943–2009

By David Stout
New York Times

Jody Powell, a sandy-haired former Georgia farm boy who was President Jimmy Carter's closest and most trusted aide, working with him from his days as Georgia governor through the Carter presidency, died Sept. 14, 2009, at his home near Cambridge, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He was 65.

Mr. Powell collapsed outside his home, and efforts to revive him at a hospital were futile, said Jack Nelson,



This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Joseph Lester "Jody" Powell Jr., who passed away Sept. 14, 2009, at age 65. He served as White House press secretary during the Carter administration.

For complete transcripts of the Jody Powell memorial service and funeral, and other messages following Powell's passing, send a request to Jay Beck at jbeck4@emory.edu.

who hurled questions at Mr. Powell three decades ago as Washington bureau chief of The Los Angeles Times and became his good friend afterward. Mr. Nelson said Mr. Powell's wife, Nan, had told him her husband apparently suffered a heart attack.

After leaving the White House in 1981, Mr. Powell was a syndicated columnist, author and public relations executive. In recent years, he was chairman of Powell Tate, an influential Washington-based public relations firm in which he was a partner, somewhat improbably, with Sheila Tate, a former press aide for Nancy Reagan.

Mr. Powell's official White House title was press secretary to Mr. Carter, but he was much more than that. Unlike many White House spokesmen, Mr. Powell really did have his boss's ear and really was privy to his boss's thinking.

"Jody was beside me in every decision I made as a candidate, governor and president, and I could always depend on his advice and counsel being candid and direct," Mr. Carter said. "I will miss him dearly."

Mr. Powell's path to the White House really began in 1966, when he was walking through a south Georgia shopping center and a smiling man thrust a hand toward him and said, "Hi! I'm Jimmy Carter, and I'm running for governor."

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Remembering

... Mr. Carter lost in 1966, and when he ran for governor again in 1970, Mr. Powell volunteered to work in the campaign. He was Mr. Carter's chauffeur and formed an easy rapport with the candidate, who was impressed by Mr. Powell's knowledge of politics. Soon, Mr. Powell was functioning as press secretary, a position that became official when Mr. Carter moved into the Governor's Mansion.

When Jimmy Carter unseated President Gerald R. Ford in the 1976 election, the appointment of Mr. Powell as press secretary was one of the new president's first announcements. As President Carter's spokesman, Mr. Powell was always fiercely loyal, sometimes quick-tempered and combative.

But reporters liked and respected him for the most part, Mr. Nelson, the former Los Angeles Times reporter, said Monday. "If he wasn't going to tell you something, he'd tell you," Mr. Nelson recalled. "But if he told you something, you could take it to the bank."

Jim Wooten, a former White House correspondent for The New York Times who covered the Carter presidency, agreed. And those who were lulled into underestimating Mr. Powell because of his Southern drawl and "good old boy"

ways did so at their peril, Mr. Wooten said. "He was really quick, whip-smart," he said on Monday.

Joseph Lester Powell Jr., who was nicknamed Jody after the young hero of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings classic "The Yearling," was born on Sept. 30, 1943, in Cordele, Ga. An A student and member of the debate team in high school, he also played quarterback on the football team.

Mr. Powell's survivors, in addition to his wife, include his mother, June Powell; a daughter, Emily Boddy, of Richmond, Va.; a sister, Susan Glenn, of Hilton Head, S.C.; and three grandchildren.

Mr. Powell was a Civil War buff and boasted that nine of his ancestors wore the rebel butternut and gray. His was the voice of Gen. Stonewall Jackson in Ken Burns' acclaimed public television series "The Civil War."

But his principal role in life was as a defender of Jimmy Carter.

Mr. Powell had honed his style years before, when Mr. Carter was governor. Responding to a critic who accused his boss of "communistic" tactics against opponents of the busing used to desegregate schools, Mr. Powell wrote that one of a governor's burdens was having to read "barely legible letters from morons."

"I respectfully suggest that you take two running jumps and go straight to hell," he continued.



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Jody Powell briefs the White House press corps.

Carter: Powell Had Enormous Impact on My Life

By Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter

I think I can say honestly that there has never been a single day in the last 39 years that I haven't thought about Jody, because he shaped my life almost as much as anyone else except perhaps Rosalynn. I went back and tried to think about the times when Jody and I were together, and I have to say I kind of expected him to speak at my memorial. So it's a sad time.

After I met Jody, we formed a partnership that he would be my driver as I campaigned around Georgia in the governor's election.

We soon found that we were quite different. I was punctual [laughter] and, as everybody knows, always on time. So if I was leaving a place and going to the next place to campaign, I left at the appointed hour. And it wasn't but just a couple of days before I left Jody for the first time.

He was my only traveling companion so I left by myself, and two or three hours later he showed up, having hitchhiked to catch up with me. I was in the middle of a speech. A couple of days later, it happened again. I left Jody. We were in Eastman, and I was going to McRae, Ga., and after about 30 minutes Jody showed up. He had hired a taxicab. Obviously, he had no money, so I had to pay for the taxicab [laughter]. After that, we worked out a better arrangement about waking each other up so we left on time. That was the governor's race.

Jody knew how to take a mountain of problems and make a molehill out of it. He didn't do that often enough [laughter], but I remember one time we went to the University of Wisconsin, which then had the wildest student body. And when I got out of our car, there were a bunch of antagonistic students, and they pelted me with peanuts. We could see the headlines: "Carter Attacked by Wonderful Wisconsin Students." Jody was asked about it, and he immediately said, "I'm just glad Governor Carter doesn't grow watermelons."

I have told you a lot of humorous things about Jody, some serious as well. But I would say that Jody was a real man. If it's politically correct to say it, he was a man's man.

He was tough as nails, and he was stubborn. He had a mind of his own. He was a patriot. He understood this nation and its history, and he also had a remarkable insight into the character and attitude of American people. He had a lot of political acumen. He knew how to help plan for the future and how to accommodate for the vicissitudes of political life. He was an iconoclast. Nothing was sacred to Jody. If he thought something was wrong, he had no hesitancy about trying to change it.

He had, I would say, perfect integrity. He also had courage. He never backed away from a serious challenge.



Powell meets with President Carter.

Everybody knows he had a great sense of humor. And he was loyal. Nobody knew the essence of Jody's loyalty better than I did.

I think Jody is probably the person that I have known who loved the outdoors most. He's the only one of all the friends I have who knew which weed seeds a duck would eat. And I think among all the friends that I've known, no one ever loved an old hat as much as Jody did.

I loved Jody Powell very much.

Excerpted from Jody Powell memorial service, Oct. 3, 2009.

Taming the Scribblers

Francis Wilkinson

The New York Times Sunday Magazine

In the late 1970s, the national press was potent—a lurching, ill-mannered leviathan issuing self-satisfied spouts as it cruised the flotsam of post-Watergate Washington. In these treacherous seas, Jody Powell captained the White House lectern, forever struggling to right a storm-battered ship.

As President Jimmy Carter’s press secretary, Powell endured more than the usual cheap shots and the maddening, unacknowledged inaccuracies that form the clammy underbelly of the beast. He was the public face, and final word, of a White House under siege—from stagflation, energy crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran hostage crisis, intraparty rebellion and, finally, the failed hostage rescue.

