Interviewer:
George Terry

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Location:
Lace House, Columbia, S.C.

Topics:
Mrs. Iris Campbell, wife of former governor Carroll Campbell, and their son Mike, discuss life in the Mansion, 1987 to 1995.

Transcriber:
Dorothy Hazelrigg
[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]

**Terry:** Mrs. Campbell, First Lady, good to see you, and Mike Campbell. Thank you all for joining us today.

**Mike Campbell:** Thanks for having us.

**Terry:** Well, I think it's good to come home once in a while, and I also think that Thomas Wolfe is wrong. You can come back home once in a while. You all will always be part of the Governor's Mansion. We're in the Lace House now, but it's part of the complex. You grew up here, Mike. What was that like?

**Mike Campbell:** It was different, that's for sure.

**Terry:** How old were you when you moved in?

**Mike Campbell:** When we moved in, I guess I was eighteen years old, and moved out when I was twenty-six years old. I did do a lot of growing up here. Finished high school here, attended my college years here. I don't think that you can ever quite prepare yourself, even if you've been in a fishbowl-type life in front of the public eye, to the role that you play when you come in. But it is an experience that you just can't describe. You experience things that some people aren't fortunate enough to be able to experience their whole lives, and it becomes a way of just growing up. It was a lot of fun. A lot of fun.

**Terry:** What was the first day of your arrival here at the Governor's Mansion...

**Mrs. Campbell:** The first night, actually. The Rileys were here at that point. We came over for breakfast the day of the swearing-in, which takes place on the State House steps. We had a little coffee over there, and then we rode in, and, of course, you're still not real sure about the situation. "What just happened to us?" Of course, we loved it. We were sworn in, then we did the inaugural ball and stayed in a hotel that whole afternoon. We'd been there for about a
week. Of course, we had a wonderful time at the ball, and came home. Willie Brown, who has been here for many years, such a fine gentleman, I'm pretty sure he's taught most of the First Families how to deal with the situation. He was there to make us feel comfortable. Of course, we thought, "Well, we're here now, what do we do?" We came home, and it was kind of hard at first. I had the opportunity to be here with some of the former governors and first ladies, so I had a general idea of what was going on. But, just all of a sudden, you're in a strange bed and you're thinking, "Okay, now we're governor and first lady. Where do we go from here? How do we deal with this?" It's a little overwhelming at first. You're not real sure whether you want to do this lifestyle. You want to maybe take it back, forget the whole thing. [laughter] No, it was fun for us, and we loved being there. It was very trying at times. It could be a fun place or it could be a real tough place. Of course, Mike came in, and our oldest son, I don't think he lived there very long before he moved out into an apartment. Then he was engaged to be married right after that.

**Mike Campbell:** Actually, when we first moved in, he was still a student at Newberry College, and it was kind of a great experience for him, because at the time, he had been in college down here, and we were living in McLean, Virginia, because Dad had served eight years in Congress before becoming governor. So the family was split up. And he was kind of glad, it was kind of like reuniting the family. So he was excited about it, and he did briefly move in, but after having been out of the nest for a while, he wasn't ready to come back home to live with Mom and Dad too soon, so he said, "Living in the Mansion's great, but I'm going to go get my own apartment."

**Mrs. Campbell:** It's kind of like living in a museum. He said, "I love this," and I said, "Well, it is part of history, and you're part of the family, you should be able to get the benefits from being here." He said, "Well, you know, I can deal with that for just so long," and of course, you try to be really strict with your children, because this belongs to the state. It's not your really home. But you really have to give them some leeway. Our oldest son, at that time, was president of his KA chapter at Newberry, so he had to have some of his KA brothers come and visit, and that was a big deal for him to have some of his friends come over and visit the Mansion. But, I have to say, both the boys had an awful lot of respect, never really had any
wild parties.

**Mike Campbell:** Or at least that we didn't tell our parents about them.  *laughter* I'm just kidding!

**Mrs. Campbell:** I have to say, in defense of this guy, he was very serious about it, and if he would have a party, they had to leave their keys with the guard's gate and if they weren't able to go home, I mean, this is even after he was in college. He knew how to deal with that.

**Mike Campbell:** You have to be very aware of the role. You don't want to create the wrong perception of what's going on over here, but you still want to have as normal a life as possible, and have friends over, and do all that sort of thing. So we had a lot of fun times over here, but kept everything in check, that was for sure.

**Terry:** I think you already answered my next question. It was going to be, what were the downsides of living in the Mansion, and what were the upsides? Do you want to elaborate on that just a little bit?

**Mrs. Campbell:** Lack of privacy.

**Mike Campbell:** Yes, the lack of privacy. One thing comes to mind was shortly after we moved in, I remember I was upstairs, and I'd just gotten up. I kept hearing all these voices downstairs, and still not getting used to the situation I was in, I just kind of wandered to the top of the stairs in my boxer shorts to see what's going on. I look down and there's a tour of some people from a retirement home standing there looking back up at me. *laughter* I just, "Welcome to the Governor's Mansion," and said good morning to them, and turned around and went back to my bedroom. "So this is what it's going to be like." Probably the lack of privacy was probably the . . .

