KC Star

Only Secret Service listens as Mrs. Truman, Carte

By Robert C. Trussell
staff writer

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More than 1,000 spectators cheered President Carter as his limousine followed two Kansas City police cars and a phalanx of motorcycle officers to the home of Mrs. Bess Truman, widow of President Harry S. Truman.

Carter stood on the running board of the car and waved to the cheering crowd, then walked from the car to the famous white two-story house at 219 N. Delaware.

The president visited privately with Mrs. Truman inside the house for about 10 minutes while reporters, most of Carter's aides and the crowd waited outside.

The president's Secret Service bodyguards were the only other persons who entered the house while he visited with Mrs. Truman. Among those waiting outside were Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, D-Mo., and Jody Powell, the president's press secretary.

When he emerged from the Truman home, Carter spoke briefly to reporters.

"It is indeed a thrill for a president to come to the home of one of the great presidents of our country," Carter said.

The president said Mrs. Truman appeared to be in good spirits.

Asked by a reporter if Mrs. Truman saw any similarities betwen Carter and her late husband, the president replied that Mrs. Truman did not mention that.

Mrs. Ardis Hawkenberry, who has lived across the street from the Truman home for decades, said, "Boy, this is exciting. It's just like old times."

She said in the years she has lived in Independence, she had seen Presidents Hoover, Eisenhower, Nixon and Ford. Mrs. Hawkenberry said she is a "born Democrat" but she hasn't decided how she will vote this November.

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She said there are some similarities between Carter and Truman, but that Carter "doesn't have the force Mr. Truman had. He says one thing one day and cancels it the next day."

Before departing, Carter walked to a barricade on Truman Road, about a half block from the house, and shook hands with several spectators. The president then climbed back into his limousine and waved to spectators through the sunroof as the motorcade headed east, toward Truman High School and the town hall meeting.

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