After being turned out of the White House in 1981 but before starting a successful public-relations firm, Powell wrote a book, “The Other Side of the Story,” to set the record straight. The subtitle of the book, which Powell published in 1984, consisted of an odd fragment: “When the news seemed to me, then and now, to be wrong, unsupportable and unfair.”

Seemed? To me? With the great whale in his sights, Powell checked his harpoon, softening his barbs with his trademark Southern humor and a complex affection, in spite of it all, for reporters—“as interesting a crowd as will ever darken the gates of hell.” Powell chastised a few reporters he deemed beyond redemption. The columnist Jack Anderson wrote “without regard to ideology or accuracy.” David Broder of *The Washington Post* bayed at the head of a “pack in full cry.” Powell wrote of *Newsweek* like a cop ruminating on organized crime.

Yet despite the bitter aftertaste, Powell, cigarette dangling, still cupped a flickering flame of faith in the Powers That Were. He didn’t want to slay the beast but to redeem it. In a typically conflicted broadside, Powell blasted a story in *The New York Times* as a “masterpiece of innuendo” that most likely contained “manufactured quotes.” But he spared the fallen reporter the embarrassment of naming him. Russell Baker, a *Times* columnist, declared “The Other Side of the Story” a failure. Powell’s cause was just, Baker concluded, but



Powell and Hamilton Jordan.

he lacked “the malice to do the job right.”

Joseph Lester Powell Jr. was reared on a 500-acre farm in Georgia, where his father grew cotton and, like Jimmy Carter, an hour’s drive to the west, peanuts. The smartest kid in class and a high-school quarterback, Powell was studying political science at Emory University when he offered his services to a former state legislator making his second run at the governor’s mansion.

Powell drove Carter everywhere and remained at his side after Carter became governor. (Upon learning of Powell’s fatal heart attack, Carter took to Georgia roads once more, traveling to the nursing home where Powell’s mother, June, was living, to inform her of her loss.) When the no-name governor, guided by a band of no-name strategists, ran for president in 1976, Powell was Carter’s constant companion on the road. “No press secretary was ever closer to the president he served,” wrote Martin Schram, a former Washington bureau chief for *Newsday*, on a blog after Powell’s death, “and no press secretary ever seemed less impressed by this fact than Jody.”

A Civil War buff with a sore loser’s ardor for Southern heritage (minus the racism), Powell came to Washington as a 33-year-old boy wonder. He resisted the temptation to go native—and paid for it. “We failed to appreciate until



Nan Powell's parents visit the Oval Office. From left: Ed Jared, Emily Powell, President Carter, Celeste Jared, Nan and Jody Powell.

too late the repercussions of our failure to socialize in the traditional Washington manner," Powell wrote. Nor could Powell's warmth compensate for Carter's chill. Washington scribes, Powell wrote, "do not take kindly to being looked down upon by any politician, especially not a peanut farmer from some piddly-assed little gnat-hole in south Georgia."

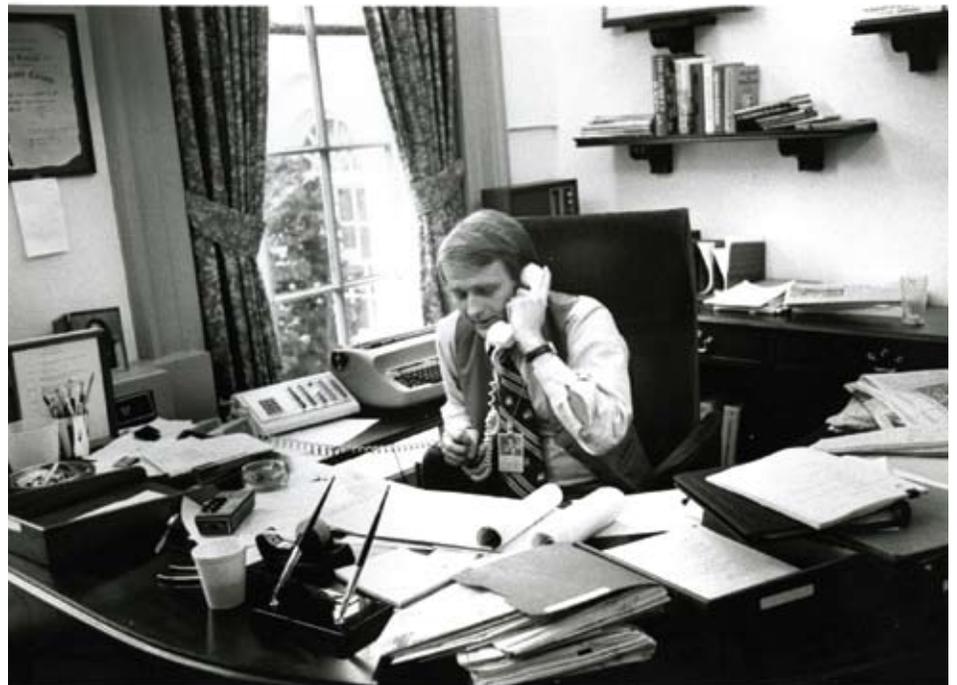
Carter was competitive, stubborn, punctual, cerebral, meticulous, pious. Powell was competitive, stubborn, tardy, disorganized, spontaneous, profane. Employing "guile without artifice," as one admirer recalled, Powell was capable of altering a sour mood in the pressroom or defusing a hostile question with an informed rebuttal, a sly riposte or a heap of south Georgia corn pone. Despite his fierce loyalty to Carter, Powell balanced the impossible task of serving both press and president as well as anyone. In his most searing moments, like the day the hostage rescue mission went down in

flames in the Iranian desert, killing eight servicemen, he covered his despair in a camouflage of competence. Many reporters said he was the best press secretary ever, a striking judgment given their generally low regard for the Carter presidency.

One night after the White House Christmas party, when the Carters had retired upstairs, Powell gathered his flock around the piano, his trusted assistant, Carolyn Shields, at the keyboard, and led the singing of hymns.

The ritual was familiar. Powell knew his Bible and relished his hymns, never tiring of "Amazing Grace," in particular. On the return flight from a foreign trip, he would initiate the singing at the rear of the plane. Exhausted from his labors, his guard lowered and his spirit uplifted, Powell let his honey-tobacco tenor rise and fall to the undulating strains of redemption. Reporters surrounded him and joined in. Thus soothed, the beast surrendered, momentarily, to grace.

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Jody Powell in his White House office.

Personal Tributes

Shortly following Powell's death, the Powell Tate Public Relations firm established a site where Powell's friends and admirers could post remembrances of his life. Expressions of sympathy went to his wife Nan, mother June Powell, sister Susan Glenn, daughter Emily Boddy, son-in-law Mark Boddy, and his three grandchildren. The following excerpts, almost all edited for space, offer a snapshot of the tributes from nearly 200 people that totaled almost 40,000 words.



Nan and Jody Powell.

The passing of Jody Powell is a terrible loss for me and my wife, Loretta. During our years working together, Jody and his wife, Nan, became our dear friends. Jody was the ultimate professional and helped create the modern practice of public

affairs. He was a brilliant communicator, a gifted strategist, a leader, but most of all, the kind of man we all aspire to be.

—Gerald Cassidy, Washington, D.C.

