

*GOVERNOR'S MANSION
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT*

Interview

with

Governor James B. Edwards,
Mrs. Ann Edwards, James B. Edwards, Jr.,
and Katherine Edwards Wingate

Interviewer:

George Terry

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Lace House, Columbia, SC

Topics:

The Edwards family reflects on their years in the Governor's Mansion, 1975 to 1979.

Transcriber:

Dorothy Hazelrigg

[Interview Begins]

Terry: We're here today at the Lace House, part of the Governor's Mansion complex, and we're very pleased to have Mrs. Anne Edwards who, really, was probably the architect in developing the Governor's Mansion complex. Governor James Edwards, Secretary of Energy in the Reagan Administration and now president of the Medical University of South Carolina. And we're very pleased to have their daughter Kathy, and son Jim, here with us as well.

I want to ask you all about the house [Governor's Mansion] when you lived there. What was life like? What are some of your fondest memories?

Gov. Edwards: George, all of our memories were good during those four years. We had a wonderful time during those days. I'll let Anne tell you about the Mansion because she was the one in charge of things at the Mansion. I was busy enough down at the office, trying to run the other affairs of state.

Mrs. Edwards: George, I have found since talking with Mrs. [Rachel] Hodges, the present First Lady, that all of us had a sense of not being prepared to come in as First Lady. I'd been in one time before, and I was very concerned when I learned that when Lois West left, that her staff were actually her friends, so they left and left me with a highway patrolman and inmates [prison trustees provide much of the manpower to operate the Mansion]. And, not knowing what was expected of you, I was a little overwhelmed at this first entry into the Mansion. After getting in, I realized that, true to South Carolina, I never asked anyone for help that they weren't delighted to help. The feeling of being out on a limb, so to speak, evaporated very quickly because I would just ask, "Would you help me with this?" As you know, when we were getting together the idea of the history of the Governor's Mansion, everybody responded and everybody came forward and helped in every way possible.

It was unusual, all of a sudden, to have a staff. I had never had a staff before. And, almost immediately, we were involved in lots of entertaining. The Governor's Mansion belongs to the people of South Carolina, but we were having dinners and lunches and receptions and coffees and teas and hit the deck running, so to speak.

I asked the Mansion Commission Chairman to come to orient me. Jack Scoville was my

chairman at that time and he was friendly and welcoming and cooperative and oriented me on what was going on in the Mansion. One of the very active important people in the Commission--all of them worked hard--but Gus Graydon was absolutely incredible. He comes from a family that's lived here in Columbia, he's known all the movers and shakers for years, and as soon as he got over the fact that I was a Republican and he was a Democrat.... [laughter] It was so funny; I have to add this story. When he walked in, he said, "Mrs. Edwards, I want you to know that I've been a Democrat all my life, and my family before me." And, I said, "Well, Mr. Graydon, that's fine, and I'm looking forward to meeting you and working with you." He said, "Now, where are you from?" I said, "I was born in Edgefield." And, he said, "Edgefield? I didn't know that. My family's from Edgefield." And we began to talk, and exchange stories, and the next thing I knew, Gus just led me along and was just the most marvelous, wonderful friend that I could ever ask for. And he opened so many doors, and the continuity of the Governor's Mansion Commission was such that he realized what needed to be done, you know. He walked me around, and there were properties here on the other end of this block that we didn't own, that we needed to acquire. There was no money. How short were we when we walked down the street?

Gov. Edwards: We won't go into that. [laughter] Sixty-nine million.

Mrs. Edwards: I thought the state would take care of everything, you know. This was daunting to do this. But I realized that we needed a complex here. And, what we needed to do perhaps, to go before the Mayor and the City Council to see about closing the street here, to acquire this property. Then we began to look at the Mansion itself. Jim and I were invited to Valley Forge to honor Congressional Medal of Honor [recipients] from South Carolina. It was bitterly cold, and we went in a room and I said, "What a lovely table this is," and this lady says, "That's John C. Calhoun's table." And I almost said, "Can I take it home?"

Gov. Edwards: That was in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. They had John C. Calhoun's table there.

