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**First Ladies: Rosalynn Carter**

**Lead: By the time they reached the White House in 1977, Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter were beyond close, they were a political and personal team that regarded each other as full and equal partners.**

**Intro.: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Eleanor Rosalynn Smith grew up just a few miles from her husband in the tiny west Georgia town of Plains. She was the oldest of four and very close to her father, a farmer and auto mechanic, and Rosalynn always worked hard to succeed and to**

**please her loving but strict parents. When Mr. Smith died of leukemia in the early 1940s, Rosalynn was forced to assume many responsibilities in the home, but she excelled academically and after high school studied at a nearby junior college. One of her best friends was Ruth Carter, whose brother Jimmy was three years older, a cadet at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. They had known each other all of their lives, but never were interested. That changed dramatically in 1945, and in a year they were married.**

**Despite the separations, Rosalynn Carter loved being a Navy wife. It represented escape from the social and intellectual confines of a small**

southern town and, in 1954 when Jimmy decided to resign his commission and return to run the family business, she resisted with all the resources at her disposal. She gradually re-integrated herself into her hometown life and joined in the running of the business. They soon recognized that their marriage, while rather conventional on the outside was, in fact, a fusion of two bright equals. This carried them through long campaigns, his terms as state senator Georgia's Governor and the White House, through triumph and bitter disappointment. She was in her words, "an ordinary woman...who did the very best she could, and took advantage of every opportunity that came her way."

# **In Richmond Virginia, this is Dan Roberts.**

## **Resources**

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**Glad, Betty. *Jimmy Carter: In Search of the Great White House*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1980.**

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**<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/rc39.html>**