**Mrs. Campbell:** A down side.
Mike Campbell: . . . down side of it. The advantages, like I say, just the experiences that you got to enjoy. Not only that, but some of the people that you get to meet that work at the Mansion itself. We established some of the best relationships, not only with the staff that works there, but the security people . . .

Mrs. Campbell: It's like family after a while.

Mike Campbell: And I tell you, another big role that you have to get used to is having security around you all the time. Because when I first moved into the Mansion, I even had to have them drive me to school.

Mrs. Campbell: I put him in Heathwood. And, that was not a good thing to do, because they wanted him to be in public school. I said, "Carroll, I'm not willing to sacrifice his education right now. You got elected to make education better. When you do that, we'll put him in public school." I guess it was probably every other day you'd see a cartoon in the paper, this stretch limousine, which we never had a stretch limousine, carrying Mike to school, with security guards and that kind of thing. And of course, he didn't have them long, but it was just because the head of SLED at that time said, "People are watching this very closely. You never know when it will be a real threat, rather than just somebody just being mad about it," the fact that he went to private school.

Mike Campbell: You have to gain a rapport and a relationship with the security people that are around you, because they're going to be with you twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. So many people are not open to that. I hear so many times of people saying, "Oh, well, you don't have any privacy with them." I've heard of people in different public offices trying to slip off without their security detail and that sort of thing. But what I found, and I think this is true for the rest of the family, if you establish a relationship with them where they're more friends than people that are just walking around with things sticking out of their ears all the time, that it's not a chore to have them around.

Mrs. Campbell: I think it's true they were professional enough to know when to back off
and when they were working. We'd go out and hit golf balls in the front, and some of the security guys would come and do that. But when we were out in a public place, they knew that they had to work and do their part, and we let them do that.

I was over here at a Girl Scout program, making pictures with all these little Girl Scouts. I'll never forget this, just things that happen that you're just really not expecting. And one of the security guys and I walked across [the street]. The butler let us in the front door, and this big, black gentleman scared me, because this guy came out of my bedroom, [at the] top of the stairs. I looked over at John, the security guy, and I said, "John, who is this person up there? It's not somebody who works here. Who is he?" He said, "Mrs. Campbell, you walk straight to the back. I'll take care of this." The guy had walked through the gate somewhere and was in our bedroom. He said, "I want to see the governor. I'm demanding to see the governor." He [John] said, "Well, I don't think this is the way you're going to." [laughter] You don't just walk in off the street and expect to see the governor.

Mike Campbell: He was wanting to know where to get his driver's license renewed.

Mrs. Campbell: Is that what he said?

Mike Campbell: And he figured the governor could tell him how to do that.

Mrs. Campbell: I mean, it just shows you that you can do that, and . . .

Mike Campbell: No. You can't do that anymore. You could then. They've really improved the security measures that they have here.

Mrs. Campbell: We had a guy, head of our detail; he decided that he was going to prove why we needed better security at the Mansion. So, he goes over the fence in the middle of the night, goes on the front porch, lights a cigarette, standing on the porch at the Governor's Mansion. Now, this is [the] head of our detail. To prove his point that we needed more money to put on surveillance or cameras. Then he gets in the Mansion, walks through the Mansion, up the steps, right outside our bedroom at two o'clock in the morning. That was his proof. He was
on camera, people didn't see him.  He thought he was really going to make a point.  Of course, he made everybody mad.  He made his peers mad.  He made us mad.

Mike Campbell:  He's lucky he didn't get shot.  [laughter]

Mrs. Campbell:  But I guess he was trying to prove his point.  Because he wanted to tell whoever it was that was in charge of, I guess, the Budget and Control, to put more money in the security.

Terry:  Did they?

Mrs. Campbell:  We had never had a panic button in the governor's bedroom, or there's a little family room in the back.  A lot of times we had our dinners there if we weren't entertaining, upstairs.  There were no cameras on the steps or anything.  No panic buttons.  A lot of times I would be by myself, and of course, we had these inmates downstairs working, and so they would bring my dinner.  Sometimes Mike was there, sometimes he wasn't.  I felt uncomfortable with that situation, because the security, at that time, was in the back.  I mean, just a lot of scary things could happen.  Mike talked to, I guess it was head of our detail at that time, I don't know exactly who it was.

Mike Campbell:  Actually, I have to commend him for the job that he did, [it] was actually Boykin Rose.  He was the one that came in and really . . .

Mrs. Campbell:  But we were there six years before . . .

Mike Campbell:  It took six years to get new security measures in place.

Mrs. Campbell:  So we only had it the last couple of years.

Mike Campbell:  It took that long.  Basically, what they did is went and looked at what they have at the White House, and have basically implemented the same things that they have up
there.

