



NEW 1600 Sessions Podcast

A Conversation with Presidential Historian Michael Beschloss

October 25, 2017 (Washington, D.C.) — The White House Historical Association today released its eighth episode, “A Conversation with Michael Beschloss” in *The 1600 Sessions* podcast series. In this fascinating interview, the acclaimed presidential historian explains why an understanding of the presidents and their families is the key to understanding the White House itself.

From the Oval Office to the Lincoln Bedroom, Beschloss tells the stories of the presidents and first families who lived in the Executive Mansion and the rich history they inspired.

Presidential portraits also color the White House walls with history and tell stories of the families who lived there. Beschloss tells a moving account of Jacqueline Kennedy’s return to the White House after President and Mrs. Nixon invited her to view her husband’s portrait after his death: “She basically said, as much as I loved living in the White House, and as much as I was involved in trying to improve the White House, I don’t think I can bring myself to go there ever again. And, as it turns out, she did.”

He also tells of the tour President Nixon gave John and Caroline Kennedy, which included the Oval Office, where John once played while his father worked. This emotional visit to the White House led Ms. Kennedy to write to President Nixon afterward that “the day that I’d always dreaded turned out to be one of the most precious days I’ve ever spent with my children.”

Asked whether Ms. Kennedy would be inspired by what has happened since her vision of the White House as a world-class museum of American history, Beschloss adds, “She also would feel good about the fact that later first families tried to change it...and improve it...I hope it will always be that way, she said.”

Beschloss points out, “George Washington felt very strongly that a house should be almost a stage set for the person who lives there,” noting that Washington was involved in the design of the White House. Beschloss says the simplicity of the White House more than 200 years later would have astounded Washington, but is “testimony to the fact that modern Presidents have felt that it has been so important to stick with George Washington’s ideal of making this as modest, and simple as possible...that we’ve stuck to the original plan.” This episode reveals just how the White House is truly a museum of American history.

The next podcast episode, to be released in November, will feature Elise K. Kirk, musicologist and author of *Music at the White House*, and Colonel Jason Fettig, Director of the U.S. Marine Band, who will discuss the history and practice of musical performance at the White House.

THE 1600 SESSIONS

In this fascinating podcast series, White House Historical Association President Stewart McLaurin interviews luminaries, historians and eyewitnesses to history about America’s most famous residence and office – the White House. Each episode includes a prominent guest or guests to discuss varying facets of White House history, including insights from former staff and many other topical issues.

The 1600 Sessions is available on iTunes, GooglePlay, SoundCloud, and Stitcher. To hear the full episode, visit The1600Sessions.org and learn more about White House history at WhiteHouseHistory.org.

For more information, please contact press@whha.org.

For Media: B-roll footage of interview available for use upon request. Additional resources are available on the Association’s press room WhiteHouseHistory.org/press.

About the White House Historical Association

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy envisioned a restored White House that conveyed a sense of history through its decorative and fine arts. She sought to inspire Americans, especially children, to explore and engage with American history and its presidents. In 1961, the White House Historical Association was established to support her vision to preserve and share the Executive Mansion’s legacy for generations to come. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association’s mission is to assist in the preservation of the state and public rooms, fund acquisitions for the White House permanent collection, and educate the public on the history of the White House. Since its founding, the Association has given more than \$45 million to the White House in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit WhiteHouseHistory.org.