When I think of Jody, I think of that gentle south Georgia accent, a sharp take-no-prisoner wit, and his encyclopedic knowledge of Southern history. Whatever I asked him about—politics, taxes, foreign policy—he'd cite a Civil War battle. Or he'd bring up a food he loved, or a fish he caught, or a bird he shot, around Vienna. I can picture him with his feet up on his desk, spinning out a story, as he got to his point. I came to realize he was the model White House press secretary, because he was close to the President. We knew when Jody spoke, one way or another, he was reflecting what President Carter wanted us to know. I mourn the Jody Powell who was a great guy, a decent and caring man, a loving husband and father.

—Judy Woodruff, Washington, D.C.

In all of those years of working together, I admired, respected, and was inspired by Jody. We never had a cross word in all of that time. He was a prince of a colleague and a great and dear friend. Jody was exceptionally bright, and had a unique capacity to marry policy, politics, and public relations as no one I have ever met. Jody was universally respected for his candor, his ability, and, yes, his wit.

—Stu Eizenstat, Washington, D.C.

I remember one time a client faced a real moment of truth and sought our counsel at a time Jody was at a granddaughter's basketball game. He told me he knew I could handle it. He told me he needed to be granddaddy and that right then, that was the most important job he had. For all of his success and all of his tenacity, he realized that none of that mattered much without his family. He loved them all tremendously and never stopped talking about them, and in so doing, made sure we in his adopted family of Powell Tate never lost sight of what truly matters in life.

—Brian Wommack, Washington, D.C.

Jody was the best press secretary I ever dealt with—not only because he told the truth (or as close to it as he could get consistent with his first loyalty), but because he was intellectually tough. He did not suffer fools gladly and did not hesitate to point out the intellectual sloppiness of which we reporters were often guilty. His like does not come along often. I'm very glad to have known him.

—Stanley Cloud, Washington, D.C.

Jody was probably the smartest man I ever worked with. It was a pleasure to watch him in action, be it Warsaw or Plains. I found myself compelled to get out of the house today. I wandered up to the Sharpsburg battlefield (some mistakenly refer to it as Antietam). I drove to the visitor's center just in time for the showing of an hour-long film about the battle. Halfway through, I was startled to hear a familiar voice—it was Jody reading a letter from Gen. Gordon to his family in Georgia. It gave me shivers. I loved the guy and I miss him already.

—Bob Neuman, Chevy Chase, Md.

Powell Was Cool Under Pressure

by Rick Hertzberg

The night of April 24 and 25, 1980, was also the night that solidified my already high regard, respect, and affection for Jody Powell. [Hertzberg is at home when he learns of the failed mission to rescue the hostages held in Iran] I threw on clothes, got in the car and drove in... I went right to Jody's office. Just about the whole press office staff was there, looking haggard. Beth Lumpkin [a press aide] was taking calls from drunks and citizens, since no one from the Comments Office was in yet. I waited outside and at about 3 a.m. went into Jody's private office. He was in charge and he was magnificent. I was moved by how calm and composed and businesslike he was. As I told Al Friendly [Alfred Friendly Jr., National Security Council press secretary] later, if we do get in a war, I want Jody to be my platoon leader.

Jody's grave calm that night—his businesslike getting on with it, his assumption that the rest of us wanted to get on with it, too, the absence in him of any hint of hand-wringing or self-pity—was the best possible form of tenderness. It comforted without softening or weakening. Maybe I made too much of it. Maybe I still do. But ever since—every time I've seen him or talked to him or heard his name, including when I heard that he had died, aged just 65, of a heart attack—that night, with him at the center of it, has sprung to my mind in vivid colors.

Jody had none of the pomposity or defensive stand-



Powell once quipped, "Being called a liar by Lester Maddox [former governor of Georgia] is like being called ugly by a frog."

offishness that tends to intrude itself into the personalities of the nicest people when they get a big title or a measure of fame—and Jody was very famous as a young man. How many White House aides have ever made the cover of *Rolling Stone*? (Answer: two, so far as I know: Jody and his compadre Hamilton Jordan, who died sixteen months ago, less suddenly but at an even less advanced age.) Jody was excellent company. He was a very good person to have a drink with. He had a tart wit, as he had proved during the 1976 campaign when Lester Maddox, an ax-handle-wielding segregationist demagogue who had succeeded Carter as governor of Georgia, accused Carter of lying. "Being called a liar by

Lester Maddox," Jody said, "is like being called ugly by a frog." For all I know, that was a common Southernism, but it was the first time this Yankee had ever heard it.

From Rick Hertzberg's blog on The New Yorker website, Sept. 16, 2009: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/hendrikhertzberg/2009/09/jody.html>, edited for length. Rick Hertzberg served as President Carter's chief speechwriter from 1979 to 1981. He currently is a senior editor and staff writer at The New Yorker.

There are so many quotes, but my favorite remains his answer when asked why he and other Carter folks had taken up bowling. His reply, "Well, it's just too damn expensive to keep polo ponies." That and his rendering of Robert E. Lee's farewell address to the troops. It never failed to make Mary McGrory cry. Today, we all cry.

—Marthena Cowart, *Deal, Md.*

Jody was truly a one-of-a-kind, larger-than-life character, great human being, and wonderful friend of 35 years. We all learned so much from him as you would from a brilliant, kindly, and, when necessary, stern schoolmaster. Most importantly, we learned how to live good, full lives even in a city that doesn't always make that easy.

—Greg and Marie Schneiders, Washington, D.C.

Personal Tributes

It is a blessing in my life to have known Jody for 33 years. I profoundly wish it could have been 100 years, or 35 or 34. But the blessing I received cannot be diminished by the blessing I did not receive. So we have to go forward now without Jody. But not without the blessing of remembering him.

—*Ruff Fant, Washington, D.C.*

I have known Jody since we worked for Gov. Carter in Georgia; we both came to Washington with President Carter. Our friendship these many years has been enlivened by Jody's political prognostications and observations, which will be sorely missed by those of us who continue to meet as the "White House Budget Task Force." Jody's Civil War enthusiasm was never more evident than during our hiking trek along Bull Run through the Confederate "measles camp" and cannon sites.

—*Jim McIntyre, Clifton, Va.*

This great man is sorely missed. But when we get to the point when the shock and pain begin to fade, what a large and contributing life we have to celebrate. So many memories with him seem magical today. For years, Jody was a primary connection for me with the candidate, governor,



President and Mrs. Carter visit Maryland's Eastern Shore. From left: Rosalynn Carter, Frank and Nancy Moore, President Carter, Nan and Jody Powell.

presidential candidate, president, and former president. Jody was also my lifelong teacher in so many things, whether the press, policy, law's justice, Civil War battlefields, history of the Roman Empire, people, values and standards, common courtesies, great wit, or just standing back and savoring life. Ede and I feel blessed to have shared time with him and Nan, to see their pride and love for Emily and her growing family, and the love they shared with Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter. I loved him too, and I only wish I had the gumption and place to say it once to him, but I think he knew, along with all the rest.

—*Terry and Ede Adamson and Holiday, Washington, D.C.*

While Jody was extremely supportive and kind to me, he also could be quite direct and blunt. In the fall of 1979, I was cooling my heels in Seattle on a break from press advance work when I got a call from Linda Peek. The draft Kennedy movement was heating up in Florida, and she asked me if I wanted to go out as the first press secretary in the field. Knowing the uncertainties of campaign life versus the comforts of the White House, I asked her if she was asking me or telling me. She said she was asking me, and I said I would rather not. An hour later, I got a call from Jody that consisted of six words—"F--- you Liff, we're not asking." An hour later, I was on a plane to Orlando. I did not get home until six months, and seven states, later. It was the adventure of a lifetime. He was a good, honorable, and decent leader.

