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Diana Walker's Photographs of America's Presidents Featured at National Museum of American History

Photographer Diana Walker's magazine covers, photo essays and portraits documenting the public and private lives of America's presidents and first families, significant national and international stories, and urban and rural scenes during the past quarter century opens Oct. 9 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. "Diana Walker Photojournalist" continues through Jan. 4, 2004 in the museum's Taylor Gallery.

As a photographer for Time magazine and other major publications, Walker captured prominent political figures, celebrities and ordinary citizens, but she is best known for documenting American presidents from Gerald Ford to Bill Clinton.

"'Diana Walker Photojournalist' offers a unique perspective on the presidency, not only through iconic photographs, but with seldom-published behind-the-scenes images," said Brent D. Glass, director of the National Museum of American History. "From the picture of Gerald Ford the morning that he lost the 1976 election to a photograph of Bill Clinton backstage preparing to accept his party's nomination, our memories of these events are forever linked to these images," Glass said.

The exhibition includes 135 black-and-white and color photographs taken between 1975 and 2001 and covering five administrations. They were taken in the oval office, in the first family's private quarters, on the campaign trail, and during trips in this country and overseas. Many of the images are accompanied by Walker's reminiscences and commentaries on the pictures.

Among the featured images are photographs of:

- President Jimmy Carter at the National Cathedral praying for the return of U.S. citizens taken hostage in Iran in 1979,

- Kennedy Center Honorees for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts George Abbott, Benny Goodman, Lillian Gish, Gene Kelly and Eugene Ormandy in 1982,
- Geraldine Ferraro and Walter Mondale at a campaign rally in 1984,
- President and Mrs. Reagan on the deck of the U.S.S. Iowa during the celebration of the centennial of the Statue of Liberty in 1986,
- mourners entering the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo in 1989,
- First lady Barbara Bush with first dog Millie's puppies at the White House in 1989,
- Presidents George H.W. Bush, Reagan, Carter, Ford and Nixon at the opening of the Ronald Reagan Library in 1991.

A native Washingtonian, Walker began her professional career in the 1970s, when newspaper and magazine editors were actively recruiting female photographers. Few women photographers have covered the White House and none for as long as Walker.

“During the last quarter of the 20th century, Diana Walker became one of the most prominent female photojournalists in the nation, covering the White House and beyond, bringing public and private moments of the well-known and the unknown into our visual landscape,” said exhibition curator Michelle Delaney.

While best known for her White House photography, Walker's career incorporates a broad spectrum of photojournalism and recent history, from pictures of a 1979 “No Nukes” demonstration outside a D.C. courthouse to a series of portraits of Apple Computer executive Steve Jobs taken over a 15-year period. The exhibition also includes celebrity portraits of heavyweight champion Mohammed Ali, actress and author Jamie Lee Curtis, conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, and feminists Bella Abzug and Betty Friedan.

Everyday life in America is reflected in two photo essays. In one Walker covers life along the Mississippi River and in the other she documents the funeral procession of a man who was murdered in the nation's capital.

In addition to Time, Walker's photographs have appeared in the Village Voice, People, Fortune, The Washington Monthly and other national and international magazines. She has been honored with numerous awards from the White House News Photographers' Association, the National Press Photographers' Association and World Press. Her photographs are in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Minneapolis Museum of Art.

At the conclusion of the current exhibition, the photographs will become part of the National Museum of American History's Photographic History Collection.

"Diana Walker: Photojournalist" complements "The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden" exhibition which showcases more than 900 objects related to the nation's highest office, exploring its impact throughout 200 years of history.

Programs

Several public programs are planned in conjunction with the exhibition. On Oct. 9, National Portrait Gallery Director Marc Pachter will interview Walker, who will also sign copies of the companion book, *Public & Private: Twenty Years Photographing the Presidency*. For information about the program, contact The Smithsonian Associates at (202) 357-3030. Free lunchtime gallery talks with the photographer and curator will be held on Thursdays, Oct. 23, Nov. 20 and Dec. 11 from noon to 1 p.m. in the exhibition.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History traces American heritage through exhibitions of social, scientific and technological history. Collections are displayed in exhibitions that interpret the American experience from Colonial times to the present. The museum is located at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W. , and is open daily, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, visit the museum's Web site at <http://americanhistory.si.edu> or call (202) 357-2700, or 357-1729 (TTY).

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Note to Editors: High-resolution photos are available at <ftp://opaguest@160.111.252.80/> (password: 9getfiles9).