



Barbara Bush, wife of presidential candidate George Bush, was a real trooper last week, ignoring weather and illness to appear before audiences in Bloomfield Hills and at Oakland University.

Candidate's wife stumps county for Bush

Story: JEANNE WHITTAKER

Photos: DICK KELLEY
Neither snow, sleet, nor apparently badly infected sinuses could keep Barbara Bush from making most of her appointed rounds last week.

Sniffing quickly whenever she found a semiprivate moment, the silver-haired wife of presidential contender George Bush traveled from the top to the bottom of the state, alternating handkerchiefs with handshakes.

"This annoys me," she said Friday during a five-hour visit to Oakland County. "I've been campaigning for over a year and this is the first time that I've been sick."

However, she appeared far from sick of "pressing the flesh" with fellow Republicans. Her first stop at a Republican Women's rally found several hundred women literally hanging from the rafters. Later, she met with students at Oakland University who presented her with a T-shirt decorated with a Republican United logo. She promptly accepted the blue shirt, saying "That's for my jogging."

Spotting an old friend at the Bernard Costello's Bloomfield Hills home, Mrs. Bush gently teased former first lady of Michigan Lenore Romney by recalling how Mrs. Romney once appeared on national television with the late Martha Mitchell. "That was the time that Martha dropped the bombshell that she thought Dick Nixon was very sexy," Mrs. Bush said with a chuckle.

"Oh, my," said an equally amused Mrs. Romney.

A LOQUACIOUS, personable woman, Mrs. Bush quickly impressed her audiences with her ability to mix with large groups of strangers, promote her husband's candidacy and express her own views about the role of presidential wives.

"Being married to George Bush has been a fantastic experience," she said. "He's a self-motivated person who graduated Phi Beta Kappa in economics from Yale. He's a builder. He built his own business. He rebuilt the CIA at one of its most difficult times. He built relations with China. And he built the Republican Party as its national committee chairman."

"And," she added with a grin, "he's a decent, honorable man to live with."

Still, she appeared uncomfortable when pressed about her husband's policies.

"I'm not an issue oriented wife," she told the university students. "But let me tell you what George thinks are the three most important areas. They are inflation, energy, strategic defense."

"Energy is his field and he has many proposals on it. I haven't put all the points to memory. I'm just terrible at energy. In fact, I don't like energy very much," she said with a smile.

Noting the number of young people

who are of draft age, she explained, "George would rather see a volunteer army, but he isn't opposed to military service. There's nothing wrong with giving something of yourself to your country."

IN HER OWN RIGHT, Barbara Bush appears to be thoroughly enjoying the fast-paced, crowded schedule that she kept her on the campaign trail for the past year. "Up until last week I would have said 'no' to anyone who asked if this was hard work," she said. "Last week was tough on me. We started in New York, moved on to Milwaukee and Wisconsin, then your upper peninsula and now Detroit. I was supposed to meet George in Chicago tonight, but I'm going home to go to bed to lick this thing. It would have been the first time in eight days that I had seen George."

The couple's 34 years of marriage, she said have been exciting ones. It all began, she confided, when she was 16, her husband 17. Spotting her at a dance near Greenwich, Conn. where she was raised, Bush asked a friend to cut in and introduce them. Five children and 28 homes later the excitement hasn't paled. "I look forward to getting up in the morning. There's so much to do, and so much has been done."

Their five children, she said, are all deeply involved in the campaign. Son Jeb and his Spanish-speaking wife were effective and popular while campaigning in Puerto Rico. Jeb was also with his father last week in Illinois. Other sons, George was instrumental in the New York State campaign, and Marvin was "Our man in Iowa."

The couple's daughter Dorothy worked with her father in Wisconsin and Washington State.

"We might have lost the New Hampshire primary," she said with another chuckle, "but we gained a daughter-in-law." In addition to the Republican Convention in July, the Bush family will attend third son Neil's wedding to a young Republican volunteer he met while heading his father's primary campaign in New Hampshire.

"Right now," their proud mother said, "I couldn't tell you where they all are. We keep in touch a lot by telephone."

NEIL IS ALSO partially responsible for the role that Barbara Bush sees for herself once her husband has settled in the Oval Office.

At the age of two, she explained, they discovered that he had dyslexia, a visual disorder that frequently leaves children unable to read. With determination, the boy spent years in special reading classes and now holds several graduate degrees.

"He's a fantastic person," the proud mother said. Watching him struggle, she said, opened her eyes to the national reading problem.

Informational meeting on Reye's syndrome set

The Farmington Hills Junior Woman's Club continue their work in alerting all area parents to the symptoms of Reye's syndrome by sponsoring an informational meeting on the disease at 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 2, in Farmington Hills Community Library on 12 Mile Road.

Speaker for the evening is Dana Allen, a West Bloomfield resident who lost a child to the disease and subsequently became president of the Michigan Region of National Reye's Syndrome Foundation.

Public information pamphlets on the disease were distributed in this area through the Farmington Public Schools by the Farmington Hills Junior Woman's Club.

New information from the Reye's syndrome foundation will be available at the meeting and Mrs. Allen will an-

swer questions from the audience after her talk.

There is no admission charge.

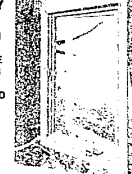


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