—*Bob Liff, New York*

Having worked with Jody more years of my professional life than not, I love all the stories about the lives Jody touched. He meant so much to so many people. I was graced by having the time with him that I did. He was an original. I owe him so much, but I probably owe Nan more. She is in every way as special as he was. It took inspiration to be Jody Powell, and I think that Nan was his. She never stood behind the White House podium in the press room, but she was Jody's rock. Our lives will never be the same without him, but he was unique and unforgettable, and in that sense will live on.

—*Dale Leibach, Washington, D.C.*

Daughter Recalls Father as Teacher

By Emily Powell Boddy

This is a truly unique opportunity. Selfishly, it is a chance for me to stop and look at you. You represent people and places and events that have intersected and interlocked and clicked together to create a very full and pretty amazing life for my dad.

You represent hometown Vienna family and friends, Georgia roots and friendships who were formed before I was even born. You represent Washington friends who weathered personal and professional transitions. You represent Cambridge friends who were part of my parents' newfound love of the Eastern Shore [of Maryland]. You represent close friends of mine and of Mark's—people who have touched our lives and the lives of our children.

To be sure, there were recurring themes in your posts [to the memorial website]. Hunting, the Civil War, hot muggy nights at the Best Western, his quick wit. There were a few well-used symbol keys that spelled out some unprintable words [laughter]. You mentioned him leading the words to "Amazing Grace," his love for the farms both in Cambridge and in Vienna, his pride in his grandchildren, and without fail you mentioned his pure devotion to my mom.

Most noticeable to me were the countless times he

was referred to as a teacher. I've heard from more than one of you that my dad liked to say with pride that he was the son and the husband and the father of teachers.

But I think that my dad was more than just a teacher of skills. The things we learned from him were part of who he was, and then, if we were really paying attention, they could become part of who we are. And maybe that's the lesson he would have wanted us to learn all along. Know who you are. Maybe, like him, you are honorable and loyal. Maybe, like him, you love the land and ultimately desire to be a good steward of it. Maybe you always shoot straight, both literally and figuratively. Maybe, like him, you have a faith that sustains you. But whatever noble characteristics define you, I think he would hope that you would share them and model them, and leave no question in other people's minds who you are, and that you would teach that to any receptive ear.

One of the very sad things about a life that ends too soon is the thought of all of the things that are left undone, and we spent a lot of time thinking about that. But I think that whenever my dad's life would have ended, there would have certainly been things left untaught. I wouldn't have expected it to be different because he was always learning new things and always ready to share them with us. So now that's my job, and it's Mark's job, and it's our job, because we could not have had a better teacher.

Excerpted from Jody Powell memorial service, Oct. 3, 2009



Powell and his daughter, Emily, in the 1970s (above) and in more recent times (right).

Members of the Media Remember Former Press Secretary

From The Washington Post

Jody Powell, the Carter White House press secretary who died this week after a heart attack at 65, was one of those blithe spirits whose personality does much to lift the clouds of controversy that envelop Washington. Arriving with the former governor from Georgia, Powell more than anyone else in the Carter administration made an effort to become part of the capital's political and journalistic community. His weapon of choice was his impish sense of humor, which did not dim his strong partisan and personal loyalties, but enabled him to make friends among many who never overcame their skepticism about his boss. Candid, canny, convivial, he became deservedly one of the most popular public figures in this city.

—David Broder

Mr. Powell said his parents were vital early influences. His mother was a high school civics teacher. His father, he said, instilled “the most important things,” such as “how to drink beer, drive a tractor and shoot a gun” and “never be ashamed of who you are or where you came from.”

In the 1980s, Mr. Powell was the author of a syndicated column, a news commentator for ABC and an executive with the public relations giant Ogilvy & Mather. In 1991, he and Republican communications strategist Sheila Tate, who had been press secretary to first lady Nancy Reagan, started Powell Tate as a division of Gerald S.J. Cassidy's government relations firm.

Members of the Carter administration conduct business on Air Force One. From left: Jim King, Carolyn Shields, Powell, and Stu Eizenstat.



“Failures are less sweeping and all-encompassing in business,” he told a reporter in 1990. “In politics, failure is punished more severely. If you lose, it’s over in a day. Not only are you out of a job, so is everyone you worked with.”

—Adam Bernstein

From Richmond Times-Dispatch

Jody Powell ran an exemplary press office for Jimmy Carter. Indeed, it rates as the most efficient White House operation in our memory. Powell himself was witty and sharp. The staff always responded to requests for information with alacrity. If political science departments taught courses on the gentle arts of the press secretary, Powell's regime could serve as a textbook. Jody Powell died Monday at 65. We salute and thank him.

—Editorial

From the Chattanooga Times Free Press

A piece of civility fell by the wayside last week... [Jody] was a partisan but not of the loud, boisterous type. He was a Democrat. He worked hard for Jimmy Carter and continued doing so long after his time in the White House ended. He held certain beliefs and never forgot those who shaped his life. President Carter was one of those who clearly molded a young man from Vienna, Ga.

In a different time, Jody would have been an extraordinary professor of American history. He was, but you did not receive college credit for his lessons... In a town that rewards those who bail out to make money off their connections, Jody Powell was willing to stand with the man who gave him the ticket to Washington, even 28 years after that man left the White House... The Jody Powells are the exception in Washington.

—Tom Griscom

From The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

His tenderness was not confined to his family. On one of the early days of the Carter White House, the posted time to brief the press had come and gone, and reporters were grouching about an overdue Jody. But he remained in his office, door closed. I interrupted him, urging him to appear.

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Powell Remembered as Unflappable Press Secretary, Civil War Buff

By Joe Klein

Well, this is becoming quite the year for obituaries. Jody Powell was one of the first political pros I met when I began covering my first presidential campaign for Rolling Stone in 1975. We were introduced by Hunter Thompson—who was, untypically, seduced by the fact that Jimmy Carter’s top two aides were people sorta like us. Jody was the older and cooler; Hamilton Jordan was younger, more impetuous. Jody did press; Hamilton did strategy. And now, they’re both gone. Amazing.

Jody was never as forthcoming as Hamilton. He was a press guy, careful about what he said. Indeed, he was an excellent press secretary—funny, unflappable, totally devoted to the boss (latter day exemplars of his style were Mike McCurry and, to a lesser extent, Robert Gibbs). He was a Civil War buff, the descendent of seven—he claimed—Confederate southern soldiers and I began the Rolling Stone story with a quote from W.J. Cash’s incredible *The Mind of the South* about the confederate soldier, slouching, disheveled, undisciplined, and lethal. I wish I could replicate that quote here, but I can’t seem to find the piece on the Internet—kudos to the reader who can because, to my mind, it’s the ultimate tribute to the man.

Later, a reader supplied the quotation:

“To the end of his service this soldier could not be disciplined. He slouched. He would never learn to salute in the brisk fashion so dear to the hearts of the professors of mass mur-



At Camp David, Pat Caddell, Hamilton Jordan, Gerald Rafshoon, and Jody Powell discuss a matter.

der. His “Cap’n” and “Gin’ral” were likely to pass his lips with a grin—were charged always with easy, unstudied familiarity. He could and did find it in himself to jeer openly and unabashed in the face of Stonewall Jackson when the austere Presbyterian captain rode along his lines. And down to the final day at Appomattox his officers knew that the way to get him to execute an order without malingering was to flatter and to jest, never to command too brusquely and forthrightly. And yet—and yet—and by virtue of precisely these unsoldierly qualities, he was, as no one will care to deny, one of the world’s very finest fighting men.”

