

red ball gown and another in a suit of husband Lyndon.

"She squinted up at it and said, 'Michael is that suit brown?'"

"I told her it was, and she made such a face and said, 'Oh well. Surely we can find you a black one somewhere.'" She remembered wearing the red silk gown on two state occasions; the state dinner for the prime minister of Japan and a concert at Constitution Hall given in honor of President Johnson's 1965 inauguration.

Not shy, Smith said he also asked for another outfit from Mrs. Johnson as well, one of her "Tree Planting" outfits so that the exhibit could be rotated and Mrs. Johnson's environmental activism recognized.

"Well, I don't know about a tree planting suit," she said. "I just wore whatever was back from the cleaners that day."

But she said she would look, and had her niece Susan Taylor take pictures of the clothing exhibits to show to her staff in Austin.

Of particular interest to Mrs. Johnson, Smith said, was the large quilt at the top of the grand staircase made by the Piecemakers Quilt Guild of Marshall. "She started up the stairs to see it and the Secret Service had to stop her and get her to take the elevator."

"I was just so happy we had taken down the moose head and put the quilt," Smith said.

Smith said the highlight of Mrs. Johnson's visit was a chance to look through her high school scrapbook and several class note-

books she had donated to the museum a number of years ago.

"She studied old pictures and passed around old report cards, notes and invitations."

"The Secret Service men especially liked the report cards," Smith said. "I think they were a little disappointed she always got As."

"She had been telling me about a classmate — the only one to receive a doctorate, which was in mathematics," Smith said. "And here in the scrapbook was a note — that classmate writing her that she wouldn't have passed high school math if 'Bird' hadn't been helping her."

"Lady bird was also amazed at the many pictures and references to Caddo Lake," Smith said. "She told her niece, 'I believe all I did was go to Caddo Lake.'"

Smith said he worried that no one would believe he had actually spent more than two hours showing Lady bird Johnson around the museum — even though she stopped to sign the visitor book, admired the Sam Houston Oak festival it rested on and asked about purchasing bookends made of Sam Houston Oak.

"After she left I looked around and found she had left her cane, which was conveniently marked, 'Please return to Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson.' I told everyone in our office the story Monday morning but I'm not sure they believed me," Smith said.

"But when the Secret Service men stopped by and asked for Lady bird's cane, I think that convinced everyone."

Lady Bird visits museum

GAIL K BEIL
News Messenger

When it comes time for confession, Michael Smith may have a little trouble with getting anyone to believe his excuse for missing mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church a week ago Sunday.

He had to run down to the Harrison County Historical Museum to be the guide for a special visitor, Lady Bird Johnson.

The former First Lady was in Jefferson on a private visit and wanted to see her high school scrapbook and her ball gown in the museum. Volunteer Hubert Bender, who fielded the request, spent half an hour trying to find someone with keys to get in and knowledge of the combination locks on the old vault doors, behind which reside some of Marshall's greatest historical treasures.

Smith, past president of the

Harrison County Museum Board, had both, and a personal reason for wanting to do the honors for Mrs. Johnson.

"I really had her family to thank for being in Marshall in the first place," Smith said. "If it hadn't been for the LBJ School of Public Affairs, where I got my masters degree, I couldn't have studied under Barbara Jordan. And if it hadn't been for Professor Jordan recommending me to her former congressional colleague Judge Sam B. Hall Jr. when I applied for a clerkship, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to come back to Marshall."

Once the mutual connection was made, Smith said he and Mrs. Johnson shared stories about Jordan and Hall as Smith read much of the Hall and James Farmer exhibits to the First Lady who is having trouble with her eyesight.

Smith said Mrs. Johnson knew



Lady Bird Johnson

civil rights leader Farmer but had forgotten that he had been born in Marshall.

Then she got to the case with a mannikin inside wearing her

See Lady Bird/3