**Mrs. Campbell:** But there were just things that could have happened, that didn't. We were thankful for that. We had some funny things happen too, when we were there, with some of the guys that worked downstairs. We had one guy in particular, the strange part was, he was not your typical guy that was in jail, he was this white guy that had all the privileges that anybody could possibly have, and he had wanted to cook lunch for the governor and first lady, and serve it to us, have the butler serve us out by the pool. He went up to our bedroom after the food went out, and he got an old fake Rolex watch. It came from Bangkok or somewhere. Tommy Hartnett had thought it was a joke to give the governor a fake Rolex. Anyway, [he took] that and got our car keys. In order to get out, you had to go through the front gate. You had to be on camera. Got our car keys. Our car [was] parked in the garage, stayed there forever. And this guy thought he was really slick. Well, he made a silly mistake, wasn't he making liquor or drinking or something?

**Mike Campbell:** Oh, yes. He was into all kinds of stuff.

**Mrs. Campbell:** He got in all kind of trouble. Well, that's when they found that this watch was gone, and he had the keys to our car. But things like that went on all the time.

**Mike Campbell:** They also found some of Mom's underwear in his locker . . .

**Mrs. Campbell:** Well, I wasn't going to tell that! [laughter] I wasn't going to tell that story! We had a lot of fun, but you had to kind of be on your toes. One of my pet peeves, I guess, was when we were having a function, and I would say, "Okay, we need to keep the glasses put up." I don't like stuff just sitting around. Well, we noticed this couple of guys really good at doing this. You put a drink down, a wine glass, it was gone. I thought, "You know, they're really pretty darn good. I'm really impressed." He was drunk out of his mind. [laughter] He was having the best time. He had gone in the pantry back there, and he was just throwing this stuff down [drinking the wine remaining in the glasses he had picked up]. We thought that he was just doing such a good job.
Mike Campbell: I remember one time the inmates had been having a party on the side themselves, while we were having a party, so they were rip-roaring. They caught wind that when they went back to the institution that night, they were going to be given breathalyzer tests. Somehow, one of them came up with the idea that vinegar cleansed your system, if you drank pure vinegar. Actually it makes it stand out more. They had just the worst looks on their faces. And, all of the security people knew what they were doing. They were just sitting back there just dying. They must have gone through a case of vinegar that they were just drinking pure. I think they all had stomachaches the next day. [laughter]  

Terry: Now, when I think of the governor's terms, I think of economic development. What role did the Mansion and the First Family play in that?  

Mrs. Campbell: I think that it was very important. For instance, with BMW, that was one of the biggest investments . . .  

Mike Campbell: It was the biggest investment in state history.  

Mrs. Campbell: We had been to Germany. Carroll had gone several times, and I'd been over there, and we'd invited them over. So we decided to have them come and stay at the Mansion. Just really wine and dine [them] and make them feel comfortable with us. Germans are very formal people. That's just their nature. I had been told this, that they're very formal and everything they do is formal, and they don't let their hair down. After[wards], we became pretty good friends with the president and the chairman and all the people at BMW that came over, and we grew very fond of them. They came over, and we decided, "Look." They were in the dining room in there, the little family dining room downstairs. They had been talking this thing over and over and over, and just on and on and on.  

Mike Campbell: There were a couple of issues that . . .  

Mrs. Campbell: They had to have special training. So, we had to set up courses at TEC,
and do all that for their people. Plus, they had to have a bigger runway at the airport. All this stuff had to go on. And of course, we were willing to try to help them out, to get this BMW [plant]. We had worked on that for several days, and finally I said, "Carroll, get them out of the house. Take them out by the pool. We'll put a little classical music on, we'll give them a nice lunch, they could smoke their cigars." They loved their cigars. I said, "We'll give them a nice little glass of wine." And they took out a cocktail napkin and they wrote the agreement on a cocktail napkin. And that's how they sealed the deal with BMW.

Mike Campbell: Nobody knows where the napkin is now. [laughter]

Mrs. Campbell: Somebody better have it!

Mike Campbell: It was funny, because there were a couple of issues that the intermediaries couldn't get past, that the lawyers were holding up, basically. You got the two decision makers, the governor and the chairman of the board of BMW, in a relaxed atmosphere, away from everybody else, and they got it done within just a few minutes. And they said, "Okay, what do you need? This is what we need. Let's do this," and they didn't have anything else to write on, so one of them has a pen, they pull it out, and they write it out on the back of a cocktail napkin.

Mrs. Campbell: On a cocktail napkin, and that was how they did it.

Mike Campbell: Both sign it and shake hands, and that's the way the biggest investment in the state history was done.

Terry: Mike, did you get to spend much time with your family while they were in the Mansion? I know how demanding the job must be.