From the “Swampland” blog on the Time magazine website, Sept. 15, 2009. Joe Klein is the magazine’s political columnist and author of six books.

Continued from previous page

“I’m coming, I’m coming,” he said. “But I had to get this right.”

Rex Granum and Powell confer at the White House.



He showed me his handiwork. The mother of an 8-year-old boy had written, despairing of the relentless teasing her son Jody was enduring for having a “girl’s” name.

While the press corps waited impatiently downstairs, the older Jody wrote young Jody in unadorned language understandable to an 8-year-old. He wrote about how what was important in life was not how you looked or what people thought of your name—that what mattered was how you conducted yourself and treated others, encouraging him to be proud of his name.

So to that Jody—wherever you are—think about Jody Powell the family man, Carter advocate, public servant, executive, and courtly gentleman and hoist a glass in his honor. So very many of us will join in.

Personal Tributes

My friendship with Jody overflows with fond and wonderful memories. Many involve affairs of state and business; others less heady matters. But one seemingly inconsequential incident almost three decades ago gave me a revealing glimpse of him.

In the midst of an animated conversation as we walked down the street, Jody silently dropped back and unobtrusively slipped some folding money into the hand of a panhandler. As he quickly caught up and resumed our sidewalk colloquy, I noticed his eyes were moist. That surprised me because I had pictured him as a man's man: a hunter, an athlete, a patriot, a master storyteller—and, of course, a man too busy and too important to trouble himself with someone less fortunate or someone who could not pos-



Powell works aboard Air Force One.

sibly do anything for him. Through this episode, and several subsequent ones, Jody taught me that many traits that “real men” scoff at and belittle are often more accurate measures of a person's character. Over the years, I came to find Jody, of all things, shy and very private. He was modest and humble, gentle and sensitive, considerate, compassionate, and fiercely loyal. As the small encounter with that homeless man demonstrated, Jody was unfailingly generous, not to himself, but more important, with himself and to others.

—Dan Tate Sr., Washington, D.C.

Little did I know when I was sitting in the press office trailer in Plains, Ga., in early fall '76 that that was the beginning of a 25-year odyssey that can only be described as most extraordinary. Jody always made certain when he was approached about starting a new adventure that everyone was aware that we were a “package deal”—where Jody went, so went Carolyn. He was my friend, my mentor, my protector, my educator. I will sorely miss him.

—Carolyn Shields, Paris, Texas

Jody was a man as comfortable in his skin as any I have ever known from the day I met him in Atlanta in the summer of 1974, young but so wise beyond his years. Nature had granted Jody Powell guile without artifice. I think it is this authenticity, so rare in Washington in 1976 and gone completely from public life today, which endeared him in the capital city's media and political culture. He was, perhaps inevitably, a very private man in a public life. Thus, I sensed that the “neck” farmland of the Eastern Shore of Maryland that he so loved was a natural sanctuary to him, the flora and fauna there an order more comforting to his character than the jungle of human conflict Washington had become. And if one contemplates this good man's full life in that context, it is perhaps fitting that Jody died on his farm, returning home in the sweet warmth of Mother Nature's embrace.

—David Dunn, Washington, D.C.

My friendship with Jody had very little to do with politics or the White House years. Our relationship was one of sharing our love for Maryland's Eastern Shore and its beautiful natural resources with others. Jody and Nan became friends of mine when they became partners with Frank and Nancy Moore in their Eastern Shore property in 1994 and have since shared many beautiful memories together with my family and me. My family and I have truly been blessed by God to have known Jody and to have shared the last 15 years with him and his family.

—Donald Webster, Cambridge, Md.

Carter Had Best Press Secretary

By Sam Donaldson

When I heard the awful news, my first thought was, “Oh no. Not Jody. Not yet. Too soon.” Here was a vibrant, interesting, good man who, after years of work in the public and private sector, was having the time of his life with his wonderful loving family, and it just didn’t seem right.



Powell checks in with members of his staff and the media, including Sam Donaldson (center).

And then my second thought was of all the good times, and the funny things, and all the interesting things that happened. You couldn’t have known Jody, as a reporter, without coming to like him immensely.

This may come as a shock to you, President Carter, but we came to discover that Jody liked us [laughter]. Now he didn’t love us, but he liked us [laughter].

In my case, I discovered some time later how much he

really liked me. It was on a press plane coming back from Asia, where the President had been to a conference. We were all tired. We were happy it was over. We were going home. We’d had a few pops, one or two. But Jody wisely decided he’d had enough, although he found himself at that instant with a glass of red wine in his hand. And having decided not to drink it, he just threw it full in my face [laughter]. Now some of you would say that I don’t know that I’d take

that as a sign of affection. But you don’t know young men, the young bulls. I just thought well, heh-heh, hooray for me, and cleaned it off [laughter].

In Jody’s handling of the press corps, he remembered the biblical admonition, “a soft answer turneth away wrath.” He never lied to us. He never misled us. He dodged controversial issues once in a while. But he did it with grace and style. He’d laugh. He’d shuck. He’d jive. He’d pirouette. Even the fiercest of us, the legendary Helen Thomas, would laugh.

The family—not just the Powell family, but the Powell-Carter family—looked after each other. The loyalty that all of them showed each other is rare in Washington. Everyone talks loyalty, but they run around and tell people like me what’s really said. I never heard Jody say a bad word about any one of

the Carter people. Not just the people named Carter, but the people around him.

No President whom I’ve known has had a better press secretary.

Excerpted from Jody Powell memorial service, Oct. 3, 2009. Sam Donaldson was an ABC News correspondent and anchor for 41 years.

Thanks, Jody, for what you have been to our family and for taking such wonderful care of my daughter Nan. No one could have done better.

—Edmond Jared, Gainesville, Ga.

Anyone who had the great privilege to know Jody Powell very quickly came to realize that his name was a synonym for integrity.

—Ray Jenkins, Baltimore, Md.

Personal Tributes

I first met Jody 22 years ago during my first months of courting Emily. Needless to say, he was not the warm and fuzzy man I had hoped to meet, and I now know he was measuring me for just a few of the qualities he led his life by. My mother reminded me this week that I asked her in these early months, “Who is Jody Powell?” All I knew was that Emily had the qualities I was looking for in a wife and lifetime companion. With two teenage daughters of my own now, I recognize the importance of this fatherly role and intend to do it as well as Jody did it 22 years ago.

Early on in our marriage, I realized that Jody’s love was hunting. But the actual hunt was only a small part of the total experience. The preparation for the hunt was perhaps more important. Whether it be the painting of the decoys, planting of the food, or the building of the blinds, this was all part of the experience and something the grandchildren and I took great joy in helping him with. I will always cherish the time we spent around the wood stove in the “Research and Development Center” following a hunt more than any hunt itself. Jody was always teaching, and one of my biggest regrets in Jody’s passing is that my 9-year-old son, David, couldn’t be his student another 10 years or so. I will do all I can to continue to instill in all of the children the lessons he felt so important to share with them. My hope in the coming weeks and months is to begin to focus not on the loss of Jody in my life but rather



Sarah Boddy and her grandfather.

on how much richer my life was because he was such a large part of it. I can only hope that those who loved him can do the same.