Mrs. Edwards: I realized South Carolina was losing not only fine antiques, but antiques

with historical significance. This gave us thought, the Mansion Commission, and myself, and [we] thought that we needed to do something to get some sort of money. There were no monies available for acquiring objects of art and furniture, so then I thought I ought to go talk to people like Clem Conger at the White House, Israel ----- of New York, people in the antique world that knew antiques. I had never been in an instance where you were trying to do museum collection. So here again, I thought of people that would help us, and they all responded.

Terry: You know, I think one of the things that bound you and Gus together was the fact that Gus had a great appreciation for our state's history, too. And, you all had basically a mission to preserve our state's history and our Governor's Mansion, and I think that that's to be commended.

Mrs. Edwards: When you run for office, you run as a partisan candidate. But, when you win, you belong to the state of South Carolina. After all, this Mansion belongs to the state of South Carolina. Gus just not only put his energy and his time and his knowledge [into the Mansion] but his things as well--books and manuscripts. And, if we didn't have it, he knew who had it and he knew how to get it. *[laughter]* Just wonderful.

Terry: What are your fondest memories of the house?

Mrs. Edwards: It's awfully hard to say the fondest memories. I enjoyed so the opportunity to work with you and [U.S.C. historians] Walter Edgar and George Rogers. As I walk through the Mansion, I realized the sense of the people that had been before me and particularly during those [earlier oral history] interviews, that it was a privilege to be there, and to realize that others had gone through the same thing that we were going through. Some of the fondest memories - - we had a senior citizen day and it poured rain and Jim had invited the senior citizens . . .

Gov. Edwards: All the senior citizens from around the state to come and visit the Governor's Mansion. I thought there would be three or four or five hundred, and there were six thousand that came.

Mrs. Edwards: Six thousand people! And they came, and it poured rain, and thundered and lightning, and I looked at Jim, and he said, "The only thing we can do . . ." We opened the Mansion, and they were coming through the Mansion. He said, "The only thing we can do is walk out there with them." And not a soul out there said, "This is a terrible rain," or "This is awful." They said, "We've never been to the Mansion before, we're thrilled to death, isn't this a marvelous day?"

Gov. Edwards: And the rain poured down on them. We finally walked out, left the Mansion porch where we were receiving this long line. I said, "Anne, let's walk out," and we walked out amongst them and started going down the receiving line, and they just were wonderful. Nobody wanted to get in out of the rain. Nobody went back to the buses. They all stayed right there because they wanted to see the Governor's Mansion. It was a wonderful thing. It was an inspiration to see those older people out there wanting to do this. Anne and I had a wonderful day. We met so many wonderful, great people.

Terry: Would you say that is probably your fondest memory of the Mansion?

Gov. Edwards: It's hard to say what our fondest memory is. For me, anyway. Some of my fondest memories were using the Mansion for industrial development, to bring industry to South Carolina, create more jobs for people. Our second year there, we had a banner year. But, you know, the Mansion is not just a place where the First Family lives--it's a home for the First Family, no question about that, and a wonderful place--but it's also a museum. Particularly since the Foundation has acquired so many wonderful pieces of art and furniture. So, it's a museum.

It's also a five-star restaurant, because when you bring people into the Mansion, you can't feed them peanut butter and jelly. And, it's a motel where people come and stay, and you want them to be comfortable. So, the Mansion is a lot of things to different people, but to me it's a multitude of things that you use for the betterment of South Carolina, and we used it very well and, I think, all families in recent years have. Most people in the big states up North, they never see a governor. Never meet a governor. You know, the governor's somebody that's in the

capitol and [you] read about them in the newspaper. But, if you can bring a corporate CEO or president of a corporation that you're trying to woo and recruit to South Carolina, if you bring them here, put them up in the Mansion, feed them, have a little dinner in their honor, and then go out and have the Industrial Development Board, they call it something else now, to take them out and show them the industrial sites, maybe the wives would come with them and they could stay around the Mansion or they could go antiquing or shopping somewhere in town, it's all part of the system that made it so successful for us.

The second year I was in office, we had the best development year we'd ever had. I think we brought in a billion, one hundred and thirty-five million dollars' worth of new investment in one year. Now, that sounds like a small amount, but that was twenty-something years ago. Just the other day, Governor Hodges in one day brought in almost a billion dollars' worth of industry. But, things have changed since then. It's hard to get industry to move to South Carolina. So, the Mansion is an instrument for progress, and so I look at it as that.

