



Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter: The Georgia Years, 1924-1974

E. Stanly Godbold Jr.

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Covering their lives from childhood to the end of the Georgia governorship, *Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter* is one of the few major biographies of an American president that pays significant attention to the First Lady. So deeply were their lives and aspirations intertwined, a close friend once remarked: "You can't really understand Jimmy Carter unless you know Rosalynn." The story of one is the story of the other.

To recount their remarkable lives, E. Stanly Godbold, Jr. draws on academic and military records, the governor's correspondence, the recollections of the Carters themselves, as well as original, unpublished interviews with a wide variety of participants in the Carters' political and personal lives. The book reveals a man who was far more complex than the peanut farmer of popular myth, a man who cited both Reinhold Niebuhr and Bob Dylan as early influences on his legal philosophy, was heir to a sizable fortune, and who, with the help of Rosalynn, built a lucrative agribusiness. Nicknamed "Hotshot" by his father, Carter was the first president born in a hospital, rode a motorcycle before entering politics, counted Tolstoy, Dylan Thomas, William Faulkner, and James Agee among his favorite authors, and claimed his wife Rosalynn as the most influential person in his life.

Volume I in this two-volume biography details how the Carters rose to power, managed their private and public lives, governed Georgia, and seized control of the national Democratic party. The cast of colorful characters includes "Miss Allie" Smith, "Mr. Earl" and "Miss Lillian," brother Billy, Rachel Clark, Admiral Rickover, George Wallace, Lester Maddox, Richard Nixon, daughter Amy, Charles Kirbo, Hamilton Jordan, Jody Powell, and many more. It is a sweeping, Faulknerian tale of individuals who would change the image of the South in the national mind and the role of the South in the presidency. Indeed, Carter shocked the state of Georgia and the entire country by calling for an end to racial discrimination in 1971, thus launching his national political career.

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter neither sanctifies nor vilifies the Carters but offers instead an even-handed, brilliantly researched, and utterly absorbing account of two ordinary people whose lives together took them to the heights of power and public service in America.

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