Mike Campbell: I did. To be honest with you, we were actually spending more time with each other when he was in office as governor than we were previously, with [him] in Congress. We lived in McLean, Virginia, and we had a farm in a little town called Fountain Inn just outside of Greenville. He would have to fly back on the weekends to do his district work. So it was a
constant commute. We were able to have, as a family, more down time and dinner time and do stuff like that once we moved into the Mansion. But, I think that their travel obviously did increase a great deal, because just with the record investment that we were able to enjoy, that takes years of work. The BMW deal itself took five years.

**Mrs. Campbell:** Carroll even went out in the middle of . . . We were in our place up in the mountains, and he said, "I'm going to go to Germany." He took an all-night flight to do that. He said, "Because it's important that we get them now, while they're interested." But we traveled to places that a lot of other governors had never gone, to recruit industry for South Carolina. Carroll just had a way of dealing with people, and they respected him, because he was a businessman and he knew a lot about business. So I think that they understood how he worked.

**Mike Campbell:** And South Carolina really, up until that time, had not been on the international stage as far as the business community was . . . . Of course, nationally, we were known for all the things that we offered, but internationally, if we were to have remained competitive, that was something that we had to do, and that was go out and lay the foundation to get the development in here to create jobs for people.

**Mrs. Campbell:** That was his whole campaign, economic development. And that's how he spent most of his time. He absolutely loved it and it's amazing the respect over the years that he's gotten from the Japanese and Koreans, and people that really liked him and wanted to do business with him.

**Mike Campbell:** And not just in the levels of your international business. Also your heads of state in all these countries.

**Mrs. Campbell:** Oh, yes. Helmut Kohl; it wasn't unusual for us to go and visit with him when he was president. It was just a natural thing.

**Terry:** When people think of work, they think from eight to five.
Mike Campbell: Right.

Terry: But obviously, you all, and I include you into this, worked till probably ten at night.

Mike Campbell: Yes, and the role of the governor is not a nine-to-five job. You are the governor of the state no matter where you are, no matter what you're doing. So, at any given time, you could have had an emergency, the chief of SLED calling you up because there was a hostage situation at a prison institution, something along those lines. And, you had to be ready to deal with it. Dad used to travel with the state disaster plan with him, and had to keep it with him twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Terry: I'm glad you brought that up, Mike.

Mrs. Campbell: You're going to talk about Hugo.

Terry: Yes, tell me a little bit about that.

Mrs. Campbell: I think, of the eight years we were there, that was probably the most trying time for Carroll. Because in a situation like that, you're really helpless. You have to go with your first instinct, and "Let's save lives first," that's the most important thing, and do it, and make the decision. "So they'll get mad. They'll get over it if I save their lives." In time they'll say, "Okay, he did the right thing." That was like evacuating the islands. Hilton Head didn't have any problem [ultimately, but was evacuated due to the threat posed by the storm]. They were mad at him. But they got over it because they saw the devastation in Charleston and McClellanville and places like that. I think I've never seen Carroll so agonized. I mean, he didn't sleep for two days, and he felt so responsible.

Mike Campbell: He was actually up for seventy-two hours straight at the State House.
Mrs. Campbell: He didn't throw up, but he was really . . .

Mike Campbell: Mom and I were here at the Mansion when it hit, but he was up there in the situation room at the State House, overseeing everything. I remember one thing that occurred during that time, was there was a guy, I think with the Department of Natural Resources, he was a part of the police team that was up there working. They had a big radar set up tracking Hugo, and you could literally sit there [and] see it moving, getting closer and closer. This guy was in there, and he had his hands down at his face, just almost in tears, and I had just been kind of messing around up at the State House, because I wanted to see what was going on. He said, "The thing that bothers me the most about this," he said, "is I'm sitting here, and I'm watching this thing, and I know what it's going to do to this state. And there's nothing we can do about it." He said, "We can try to help people, we can get everybody out." To go back to something that Mom said, as far as the evacuation orders, Dad went against even some of his aides that were telling him, "Don't evacuate."

Mrs. Campbell: To wait, to wait.

Mike Campbell: They were telling him to wait. Kind of a side to that, he decided to shut down [Interstate] 26 and make all lanes outbound.

Mrs. Campbell: With the exception of emergencies.

Mike Campbell: Well, he decided he was going to call the fellow at the U.S. Department of Transportation, and he calls him up . . .

Mrs. Campbell: [He] said, "You can't do it."

Mike Campbell: . . . and they said, "Governor, you can't do that. You don't have the authority to do it." He said, "I've already done it. I'll talk to you after this is over with. Bye."

Mrs. Campbell: But, he also called the White House.
Mike Campbell: Then, he called George Bush and talked to the president and let him know what he'd done.

Mrs. Campbell: He said, "You've got to back me up on this."

Mike Campbell: He said, "You've got to back me up," right. So he [President Bush] called the Secretary of Transportation and said, "Let Carroll do whatever he needs to do in his state."

Terry: Yes, he should be congratulated for all that.