Of course, we had a nice family life there. We reserved our weekends, or at least our Sundays, for the family, and I remember the pleasant times there. In the summertime, we'd swim in the pool. Other times of year, we'd just linger around the Mansion. It was secure and quiet and we enjoyed the Mansion as a place to retreat and get away from it all on those Sundays, particularly. So, the Sundays in the Mansion I remember very fondly.

Mrs. Edwards: Kathy made her debut when we were here and I have a picture of Kathy coming down the stairs. Kathy will have to describe this. She didn't want it real formal.

Kathy Wingate: That was an exciting time. A special occasion, pictures, friends, the party out by the pool was a lovely thing. I think my memories of the Mansion revolve more around a youthful observation without the heaviness of being the one responsible. I can remember standing at the top of the stairs when they were entertaining the Senate or the judges, and just the smell, the wonderful smell of the perfume and the cologne and the wine, whatever, it was just wonderful. The other great memory that I had was the wonderful people that we had the opportunity to meet. Senator Boren [U.S. Senator David Boren of Oklahoma]. Remember that night down in the library? Just the family and Senator Boren, just had a wonderful conversation, and Gerald Ford . . .

Mrs. Edwards: Lowell Thomas.

Kathy Wingate: Lowell Thomas, we had Umberto Antonello, from Florence, Italy . . .

Mrs. Edwards: Helen Hayes.

Kathy Wingate: It was just a world-opening experience. Just to be at the age that I was, without the responsibility, just to take it all in It was just a constant flow of people. And, of course, there were the little anecdotes along the way. We had pets in the Mansion. We had a golden retriever and we had a cat or two. Victoria, the black cat, would always walk across the street to the Arts Commission that was then housed in the ----- Gardens and stay on their desk for the day, and then she'd come home in the afternoon.

Gov. Edwards: After work.

Mrs. Edwards: She was pretty artsy. Jim established the Business Roundtable, really.

Gov. Edwards: I'd forgotten about that. Palmetto Visitors Forum is the official name of it, and . . .

Mrs. Edwards: And the first thing he did was have a state dinner for them. There was a man that worked at the Mansion at that time named Hennigan. He came running upstairs and he said, "We're in terrible trouble downstairs, Mrs. Edwards. Terrible trouble." And I said, "Hennigan, what is the matter?" Because, Jim wanted everything to go just perfectly. He said, "Well, you see, the trouble is this. We're getting ready to serve the fish course, and Victoria is underneath the table."

Gov. Edwards: Victoria was the cat.

Mrs. Edwards: Victoria was a black cat. Now he said, "You know, she has put her paw

up on the table. I go down to one end, thinking I can grab her, then she'd go down the middle of the table, down to the other end."

Gov. Edwards: Under the table.

Mrs. Edwards: Under the table. And [he] said, "I've got a butler down on this end and a butler down on that end. We just going just like this. [laughter] We can't get that cat out from under the table, and the Governor wants to know why we don't serve." [laughter]

Terry: You know, I'll never forget one time you called me and wanted me to come over there in the evening. It was for something in terms of the first book on the Governor's Mansion, and I was told that you all were up on the second floor, in the private dining room. And I went up there and it was just like home. I mean, you all were just at home. I think it had something to do with the financing of the book, or something along those lines. [laughter] It was an enjoyable evening, to see the Governor's Mansion as a home, as opposed to just an official residence, because I don't think you ever treated it that way. What are some of your favorite memories, Jim?

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: Oh, gosh. Do we have another week? [laughter] I don't want to be Governor of South Carolina, but being Governor's son, when you're twenty years old and at Carolina [The University of South Carolina]. . . . I could run for that office again. [laughter] It was marvelous.

Mrs. Edwards: It's hard to say what is the fondest [memory]. I wanted to ask Willis Cantey, who was [with] C & S Bank, if he would help me and be the chairman to form the Governor's Mansion Foundation to raise funds for the Mansion. Jim said, "No need to ask him. I've asked him and asked him to help me with various things. He doesn't want to fool with that." So, I called him up and asked him to come have lunch with some of the Commission. And, we just fed him, and took care of him, and then I asked him if he would do this. He was wonderful. And he knew all the people throughout the entire state of South Carolina to have on our foundation that would make this a success. And I don't think Willis called a single soul that

didn't respond. And right away, he started raising funds, and this made it possible for us to acquire so many articles for the Governor's Mansion. People were so generous. Betsy McKay was in charge of our Fine Arts Commission, and she had a representative in each of the Congressional districts. The excitement was that things were happening all the time. You were moving forward. The Mansion Commission just worked their hearts out. Gus was on it, and . . .