—Mark Boddy, Richmond, Va.

Jody set the standard and broke the mold, simultaneously. There could not be and never has been a better presidential press secretary, because there has never been someone else of his passion and intellect who was also intimately connected to the President he served. There also could not be a more Southern Southerner, in love with his regional heritage even as he participated in breaking its shackles. I suppose that other Presidents have been as faithfully served as Jimmy Carter was by Jody, but it is hard to say who. No kiss and tell for him, no second-guessing; the scores he settled were with those he felt had distorted or impeded the purposes of his mentor, friend and President. In that cause, he buckled on his armor and went forth with the broadsword of righteous wrath. But these are things you say about a public person. There are other things to say. You were fortunate if he was your friend and soon aware of its cost if he saw you as an enemy. He could extend one day well into the next, then work the next day as though he had arisen from a long night’s sleep. He was a storyteller’s storyteller, but you never forgot to check your wallet whenever you were tempted to forget his steely smarts. Jody died far too young, certainly too young for his family and friends, but too young, too, for the public good. Like so many others, I feel fortunate to have been enlisted in the cause he represented with such fervor and skill.

—Hodding Carter III, Chapel Hill, N.C.

I never knew anyone quite like Jody Powell. As everyone who ever worked with him or had the pleasure of his company knows, he was incredibly smart, funny and fun-loving, full of colorful observations about life, articulate, tough, gentle, focused, and touched to his core with humanity and a quiet, genuine humility. Every one of us who knew him was enriched by him and his extraordinary life. I’ll remember Jody with admiration, respect, and affection, and every time I think of him, I’ll smile.

—Jack Watson, Atlanta, Ga.

Parents Provided Rich Home Life in Vienna, Ga.

By Rev. Dr. Robert L. Maddox

There's a farm on the state highway in Dooly County, Ga., between the county seat of Vienna, population 2,500, and Byromville, a village of a few hundred. On that farm, June and Joe Powell reared their two children, Susan and Jody. The Powells and June's family, the Williamsons, go all the way back in the history of that part of the world. The Williamson family traces its roots back in Dooly County for nine generations.

I can't speak about other farm families in Dooly County, but I do know a bit about June and Joe's home. The house was full of books, fitting for a veteran schoolteacher like June. Joe was steady but taciturn. June, on the other hand, was a



Already an outdoorsman, a young Powell shows off his catch.

Renaissance woman by any measure. I have a special place in my heart and history for June because she served on the pulpit search committee that brought Linda and me to the First Baptist Church of Vienna, Ga., exactly 45 years ago this very fall. June and her Atlanta-based sister, Claire, were way ahead of the cultural curve for that time and place. Both understood the South was changing, had to change, in its racial attitudes and did their part to help. As Linda and I began to make our

concerns known by word and deed in those tense days of change, June stood right there with us.

All of us here gathered have our lives nobly enriched because of Jody Powell. To Nan, Emily, three grandchildren he absolutely adored, you have a grand and unique heritage. None of that will make him walk across the floor again or come ambling into the house. But he will always stroll across the meadows of your hearts and memories. And at wonderfully unexpected times, you will look up and almost see him coming across the room to give you that special word, that special hug.

Jody Powell was born on a farm. He invested much of life working with and for a farmer. Now he has died on a farm. A boy from a Dooly County farm could hardly ask for more.

Excerpted from Jody Powell funeral, Sept. 17, 2009. Bob Maddox was a speechwriter and religious liaison in the Carter administration.



Jody Powell's family visits Plains, Ga. From left: Jody and Nan Powell, Claire Williamson, and Sarah, Rachel, David, Emily, and Mark Boddy.

For all of his devotion to President Carter and dedication to his job, there were some things that were even more important to Jody, chiefly Nan and Emily. Yes, he was a superb White House press secretary, perhaps the best of our time, but he was much more. Above all he was a good man.

—Ed Walsh, Portland, Ore.

After 35 years of living presidential campaigns from the inside and out, I'm still convinced that no candidate ever had two brighter, more competent leaders guiding his campaign than Jimmy Carter's beloved Ham and Jody. God, was Jody ever funny—no one could dispense so much wisdom neatly wrapped up in a one-liner.

—Bill Romjue, Columbia, Mo.

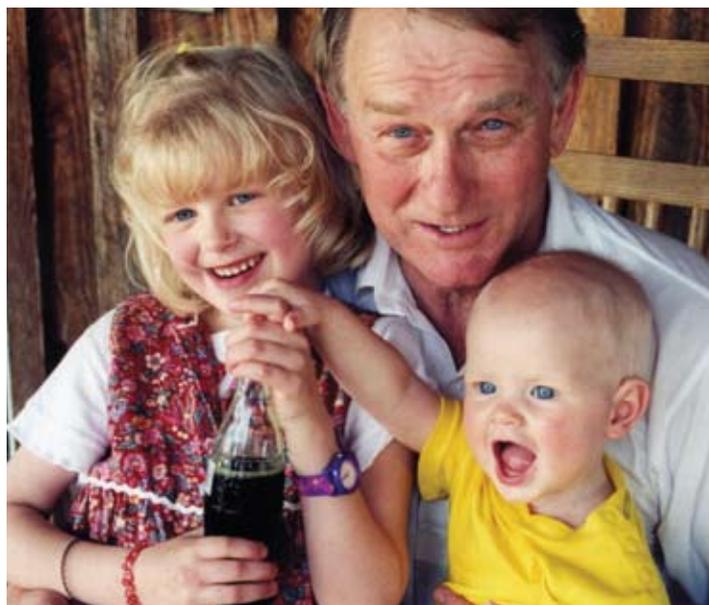
Powell Touched Firm's Employees

By Sheila Tate

My job today is not just to speak for myself but for the legions of Powell Tate alumni and current employees who have been touched by Jody's 18 Powell Tate years. We were a very small but very optimistic crowd in '91 when we started the firm with the financial backing of Gerry Cassidy.

I believe that you measure a person by how they treat the people beneath them, and our people will tell you that in that regard Jody stood about 10 feet tall. In the last few weeks, I've talked to so many of them, current and former, and that kept coming through more than his great humor, which we've talked about, and his grasp of history, which I know his mother, Miss June, is responsible for. More than his superb verbal skills and his good judgment were his decency and his humanity.

When he was in the office, he made it a point to invite all the new people to spend time with him. He would talk about his years with President Carter and the history of our firm. But the neatest thing he said to them that they all remember was that "After all these years and all I've done, I finally figured out what I was meant to be: a granddaddy."



Rachel and David Boddy with their grandfather.



Powell stands ready at the podium.

Emily, you were the apple of his eye. One favorite story he used to tell around the office centered on when he was in grad school and Nan was teaching. His job was to get you ready for school, and he always said he did fine until he got to the two ponytails assignment.

One day they were down in Georgia visiting the Powell family, and Jody's mother and Great Aunt Claire were there, and while she was fixing Emily's ponytails, Emily got very upset and said, "You're doing it all wrong." Apparently it wasn't the way Daddy did it. You, Emily, were reported to have said that when Daddy did it, he cussed and had to keep starting over [laughter].

Miss June, he was so devoted to you, and it showed. I have something here that he kept in his top drawer at work. It is written on a little piece of calendar paper. Jody was giving a speech, and his mother and Aunt Claire were in the audience. Halfway through, Jody gets this note handed to him. Jody opens it up and inside it says, "Louder." And it's signed "Mother" [laughter]. Jody said it was because his mother forgot her hearing aid. We who know him and know his propensities think he started mumbling [laughter].