Mrs. Campbell: You know, his timing was right on that, but he agonized over it. He made a decision that had to be done. Like you said, he said, "I'm going to make people mad, but if I can save people's lives . . . ." Because you have to save people from their own stupidity sometimes. He had a legislator out surfing, and he said, "Arrest him. I don't care who he is." I mean, you can't do that when a storm is brewing like that. Because who's going to be responsible for their lives?

Mike Campbell: I'm not going to call him by his name, but we had one state senator, he lived in Charleston, who locked himself in his bedroom, sitting in a rubber life raft with a life vest on, writing in his diary while Hugo's hitting.

Mrs. Campbell: This house has been here . . .

Mike Campbell: "We from Charleston are a hardy bunch," and all this stuff, and I guess he painted himself as being a nut, because people said, "What's the matter with you?" [laughter] That didn't help the evacuation any, when you have people out there like that, that are supposed to be leaders, that should be, at a time like that, backing you up, and they're out there saying, "Oh, we don't need to do this. We've lived through it." Thank goodness people didn't take their cues from those people and they did what they were supposed to do, and so many lives were saved because of it.
Terry: I have a house at Cape Hatteras, and whenever there's a hurricane warning, I don't fool around.

Mike Campbell: Right.

Mrs. Campbell: We don't either. Our places at the beach, Carroll gets us out of there. I'm so tired of packing up our ----- and stuff.

Terry: Any evacuation signs that I see now, both in Virginia and North Carolina, I think of the governor, because he is responsible for those being all over the East Coast. They didn't have those signs before. But Governor Campbell was basically the person that started that. I'll never forget how devastating the storm was, but not just the houses and things like that, but the literature. Ted Rosengarten, who lives in McClellanville, has won three National Book Awards, and also Mickey Spillane . . .

Mrs. Campbell: We know Mickey.

Terry: . . . The mystery writer. Both of them came back to their houses after the storm, and their papers were literally in the water, gone for posterity. It was a terrible storm and I think Governor Campbell took a real leadership role in terms of making that work.

Mrs. Campbell: It was his to do. He had to do it. And, when Carroll makes up his mind to do something, you can't tell him no. If he thinks it's the right thing, he'll go with his first instinct to do that.

Terry: What was life like at the Mansion when this was going on?

Mike Campbell: I got in rather late that night.

Terry: The night of the storm?
Mike Campbell:  The night of the storm.

Mrs. Campbell:  Probably over at the State House, weren't you?

Mike Campbell:  No, I was working and not gotten off work until late.  But I got in, and was tired, and said, "Well, I'm just going to go to bed," because nobody really knew at that time that Columbia was going to get the blow that we got.

Mrs. Campbell:  Well, it was so bad.  Because the house was shaking, and it was just really scary.  I tried to go to bed, but of course, the noise was horrendous.  I went downstairs, and Mike was down there.  I said, "What do I do?  Do I go to bed?  What do I do?"  He said, "You just put on your warm-up [suit] and you get downstairs.  If we have to get in the bomb shelter or whatever, we'll do that."  It came inland so far.  I took Marilyn Quayle, I guess the next day.  Carroll was flying the low coast, and she was with FEMA at the time.  She and I went down.  I said, "Let's go down through the old Sumter Park and all through there."  The pine trees had snapped just like toothpicks.  She said, "I didn't know about this.  I thought all of it was on the coast."  I said, "See how far this came in?"  It went all the way to Charlotte, came through Columbia and all and went through Charlotte.  A lot of people in Washington didn't know that, but she and I went down and flew over it.  It was devastation.  Most people saw the pictures of the coast, and of course, we were lucky, we didn't lose any really major trees, but we did lose a lot of the limbs off these big trees.

Mike Campbell:  Actually, I was in bed, and that's what woke me up.  I'd fallen asleep, and I heard . . .  It just sounded like it was going to come through the roof.  I thought, "Maybe this isn't such a good idea, after all."  So I got dressed and went downstairs, and there is a bomb shelter here at the Mansion that was put in back during, I think it was either World War I [or] World War II.  They had prepared the bomb shelter as an evacuation point in times of a tornado warning or, obviously, with Hugo.  We went back and sat in the security room, and we lost power.  They have a backup generator, so we weren't without power, because you had to keep your communication base up.  So, we stayed back there, and it was a scary time, but we
obviously fared pretty well compared to some places. An interesting story is that the day after Hugo hit, Dad did his fly-around to assess the damage in a helicopter. Well, then he had them land . . .

**Mrs. Campbell:** Oh, this was funny, because his cousin [Governor Campbell’s cousin George McCall] was a pilot. He didn’t realize that George was going to be working that day. The National Guard had all been called in, so he was flying Carroll around. Carroll leaned over, not knowing that his cousin was flying the helicopter, and he said, "I want you to land right here in McClellanville." Because there were people on the roof of a school, and he still talks about it, and he gets teary-eyed every time he talks about it. These people were waving to him to help them. They had their children on their shoulders. They had gone to the auditorium in the school, and the water was so bad coming in there. He said, "We've got to help these people." The pilot looked around, he said, "Carroll, we can't land here. There's just no way. It's dangerous." He said, "George, land this plane. I'm your big cousin here." You know, he realized who it was, and so . . .