Kathy Wingate: Do you remember how Gus used to come to the Mansion? Do you remember what he carried?

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: His peach basket.

Kathy Wingate: He didn't carry a briefcase, he carried his notes in a peach basket. So he'd always come to the Mansion . . .

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: In true Edgefield style.

Kathy Wingate: . . . with a peach basket in hand and his notes in there. It was great.

Gov. Edwards: That was his briefcase. [*laughter*] A peach basket.

Mrs. Edwards: And he'd come in the front door and say, "Anne! I'm here! I've got something. I've found something. Come quickly."

Terry: What do you think were some of the greatest acquisitions at the Mansion while you were there?

Mrs. Edwards: [Mrs. Roger] Milliken gave a magnificent sideboard to the Mansion that really was museum quality. ----- Mills sideboard. Governor McNair was on the board of Southern Railroad and we acquired a Samuel F. B. Morse [portrait] of Robert Y. Hayne, the former Governor. That, of course, had national notoriety with the Hayne-Webster debates. We

acquired two fine Empire tables that were on either side of the mantelpiece in the large drawing room. Southern Bank and Trust gave a beautiful Oriental rug.

Kathy Wingate: Wasn't there a piece that you found that used to be a chicken . . .

Mrs. Edwards: Later on, Tunky [Riley] acquired it. But, when I was learning, I went to [visit] the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Art in Winston-Salem. They had so many South Carolina pieces. We were looking around, and he said, "Well, I want to show you our workshop." We went downstairs, and I looked at this thing, and I kept looking at it, and I said, "You know, that looks like the breakfront in the Heywood Washington house, at Thomas . . ." What's the cabinet maker's [name], Elfe?

Gov. Edwards: Thomas Elfe.

Mrs. Edwards: I said, "It looks just like it." Now the bottom was all out, because they'd used it as a chicken coop. And, I said, "What are you going to do with this?" And they said, "Well, we haven't decided, because if we have to add so much back, our museum doesn't necessarily always keep the piece." And I said, "Would you give us first refusal if you ever decide to deaccession it?" And during the Rileys' tenure, they did deaccession it, and it's here.

Gov. Edwards: It's a beautiful piece, too. Gorgeous piece.

Mrs. Edwards: And then we got a Charleston linen press, and I'm trying to think, how many wonderful pieces that we did get.

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: The portrait of Calhoun.

Mrs. Edwards: Yes. John C. Calhoun.

Terry: That whole area down from the dining room, you redid that entire . . .

Mrs. Edwards: We've got an early grandfather's clock. I'm trying to walk myself through the Mansion. We had the Middleton bed that Josephine McNair had acquired, so the other room desperately needed more than just a double bed. I asked Boyd Smith of Charleston if he would carve twin rice beds to go in that room. We would feature the signers of the Declaration of Independence. And he said that he would. The beds cost us \$5,000. Can you imagine? For two beds. And so we went down to see him and Gus said he could get the money for the beds, and then we asked the Millwood Needlework Guild if they would do the hangings of cotton and rice and indigo that made us wealthy during the Colonial period. And Patty Whitelaw from Charleston was our consultant with the fabric, and later became a member of the Mansion Commission. We had those beds carved and the whole suite done to honor our people from South Carolina that signed the Declaration of Independence. Truly, the hangings absolutely I don't think you could find anything finer in the Smithsonian. And an interesting by-the-way about these beds, at that time Wendell Garrett had visited us here, the editor of Antiques magazine. I said, "I want to take you to Charleston to look at some beds that I'm having carved." He said, "I don't like craft." And I said, "Well, would you mind going with me?" He said, "Mrs. Edwards, there are a lot of antiques that you could get, you don't need those. Anne, I don't like crafts." And I said, "All right." We took him to Charleston and went to see Boyd Smith. I was so delighted to have this editor of the Antiques magazine, and I said, "Boyd, this is Mr. Wendell Garrett, who is the editor of Antiques magazine." There were Antiques magazines all over, covered with sawdust. He said, "Hello." And I said, "This is Boyd Smith." And he went right on carving. And finally, Wendell looked at it, and he said, "I am really impressed. Mr. Smith, would you like to take an ad out in our magazine?" He said, "Nope, got more work than I'll ever need. I don't need to take out an ad." [laughter]

Terry: When was the last time you were at the Governor's Mansion? Was it the day you left office, Governor, or . . . ?

