

Rosalynn Carter
By Gabriella K.

I did not know about Rosalynn Carter before researching for this paper but now I feel like I know her and believe in what she stood for and accomplished not only during the time she was First Lady but after leaving the White House. Rosalynn Carter was a Democratic American First Lady born on August 18, 1927 in Plains GA. She met Jimmy Carter through a friend and in 1946 married him at the age of 18. Carter was at her husband's side during his political rise in the 60's. She became the First Lady of Georgia when he won the Governor's role in 1970. Later in 1977, she became the First Lady of the United States when he was sworn in as the 39th President.

Rosalyn was the oldest of four children. Her dad was a mechanic and after his passing her mom had many jobs to make ends meet. Jimmy and Rosalynn met while she was in high school. He was the oldest brother to her best friend. He proposed to her and she initially refused. When he proposed again, she accepted and they were then married. He was a naval officer and they moved around a lot. After Jimmy's father's passing, they moved back to Georgia to run the Carter family business with their three children. Later in 1967, they had a daughter Amy. Rosalyn pursued her degree in literature and art through home-study programs. She obtained her degree in 1946 from Georgia Southwestern College.

Rosalyn was very active and initially served as a sort of advisor to Jimmy when he took office. Later she concentrated on her work to improve services for the mentally ill and emotionally handicapped. She was an honorary chairperson to the Georgia Special Olympics. She worked with the Commission on Mental Health which later helped pass the Mental Health Systems Bill in September 1980. She received the President's Medal of Freedom, a high civilian honor. In 2001, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She and Jimmy together worked with Habitat for Humanity as well as other charities founding the Carter Presidential Center of Emory University. The foundation has helped many people and advocated for human rights, alleviating unnecessary suffering and improving quality of life for people in more than 65 countries.

Rosalyn was a strong First Lady. She was referred to as a steel magnolia. She was strong, durable and of good character. As a magnolia she was gentle and caring for the less fortunate, poor and sick. As I read about her I think she was a very smart, kind and proactive First Lady who brought about real change. She remained active in her work even after leaving the White House which speaks to her character and humility. Initially it seems America had mixed feelings about her but that has changed over the years. She is admired and respected by many now.

Rosalynn Carter's work has to be commended. She cared for the mentally and emotionally ill, encouraging early childhood immunizations, human rights and conflict resolution. She received the President's medal of freedom, a high civilian honor. In 2001, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Through the Carter Presidential Center at Emory Center Jimmy and Rosalynn worked to create a world where every man, woman and child has an opportunity to enjoy good health and live in peace.

Bibliography

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