**Mike Campbell:** He said, "I'm not asking you. Land this."

**Mrs. Campbell:** It was George McCall, and so George landed the helicopter, but it was a National Guard helicopter.

**Mike Campbell:** And you had these people, they had gone to the shelter, where they were told, and you had elderly people who they had placed up on . . .

**Mrs. Campbell:** And children.

**Mike Campbell:** And children that they placed on desks and cafeteria chairs, and wheelchairs, up on these cafeteria tables, because the water had risen so high.

**Mrs. Campbell:** And they had some people up there had climbed up on the roof, and they were trying to get help. People were flying over, and they were waving. Carroll said really it
was a bad place to get down, he said, "but we really have to help these people." He went in and of course, they did help them, and that was good.

**Mike Campbell:** And those poor people down there.

**Mrs. Campbell:** You know, the thing is that the lives that were lost were lost after, because people would go into their homes and the electricity was still hot, or something was going on. They'd try to get the power back on. And not only that, I remember going in our beach house at that time, it was at Garden City, and the whole downstairs was devastated. There was like three feet of sand downstairs, and all the furniture was torn up and moved around. Halfway up the steps going upstairs, you could see a little sand on the steps. We went upstairs. A lamp hadn't moved. Everything was still standing. The security guy, I can't remember who it was, he said, "I don't think we need to be here. This house could collapse." That does happen.

**Terry:** You mentioned the casualties. When you take a look at what happened in Galveston in the early nineteen-hundreds, thousands of people died . . .

**Mrs. Campbell:** That's right.

**Terry:** . . . from a hurricane that probably was not as powerful as Hugo.

**Mrs. Campbell:** I know it. Carroll's family lost their house; I guess it was Hazel, at Folly [Beach]. They had a house down there. I think that he was very cautious about that, because as a child, he remembered how bad it was. But anyway, we were lucky. We thank God that everything worked out for us.

**Terry:** What is probably the happiest experience at the Mansion when you all were there?

**Mrs. Campbell:** Well, our oldest son got married. He didn't get married there, but we had the rehearsal dinner there, out on the patio. That was a happy time. We had a lot of wonderful
times. We had presidents and vice presidents stay there.

**Mike Campbell:** As a matter of fact, if I'm not mistaken...

**Mrs. Campbell:** I don't know. We don't know for sure.

**Mike Campbell:** Yes, y'all may know this better than I do, but I believe, because I never found any other record of it, because we checked, I looked after this, but I believe that during the years that we were there, we were the only ones to ever have a sitting president and a sitting vice president both come visit the Mansion while they were both in office.

**Terry:** Together?

**Mike Campbell:** No. On separate occasions. Bush and Quayle both, during their terms in office, came. But we had Dad's surprise fiftieth birthday party there.

**Mrs. Campbell:** That was probably the happiest.

**Mike Campbell:** He loved that.

**Mrs. Campbell:** That was the most fun he had, he said.

**Mike Campbell:** We had an old beach music band come in and play, and got a lot of his old friends from Greenville.

**Mrs. Campbell:** Well, they were all over, from Alabama, and somebody came from Texas, and just people . . .

**Mike Campbell:** He had no clue. He didn't have the slightest idea. He thought that he and Mom were going to have a nice quiet evening by the pool and have dinner. He was totally surprised, that's for sure.
Mrs. Campbell: That was one of the fun things, yes. We had a lot of good times.

Terry: Let me ask you this. What was it like the last day?

Mrs. Campbell: You know, I think I conditioned myself to leave. I was ready to go. Probably six [or] eight months before we left, I had most all my stuff packed. We had kept our house at Debordieu. I said, "You know, sometime I'm going to have to wean myself from these guys that take such good care of us," and start driving again, and go to the grocery store, doing all the things that I hadn't been doing. So I was ready. I was a little burned out with that. I was really looking forward to it. It was so sad to tell the people you'd been working with for so long goodbye. You feel like you're leaving your family. They all lined up, and, of course, Willie Brown is everybody's dear, dear friend, and he was ours.

I have to tell you a funny story about Willie Brown. Willie was always there for us, and of all the years that we were here, we had one outside event rained out. At that time, I actually wasn't hosting it. We were just sort of being there for the receiving line. We had to move it over here. It was a lot of people out there. But Willie has such a good sense of what's going on, and even our son's rehearsal dinner, it rained all day, really bad, and I said, "Willie, I'm going to call at about five o'clock," because they were calling for really bad weather, and he said, "Whatever you say, Mrs. Campbell." I said, "What do you think, Willie?" He said, "I think we can go with that. We'll do it." Because he never said no. If I said, "Let's try it," we'd do that. He always managed, and that night it turned out beautiful. It was a perfect evening.