Gov. Edwards: I've been back several times since then. We were there when the Rileys were there. We were there, I guess, when the Campbells were there. We were there a number of times. And, we were there a couple of times when the Beasleys were there.

Terry: Did it seem like the same house?

Gov. Edwards: Yes, it still had that warmth that it had.

Terry: Especially over in the library, I remember the library.

Gov. Edwards: I loved the library. We got Osceola's picture, wasn't it, that we hung in the library; and I loved that painting.

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: Did we have the moon rock in our administration?

Gov. Edwards: Yes, the moon rock came while we were there. It was hanging in the hallway. The library was really my favorite place, and you had a chair made, too, by . . .

Mrs. Edwards: Two chairs, made by Boyd Smith.

Gov. Edwards: Two beautiful chairs made by Boyd Smith, the same cabinetmaker that made the two rice beds.

Mrs. Edwards: I go back for the Mother of the Year [ceremony]. But, it's a funny thing, you know. You give it your life, and I couldn't really tell you the fondest memory I had. I had an exciting, extraordinary opportunity. We really accomplished a lot, and I say "we," meaning you, and Walter Edgar, and George Rogers, my Mansion Commission, [and] Willis Cantey. So many things happened, you understand?

Terry: Tell me a little bit about the formation of the Foundation, and how that came about?

Gov. Edwards: Necessity's the mother of invention, and she didn't have any money to spend on articles that she wanted to put in the Mansion. That's the basis. *[laughter]*

Mrs. Edwards: I would tease about genteel poverty; we'd go into the small drawing room .

..

Kathy Wingate: The small dining room.

Mrs. Edwards: The small dining room. Kathy, you're right. And, the curtains were just hanging in shreds. It just was unbelievable. I knew that we didn't have any money. Walt Pettiss made that very This is changing the subject, but when I asked Jim for the funds for the book, Walt Pettiss said I couldn't have it. Walt was his administrative assistant.

Gov. Edwards: Walt told me, "Now, Governor, this is going to hurt your reputation. You know, you're a conservative, and you spend \$10,000 on this silly book. If you spend that \$10,000, nobody's going to buy that book except your relatives and close friends."

Terry: It's now a rare book.

Gov. Edwards: It is a rare book.

Terry: It's very expensive. [*laughter*]

Gov. Edwards: But, you know, it was starting off to be a \$10,000 project. I told Walt, "I don't care. You advance the money for them." And my wife said, "We're going to pay it all back when the sales of the book. . . ."

Mrs. Edwards: And we were shouting, of course, at each other.

Gov. Edwards: Walt was trying to protect me, he said, from the criticism we'd get. When you were having champagne, celebrating the publication of the book, the bill came. Instead of \$10,000, it was \$35,000, as I recall. Anne said, "I'll get it back to him. I'm going to pay Mr. Pettiss back for that book." And so, as you know, she got all the books and you were a very major part of it, you and Walter Edgar and . . .

Terry: I don't know how many hours we signed books, but it took two days I can remember, one at the pool parlor, and one outside, with the people coming through, and . . .

Mrs. Edwards: And then on through South Carolina.

Gov. Edwards: . . . made the tour. She got the money back, as you know, from the sale of the books. And, she also gave a copy of each one of these books to each library around the state and all the schools around the state. She got all the money, and she was counting it out. I never will forget. She said, "Mr. Pettiss, here is your money," and she put "\$35,998, \$35,999, \$36,000, and there it is, damn it." [*laughter*]

Terry: I didn't realize that. I knew he had a big problem with . . .

