



Friendship Force honors the memory of the late President Jimmy Carter with deep gratitude and fondness. A Nobel Peace Prize laureate, President Carter passed away on December 29th at his home in Plains, Georgia. Nearly 50 years ago, his pivotal role in founding Friendship Force helped shape an enduring legacy of global connection and peace.



On March 1st, 1977, the newly inaugurated President Carter, in support of his long-time friend, Friendship Force founder Wayne Smith, formally introduced Friendship Force at a White House gathering of State Governors. The two men could not have known how much this decision and the vision behind it would impact world communities in the next 45 years. What began as an experiment has become a global phenomenon, with thousands of people from more than 80 countries participating as Friendship Force hosts or citizen ambassadors.

Post-presidency, Carter continued with his gracious support of our organization for many, many years and the late First Lady Rosalynn Carter served as our Honorary Chairperson until 2002. The Carters attended the International Friendship Force Conference in 2000 to celebrate the retirement of Friendship Force's then-president, founder Wayne Smith.

Despite the Carters officially parting ways with the organization in 2003, their championing of human rights and their core message of peace continues to be upheld by Friendship Force to this day.

Friendship Force International owes a profound debt of gratitude to President and Mrs. Carter for their unwavering advocacy and steadfast belief in the organization and its mission. Friendship Force members are invited to post a tribute on the Carter Center's website [here](#).



*Friendship Force founder Wayne Smith, left, with the First Lady and President Jimmy Carter in the late 1990s at FFI's office in Atlanta*