But one of the funniest stories was when George Bush came. I told Carroll, "He's the president of the United States. Don't you think we ought to give him our bed?" Carroll said, "No, we won't give him our bed. We got beds downstairs." I said, "He's the president!" He said, "Well, he's still our friend. We've been knowing him a long time. He'll be fine. Just sit him anywhere. Put him anywhere." So I said, "No, we need to do this," and we were talking about it, and I was talking to the Mansion director, my secretary, and I said, "Get Willie Brown. Let's go back here and see about these beds," and of course, we had the two twin beds downstairs. Then we have this sort of half-whatever it is. It's a quarter bed, or whatever it is. I figured the only person that ever slept in it comfortably was John Tower, and he was not a very
big man in stature. So I said, "Willie, lie down on that bed." He looked at me. "Mrs. Campbell, are you serious?" Of course, we're all standing there, just watching to see what he'll do. I said, "We've got to see if the president will be comfortable. You're the only one tall enough to know. So lie down on the bed, Willie." I said, "Now, stretch out," and he was doing that.

Mike Campbell:  "Roll over a little bit."  [laughter]

Mrs. Campbell:  I thought, what a good fellow to do that. I said, "Now, do you think the president will be comfortable?" It tickled him that I cared enough I had him check it out for the president. He thought that was the funniest thing. Sure enough, he said, "It'll work," so that's where we put George Bush. And George Bush wrote a letter. Do we still have that? He always said I told the worst jokes, and every time I'd see him, he'd say, "Do you have new material for me?" I'd say, "No." I really don't tell jokes very well. I miss the punch line. He would start grading me. I do have one where he grades me. He said, "Willie Brown's service was a ten." Something else, the coffee was good, and the bed was comfortable, and then down about seven, Iris's jokes could use some improvement, or something. He was just always joking with me like that. He and Carroll went out to the university to run, and he had gotten back in the back, and for some reason, the Secret Service wouldn't let the maids go back and take some really nice towels to the president, because they just didn't want to take any chances, so they wouldn't let them do it. We had this tiny little fingertip pink towel, and he took it in the limo . . .

[Side 1 ends.  Side 2 begins]

Mrs. Campbell:  He left it in the seat of the car. They got on Air Force One, and he started back, he started to get on the plane, so he took the towel with him. He said, "I'm going to send this back to Iris." So he did, and I have a really neat note from him about how he told me he was not stealing this state towel.  [laughter] It was a little dainty pink towel, but it was kind of fun that he did that. So he sent that. But they were always writing notes. They're great note
writers, and George W. does the same thing. So we've got a lot of wonderful little letters and notes from them.

**Mike Campbell:** They're a great family. Really good folks.

**Terry:** I'm sure you all have many wonderful memories of the house and what it stood for and what it did. Are there any other memories you want to share with us now?

**Mrs. Campbell:** One thing I was really proud of was the hall of governors. That was one thing that I wanted done, and Mike and I had talked about it. We did it down the back there, and the schoolchildren, when the docents would bring them through, gave them a little history of what was going on. A couple of rugs and things that I had designed always had something to do with South Carolina. I don't know what they've done with those rugs now, they weren't real expensive, but it was a nice little thing to do. Like cotton, and magnolia, and all the stuff that grows in South Carolina. Rice has been done to death, but it was incorporated on the rugs, and that kind of stuff. But we did a lot of cosmetic kind of stuff, just because we wanted it to feel like a home and not a museum. I think people got that feeling. It was in bad shape. She was a sick sister for a long time. It's a wonder we didn't all burn up in that house, because we would just put a Band-Aid on major, major problems.

I was always a little disappointed that we didn't have ghosts. I know there are ghosts in this house [The Lace House, laughter] I’m sure of that. All the security people have told us there are ghosts here, but over there I never really had an encounter.

**Mike Campbell:** I stayed there all the time and never had anything odd happen, and I've talked to members of other past First Families and I haven't heard any stories. I'll tell you one thing we did have [that was] funny one time, we did have a possum get in the Mansion.

**Mrs. Campbell:** Oh, that's funny.

**Mike Campbell:** One of the butlers had been describing this big rat he'd been seeing. So one morning, one of the security guys had come in, and they were in the middle of their shift
change. One of the security offices is on the back side of the Mansion. He'd come in, and he was getting his coffee, and he looked around the corner up through the kitchen, and there in the middle of the floor was a big possum. So he starts running this possum all around the floor. He was like, "That possum's going to get upstairs with the governor and the first lady, so we've got to make sure it doesn't get up the back steps."

Mrs. Campbell: I would have been out the door.

Mike Campbell: Well, he chases it around back. The officer that was in the back sees this possum and jumps up on the thing, says, "I'm not going to get near that thing!" [laughter] So they're chasing, they finally get it out. Back in the dishwashing section, there was a big drainage hole back there, that they would scrape the plates off and rinse down. It didn't have a cover over it. So he was coming up through that drainage hole.

Mrs. Campbell: They'd take him forever, like twenty miles away, and he'd come back.

