

Farenthold back in Texas; pledges active political role

United Press International
HOUSTON (UPI) — White-haired Sissy Farenthold sat in her new, half-unpacked law office Wednesday and mildly said she expected to be politically active now that she was back home in Texas, but was uncertain how.

"I feel I'll be involved one way or the other, whether it'll be electoral politics or not, I just don't know," she said. "I'm not trying to be evasive. I just don't know."

Then her voice began to rise and her concerns began to show, indicating the two-time liberal Democrat gubernatorial candidate changed little during her recently ended 4-year stint as president of Wells College in New York.

"I guess maybe you can call me a peacenik. We're going to bankrupt the planet on the armaments race. And as much as it is (costing) us, developing countries are in so much worse shape. It's the overriding issue of our time."

Mrs. Farenthold, 53, expressed other concerns: the tragedy of the world's refugees, frustrated human rights. She expressed support for women's rights and abortion. She also has strong political interests.

She has campaigned for Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., although not in Texas. She finds "dismal" the impending choice President Carter and Republican Ronald Reagan.

Mrs. Farenthold is happy to be home in Houston, where husband George Farenthold, a businessman, remained while she was at Wells. They commuted back

and forth to visit each other and their four children.

"It's my home. It's where my family is," she said. "Houston has a certain vitality."

Wells "was a wonderful experience and one I wouldn't want to give up. It really meant a lot. But it's just not my life."

"I'd given myself three years and three years had turned into four. It was a good time (to leave). I'd done the things I'd set out to do. The college was in better shape. We had a balanced budget."

Her children are all grown and she and her husband have moved into a condominium because "I didn't want to be involved with housekeeping the first year I was here."

As for the long black hair that once was a sort of trademark, Mrs. Farenthold said it had been turning white since her 30s — "it runs in the family" — and she had been dyeing it. She decided to stop two years ago.

"It was when there was talk of hair dye having carcinogenics and it dawned on me that it was a foolish way to go," she said.

She expects to spend the next few months organizing her law practice, which she said will be "general practice," and making speaking engagements.

"It's starting all over again," she said. "People are calling about speaking engagements, so I guess I'll be seeing some more of Texas, Lubbock, El Paso, San Antonio. Here we go again."

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Staff photo by Pat O'Malley

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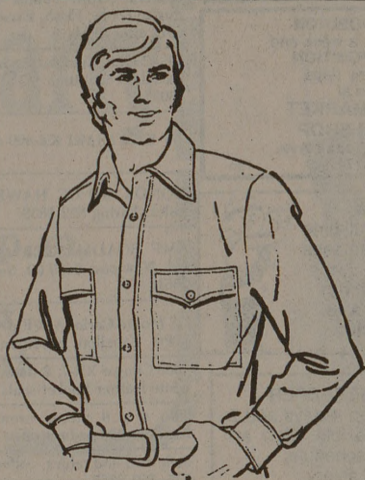
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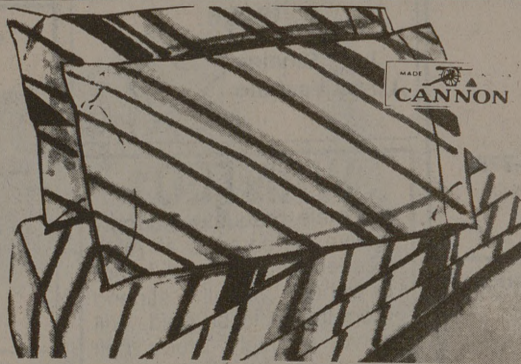
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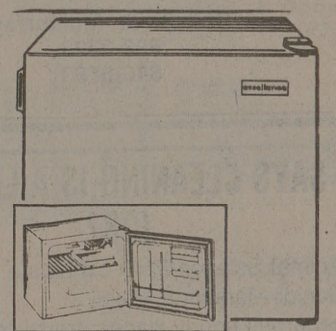
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