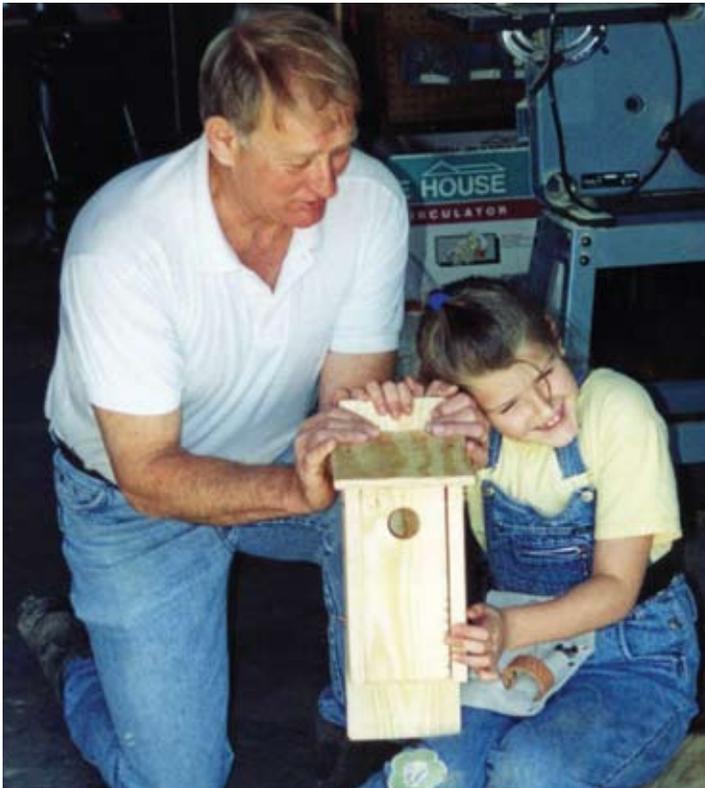
Excerpted from Jody Powell memorial service, Oct. 3, 2009.

Powell Loyal in Work, Family Life

By Herky Harris

I first met Jody in 1964. He had enrolled at Georgia State University in Atlanta. We both needed to work to help pay expenses of college. We had a lot in common, especially our love of fast cars, and girls [laughter]. We were a good team: He had a Corvette, and I was from Atlanta and had the phone numbers for a lot of girls [laughter].

Jody was fiercely loyal. President Carter has never been one to avoid controversy, and for 40 years, Jody Powell stood at his side—both in office and out—as an extremely strong advocate. And aside from discussing his family, there was never more pride and love in Jody’s voice than when he



Powell and granddaughter Sarah show off their birdhouse.

was describing his admiration for President Carter.

Recently, a group of Carter administration alumni were invited to Washington’s historic Metropolitan Club, where numerous portraits hang, especially of famous people of the late 19th century.

Jody received the e-mail inviting him to this dinner, and he quickly replied:

“I look forward to our discussion and plan to attend. It would suit me best if you would have the portraits of



Nan and Jody Powell on the White House West Colonnade.

those Yankee generals who ravaged, burned, and terrorized Georgia covered up so that I don’t have to look at them as I walk up the stairs” [laughter]. Was that vintage Jody or what?

He was a family man. Nan Powell was the love of Jody’s life. She was not only his wife, but his friend, his partner, his soul mate, and his adviser. They were a great team. Jody’s abundant love and adoration of Emily were also always apparent, and when she married Mark, Jody could not say enough good things. Mark became the son Jody never had. Jody’s three grandchildren—Sarah, Rachel, and David—are so special. He loved watching them grow up. He was very proud that they are good people, well-grounded in values, and I know through Jody will always have a great appreciation of God’s great earth and all its creations.

Jody was my close friend. He wasn’t perfect. He made mistakes like all of us. But boy, he did a ton right.

Herky Harris served as assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget in the Carter-Mondale administration.

Personal Tributes

What a pleasure it was to talk to Jody. In a region of notable talkers, he had a gift for conversation that was both meaningful and entertaining. Jody embodied the best qualities that progressive Southerners bring to our politics: a joy in the thrust and parry of the game and, most important, a genuine, deeply felt sympathy for the dispossessed. He was animated, of course, by his love of Nan, Emily, and their family. Loyalty to President Carter and his political ideals was his beacon. Covering Jody, Hamilton Jordan, their candidate, and their Georgia team as they moved on to the national stage was to witness one of the greatest political feats of the previous century. For those who knew Jody in the professional arena in those years, the world feels smaller now. On the personal side, since Jody and I were born in the same year, I had always assumed we would be old men together, with an inexhaustible fund of things to talk about, including politics, the flat and hilly parts of the South, the Civil War, and bird dogs.

—*Howell Raines, Henryville, Pa.*

In tough situations, no one was faster to cut through the blather to the real issues and the right decision. I particularly remember Jody in the White House corral the propeller heads working on pet projects on which the President was on the verge of signing off and grill us to be sure we weren't about to exploit the President's similarly wonkish policy enthusiasms and drive him over a political cliff.

—*Simon Lazarus, Bethesda, Md.*

There have been so many wonderful things said about my friend of 40 years Jody Powell, and they are all true. How appropriate since Jody was the consummate truth teller.

Jody was always exactly the person he said he was. He was real. He was authentic. He told it the way it was, and he lived life the same way. There was never a public Jody and a personal Jody. When he told you something, you knew he meant it. Whether you liked it or not. When he was funny, he was real funny. When he got mad, look out. And when it came to love for Nan, Emily, Jimmy Carter, and his country, that was as real as it could be. A rare quality, especially today. I will miss him for the rest of my days.

—*Jerry Rafshoon, Washington, D.C.*

There are many things in life to be thankful for. Today, I am grateful for the life of Jody Powell. I am grateful to have known him for almost 30 years, to have been a friend, sometimes hunting buddy, and farming partner. I am grateful to have known and seen the love he had for his Nan or Nanny or sometimes just Hey Girl. To hear him talk with pride about Emily and Mark and see tears come to his eyes when he talked about his beloved grandchildren. We are grateful for the closeness of our families. I loved being with him when he would get excited about a flock of birds flying over or grass beginning to grow when planted. He would fuss and cuss about the weather, the rain, or the wind or whether there would be ducks on the ponds. He loved this farm and was a great steward of this land. Hunting season will never be the same, sunsets not quite so beautiful, boat rides not quite so much fun. There is a hole in our hearts and soul and a loneliness that will never cease. He was like a brother and will be loved and missed forever. I am grateful that when he left the earth, he was doing the things he loved on the land that meant so much to him.

—*Nancy Moore, Cambridge, Md.*

In the summer of 1976, Jody offered me what turned out to be the opportunity of a lifetime fresh out of college—working with a small contingent of presidential campaign staff based in Plains. The experience, as many here have related with eloquence and humor, was extraordinary. We worked hard and had a wonderful time—with Jody generally staging the direction. When we weren't chauffeuring around potential candidates for vice president and Cabinet positions or monitoring any-hour press stakeouts at the Carter's house, there were softball, poolside sing-alongs at the Americus Best Western (home away from home), and dinner almost every night at Faye's steak restaurant. On special nights, we went to eat catfish, an acquired skill that Jody triumphantly demonstrated. We learned about the Civil War as only Jody could tell the tales. Staff and press became a family there in the heat, humidity, and buggyness of South Georgia in summer.