Mrs. Edwards: It'd gone to the printers and everything was going fine. We were drinking champagne and I looked out, there in the hall was this man standing right there. [*laughter*] And I thought, oh, my goodness. He said, "Here you are having this party, this book cost this, and he's [Gov. Edwards] in China." I said, "You ought to be in China, too." [*laughter*]

Terry: We did all these interviews with people about their life at the Mansion. What was your most memorable . . . ?

Mrs. Edwards: Two stand out. I loved the Richards' daughters [Gov. John G. Richards (1927-1933) had nine daughters] and how they were talking about the wedding and the christening and how things were, and somebody was out in Papa's yard drinking and how could he drink in Papa's yard, and this kind of thing. I remember that. That was really funny. And then I remember talking to Governor Was it Harley that died so shortly [after taking office]? [Lt. Gov. Joseph Emile Harley ascended to the office of Governor on the resignation of Burnet Maybank on 4 Nov. 1941. Ill and confined to the Mansion during his short term of office, Harley died on 27 February 1942.] His daughter said that he had cancer of the larynx, and that he was sworn into office and could not give his inaugural address because he couldn't speak. And that he lived down in the Barnwell area, and that he was so ill that they set up a bed

down in the small drawing room. I think he lasted only several months, if I remember correctly. They called for his sons to come and they came as fast as they could. . .

Terry: I remember that interview very well.

Mrs. Edwards: . . . As the boys came across the bridge into Columbia, they looked at the State Capitol, and the flag was lowered to half-mast.

Terry: I remember that. Governor, are there any things you would like to forget about the house?

Gov. Edwards: Not really. All my memories are good and wonderful, happy memories. Fortunately, my life has been a happy life all the way through. I don't have too many regrets or anything I'd like to redo.

Terry: Do you still consider that part of your home?

Gov. Edwards: Yes, that will always be part of our home. As a family, I think they'll always feel that way about it. I hope they will, because they were happy days there. And my daughter met her husband there, Ken Kathy Wingate: , whom she later married, and so that was a happy occasion too.

Terry: When was the last time you were in the Mansion?

Kathy Wingate: I think I have not been to the Mansion in maybe eleven years.

Mrs. Edwards: Mrs. Riley invited all the families that had lived there, and it was a most gracious thing. She had said, "Go upstairs and all around, and go in your own room," and we were so excited to have that opportunity.

Kathy Wingate: It's like any other home that you had sold to another family. You can't

pass it without a bittersweetness because you love it, you always will love it, it was your memories, your time

Terry: People can't deal with excitement for four years running. Was it difficult sometimes to cope with all the visitors and all the guests and . . . ?

Kathy Wingate: For our family, that was not a lot different from our life prior to moving to the Mansion. [*laughter*] For generations, I know that Dad's family had people coming and going, living with them at times, and it seems like that goes on in our own family. We had, on several occasions, cousins spend a summer with me where they were going to school in Columbia.

Terry: Your dad and mother never knew they'd be Governor and First Lady of this state. I've been told that a number of times.

Kathy Wingate: That's absolutely true. It sort of caught us all off guard. But I think it does with most families. I would imagine that it's always a real great surprise, but . . . Great memories.

Terry: Jim, when was the last time you were back?

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: I think it was when the Rileys had us over eleven years ago.

Terry: Did it seem like the same place?

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: Yes, it did, and it's such a vibrant home, and yet a factory where history is in the making. It is the happening spot where inventors, royalty, people who are doing things, are showing up, and you just never knew who was coming in for dinner. And it was a blast. I remember my old buddy Steve Crawford. I had him up for the weekend while I was in college, and King Hussein was in town. We were coming down the stairs and we heard that King Hussein was coming. We had all the protocol, and Steve just goes, "Hi, King." [*laughter*] And

so, it was so much fun.

Kathy Wingate: I remember the first time I saw the mansion. The Wests had invited us up.

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: Oh, yes.

Kathy Wingate: Remember? We got to tour. I remember it was Christmas time, because the inauguration was about to take place. And they had decorated the Mansion, do you remember this, with fruit? They had fruit leaves and fruit on the mantel and every once in a while I'd see a big hunk taken out of an apple where someone had just bitten into it. Do you remember that? *[laughter]* Governor West would just routinely go have a bite, and the whole guild, whoever, would go out and freshen it up. But, we happened to come the day before they had freshened it up. Do you remember the bite on the apple right when you came to the front door?