Mike Campbell: Yes, and it was so funny, because then all of a sudden, we just started seeing all these possums show up around the Mansion. I remember one night I probably saw ten running around the grounds. We used to have some rabbits that would come out every day, they would run up the sidewalk and run under the front gate and go and eat in the front yard, and then they'd go back down the sidewalk.

Mrs. Campbell: Oh, yes. That was fun.

Mike Campbell: We did that, and of course, this actually got in some of the national newspapers . . .

Mrs. Campbell: Our dog.

Mike Campbell: . . . and made it on Paul Harvey. We had an old Labrador retriever. We called him Burpy. The reason we called him Burpy was because he would eat . . .
Mrs. Campbell: Eat until he was stuffed.

Mike Campbell: . . . his food too fast and he would start burping.

Mrs. Campbell: His name was Prince. That was on his papers. He's buried out down at that tree, we had him cremated, because that was his tree, where he would sit and watch us . . . .

Mike Campbell: He was the sweetest old dog, and lived a long, long time, and he had real bad arthritis in his back legs, and we just kind of let him wander around the Mansion. When schoolchildren and that sort of thing would come in . . .

Mrs. Campbell: We'd put him in the back.

Mike Campbell: They'd pose for pictures with him and that sort of thing. He was just great with kids and that sort of thing. But one Memorial Day, Mom and Dad were here, and somehow Burpy had slipped out the back gate.

Mrs. Campbell: Well, they left it [open] to bring in some produce or something out the back door there. And, they weren't going to tell us that Burpy was missing, because they were scared that we would really get mad. So I guess it was about ten o'clock. We don't know how long he'd been gone. He'd been gone a long time. One of the guys said, "We hate to tell you this, Mrs. Campbell, but Burpy's not here." I said, "Where could he go? He's old, he can't see. He can hardly walk. What do you mean, he's not here?" They said, "Well, he just got out. We don't know where he is." So, Carroll jumps into the car, the Jeep that the kids had been driving. No gas. Just the two of us. Security up there said, "Governor, you just can't do that. Just wait. We'll call somebody to come get you."

Mike Campbell: "Wait for the agents to get here."

Mrs. Campbell: Carroll said, "No. My dog is out there somewhere, and he could be hit by
a car. He's old, he can't see, we've got to see." So we drove around on an empty-tank car. We went [by] all the office buildings, and it's a wonder somebody didn't shoot us. We were everywhere. The police officers were calling all our security. "The governor and first lady are gone, they're looking for a dog, and they're by themselves, and he's driving."

**Mike Campbell:** Before it was all over with, half of SLED was out looking for our Lab. [*laughter*]

**Mrs. Campbell:** Anyway, so we came home about two o'clock in the morning. Still no dog. Carroll said, "I have a busy day tomorrow. The Budget and Control's going to be there, and we're working on the budget and all the stuff." He said, "But I want my dog found. Y'all do whatever it takes. Get my dog home. I just have to know where he is." So he went to Budget and Control, and everybody just looking for the dog. They found him; he was down at the Cadillac dealer down here.

**Mike Campbell:** Cadillac dealership down the street! [*laughter*]

**Mrs. Campbell:** He had gone across, I guess it's Elm [Street], and he was sitting in the window down there. The lady called and said, "We found your dog. The dog's down here." So we sent somebody after him. They told Carroll that his dog was home; somebody on his staff came in and whispered to him. All the press was sitting out there, and he just grinned. They said, "Governor, did we find a lot of money for the state? You're really happy now. What happened here?" He said, "No, my old dog's home. I was worried about him. He wandered off," and so and so and so. Well, it went out. It was in USA Today that Burpy was home. Paul Harvey did a commentary on Burpy, that we were out looking for him in the middle of the night. [*laughter*] It just went out on UP and it was everywhere.

**Mike Campbell:** When he passed away, somehow the press had caught wind of it, and they even wrote articles about Burpy the famous traveling dog, [*laughter*] how he passed away, and how he was buried.
Mrs. Campbell: Then we had to have a Boykin spaniel, because they're raised in South Carolina. We loved that Boykin. He was a nice dog, but when we left to go leave the Mansion and take him, just the two of us, to Washington, to live in a townhouse, he wanted his butler. He was not happy with us. [laughter]

Mike Campbell: He couldn't adjust without having a butler wait on him.

Mrs. Campbell: He had to make a big adjustment.

Terry: Probably more so than you.

Mike Campbell: Yes.

Mrs. Campbell: We named him Sandlapper. He was a good dog, but I sent him to a head shrink, a dog shrink, and he went to obedience school, he did all this stuff. We tried to help him out a little bit. So we gave him to some friends that have a plantation. I said, "Gosh, they're probably not our friends anymore." [laughter] But he's happy now. We do have a little Brittany now.

Terry: I want to thank you all for giving your time.

Mrs. Campbell: Thank you. We had a great time. I'm sorry Carroll couldn't be here.

[End of interview]