—*Casey Cornell, Atlanta, Ga.*

continues on back cover

Faith Was Deep, Personal River

By Rev. Craig Sherouse

In the iconic fly-fishing novella and movie, “A River Runs Through It,” Montana’s Blackfoot River is the dominating theme that unified the disparate members of one family. I think there was a dominating, unifying river that ran through Jody’s life and family. This river was deeper than the Flint River of his Vienna roots. It was more present in his life than the Little Choptank River that surrounds his beloved Maryland farm.

It was the mist of that river that teared up Jody’s eyes every time he sang or heard “Amazing Grace.” It is the River of Life, the River of Grace, the River of Faith, Hope, and Love.

With the family’s permission, I want to share part of a prayer Jody recently wrote to give to family friends who were grieving a death. I have edited it to express our grief over Jody’s death:

“Dear Lord, we desperately need your help. We know that Jody is safe in your arms, in a place of perfect love and

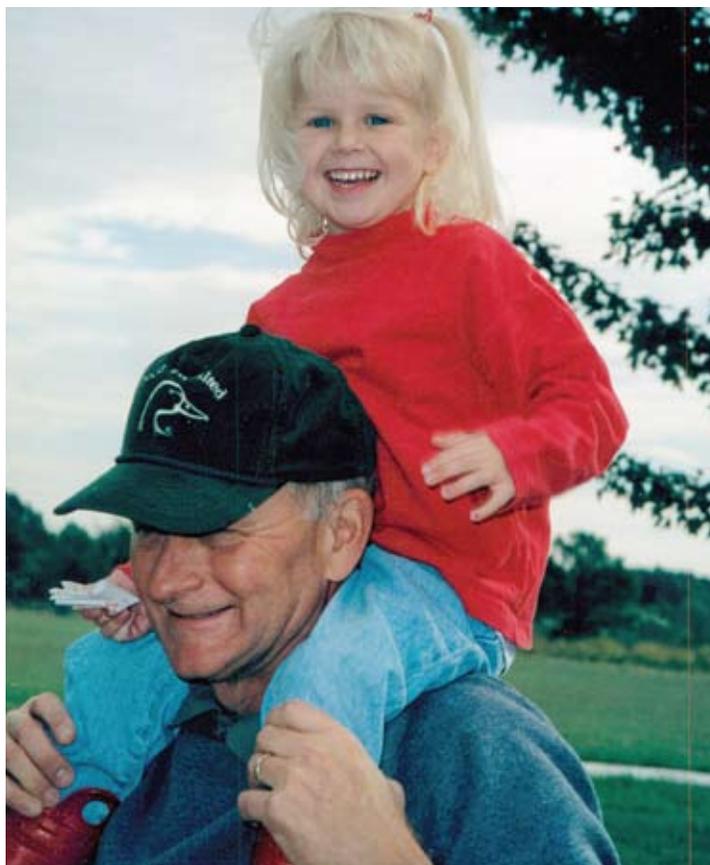


David Boddy with his grandfather.

kindness, never again to feel pain, or sadness, or disappointment for all eternity. We know we should be able to feel comforted by that. So, here we are, Lord, needing you. We ask you to take care of Nan, Mrs. Powell, Emily, Mark, Sarah, Rachel, and David, and Susan. We need you to do for them what we can’t and what they can’t do for themselves. Love them and strengthen them. Hold them close through this dark night. Dry their tears and mend, in time, their broken hearts. Bless them and keep them and walk with them every step to a brighter and happier time. We ask this, Lord, knowing that we have no right, only your promise. We know we have, so many times, fallen short, disappointed and failed. We ask it only trusting and believing that our merciful Heavenly Father will give comfort and hope and, at last, peace. Amen.”

What a man of words! What a man of authentic faith! Some of Jody’s favorite words on authentic faith are on the front of the Order of Service, a quote from the Quaker theologian Elton Trueblood: “A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit.” When I read the almost 200 entries on the memorial website for Jody, I felt like I was sitting in a forest of shade trees he planted. Husband, son, father, grandfather, brother, cousin, friend, boss, teacher, patriot, adviser—he has left us much shade.

Excerpted from Jody Powell memorial service, Oct. 3, 2009.



Rachel Boddy with her grandfather.

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continued from p. 18

Both wickedly funny and unfailingly generous, Jody was a true Southern gentleman, a real American patriot.

—Mary Fraker, Washington, D.C.

Jody belied the Washington notion that it's not what you know, it's who you know. Of course, Jody could pick up the telephone and speak with a network anchor, captain of industry, member of Congress, President. But he knew—and demonstrated—that it really is what you know and how you conduct yourself that are most important.

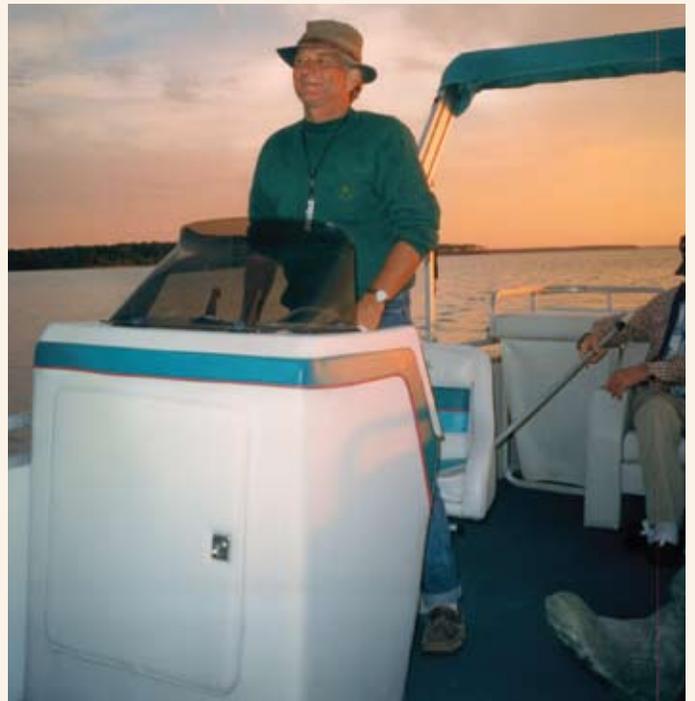
—Julie Tufts, Alexandria, Va.

To work with Jody was to know why the South, against all odds, almost managed to gain its independence.

—Walt Duka, Fairfax, Va.

About This Newsletter

The Carter/Mondale Letter is sent to individuals who were associated with the campaign and administration of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale. Please send us news and photos that will interest your fellow alumni. Contact Jay Beck, The Carter Center, One Copenhill, 453 Freedom Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30307; Fax (404) 420-3816; E-mail jbeck4@emory.edu. The newsletter can be sent to you electronically rather than in the mail. Let us know if this is your preference.



Powell captains a boat on Chesapeake Bay.

Powell could have a conversation with anybody, anywhere in the known universe, and even if he was out-talked, he was never outsmarted! Well, here in South Georgia where roots run deep, I have to say that Jody's family ties ran the deepest. He loved his family, and he loved most all things Southern. Anyone who knew Jody can probably say it better, but Jody loved his God, loved his family, loved his friends, loved to hunt and fish, loved to tell a few tales, and loved a cold beer.

—John Penney, Vienna, Ga.