Mrs. Edwards: One of the highlights was. . . . [Nelson] Rockefeller came when he was Vice President. So did Ford, when he was President. But when Rockefeller came, Jim invited the legislature to come.

Gov. Edwards: It was a luncheon.

Mrs. Edwards: It was a luncheon. And there wasn't any place to entertain. So, Lovick Thomas, who was the . . .

Gov. Edwards: Clerk of the Senate. A wonderful person. You probably remember Lovick, big wonderful man, who had a heart as big as he was.

Mrs. Edwards: And here we were spread all over the downstairs of the Mansion, and he took the knocker and knocked two or three times, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice President of the United States." Everybody stopped all this talking, and he spoke to everybody.

Gov. Edwards: Rockefeller was down here campaigning for the presidency. He was Vice President at the time.

Mrs. Edwards: And we came across here to have lunch downstairs. Well, the Secret Service had been in every single corner of the complex. And, in the midst of it, these two ladies came through. I said, "I don't know who they are. They aren't on the guest list." I couldn't find anybody. I turned to the Secret Service and I said, "They aren't on the guest list." They wouldn't pay any attention to me. They were standing right there. These ladies came in, went downstairs, ate lunch, had walked out and somebody outside said, "You're part of the party?" and they said, "No, we saw all these people here and they're having lunch." [*laughter*]

Terry: That's a great story.

Gov. Edwards: They had come in, had lunch and gone, and listened to the speaker and the whole works.

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: That was kind of humorous to see these guys with sunglasses in the coats and ties in azalea bushes, talking into their sleeve. It was a trip.

Mrs. Edwards: Then, the school children were wonderful.

Kathy Wingate: You remember Boys' State, all the boys and girls . . . ?

Gov. Edwards: Yes, Boys' State. That was a highlight. I'm glad you remembered that. That was a highlight for us.

Kathy Wingate: Of course, being sixteen at the time, that was a highlight, wasn't it?

Gov. Edwards: Yes, for you. [*laughter*]

Mrs. Edwards: We were having the children come through for tours and I would come down and speak. Some of the docents were personal friends and [one day,] after this girl had just introduced me, she walked over to me and she smiled and said, "There's a bat on the curtains." In the dining room. And I said, "How nice it is to have you all here." And I looked, and there he was. After they got through that room, before we let the next group come through, I closed all the doors and said to the butler, "Would you get the bat off of the curtains?" And he looked at me and I said, [whispering] "a bat." And with that he shrieked out real loud . . .

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: He was unusual.

Mrs. Edwards: . . . "A bat!"

Jas. Edwards, Jr.: And school was out. [*laughter*] It was like the school bell had rung and it was now recess in the Governor's Mansion with third graders running everywhere.

Terry: Thank you all, and . . .

Mrs. Edwards: Before you finish, I would like to say that it is bittersweet to leave after you give it your all for a few years. It's so wonderful to come back and see the wonderful improvements and the things that have been added, and the things that have been done, so I would like to pay tribute to the other First Ladies, and each one in her own way has contributed a great deal.

Terry: I'll never forget the last day you were in the Governor's Mansion. I went over there to talk with you, and one of the things you wanted so badly, was to make sure that the tapes were transcribed and the photographs and the other notes that we had done were archived. And we've done that. And you have really been a custodian of our history, and I applaud you for that.

Mrs. Edwards: Thank you.

Terry: And Governor, for your contributions as well.

Gov. Edwards: Thank you. Before we close out this tape I want to pay tribute to the present First Lady, Mrs. Hodges, and Jim [Hodges]. It's awfully nice of them to continue the history of the Governor's Mansion and I thank them and congratulate them publicly for what they're doing because it's something that I think they will both look back on in years to come, like my wife has. One of the highlights of her service in the Governor's Mansion was working with you all on this book. I hope it'll turn out that way for Mrs. Hodges too.

Terry: I can assure you it will.

Mrs. Edwards: She really is to be applauded to do this, with the lapse of time, I think it's wonderful and I'm excited about it.

Terry: I don't think she would have started it unless she felt so strongly I think the renovation will tell us a whole lot about the building.

Mrs. Edwards: I want to applaud you all, too. You historians that are making all this happen. Without you all it never would have happened.

[End of Interview]