



Jody Powell

September 30, 1943 - September 14, 2009

Cambridge, Maryland

Jody Powell, White House press secretary to President Jimmy Carter and among the closest aides of that Georgia circle, died near Cambridge, Maryland, on September 14, 2009, of an apparent heart attack. He was sixty-five. He had been working with firewood at home on the Eastern Shore when he collapsed; friends said a prior heart attack had already warned him.

Born Joseph Lester Powell Jr. in Cordele, Georgia, on September 30, 1943, he met Carter as a young driver and student and never really left the partnership: governor's office, long-shot presidential campaign, and four years of briefings that mixed candor with loyalty. Reporters called him sharp and occasionally hot; Carter trusted him as few presidents trust a spokesman. After 1981 he wrote a memoir, built the Powell Tate communications firm, and stayed a Washington professional who still sounded like South Georgia when the subject turned moral rather than tactical.

He died on the same September 14 that took Patrick Swayze and Henry Gibson - a coincidence that places a press secretary's private medical emergency beside celebrity headlines. Maryland's shore, not Pennsylvania Avenue, was the last geography.

He died near Cambridge on September 14, 2009. The briefing room moved on; the template of a press secretary as confidant remains one of Carter-era signatures.

Powell's lesser-noted skill was translation: turning a president's stubborn conscience into sentences a national press could not entirely dismiss. He could be blunt in the briefing room and still leave reporters feeling they had

been dealt with fairly, a rare combination in that job. Notice Nearby records the death date so September 14 keeps a Georgian who made spin look like stewardship.

Services

Died near Cambridge, Maryland, September 14, 2009, of an apparent heart attack. White House press secretary to President Jimmy Carter; funeral in Cambridge.

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