

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

St. Patrick's Day

Thursday, March 17, 1966 WUD

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It was a delightful, varied, wonderful day. Up early, coffee with Lyndon, left on time for Spanish, two good hours, all seven of us there. Mercedes' garden, brilliant with yellow and purple crocus.

Back at the White House, a bit of lunch, and then an hour reading the guest list for this afternoon, and the achievements of all the awardees. The Fosburghs came a little before the party, and we had a quiet 30 minutes upstairs, so that I could show him the Mary Cassatt. They looked (in the bureau) at the little picture of Ellen Barry's portrait of me, with the yellow impressionist background, said they loved it. I showed them the bust of Lyndon, they genuinely seemed to like it but, alas, there was not anything that he had brought down from New York, that he or I either ~~where~~ were enthusiastic about acquiring for the White House.

A very large Copley, but it's about 5 x 8 feet; I think hanging it would pose a problem. And one of Winslow Homer, that he thinks is great - a farm scene, with an astronomical price tag of \$125,000. I think it's too much to consider.

He was very intrigued when I showed him the transparencies of the Whitridge [?] ~~Whitridge~~, the Hill, and the Thomas Moran, (in front of) which we may be able to get, first as a loan, and then as a gift from C. R. Smith for the White House. He and I both agreed on the Thomas Moran - Lyndon leans to the Whitridge. The several other things he had are Benjamin West Attribution, Western painter in the manner of Remington and Russell, but nothing that

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we are on fire about.

Then it was time to go downstairs for the presentation ceremonies of the National Gallery of Arts Awards to 25 teachers. As John Walker described them, ^{they represent} various levels of education, from kindergarten to college. They've been exceptionally successful in enriching the lives of young people through an understanding of the visual arts.

The 25 award winners were in the front row, I joined them. John Walker made some very graceful remarks. Had ~~at~~ a kind word to say about Lyndon's ^{Nation's} interest in the arts - quoting him "Art is the/most precious heritage. (I'm saying) at no time in our history have a President and a Congress done so much to create an America in which the arts have their proper place."

Ch Lopez

I sat next to Paul Mellon, and when John Walker finished, he called off the names of the award winners, and I rose to congratulate each of them and hand them the really very handsome gold medal - the \$500 would come later. He read the citations for each of them, they were a thrilling, varied lot, ranging from the very elderly and erudite Dr. Irwin Benoski, one of the greatest living art historians, whose roster of achievements, awards, textbooks and memberships in such things as the British Academy, would cover a page. And Dr. Howard Connant, who occupies the same big league in the art world.

But quite another side of America, a Mr. Wilbur Stillwell of Vermillion, South Dakota. The very name thrilled me because I like to think that there are people all over ^{who} ~~by~~ make it interesting and exciting for young people to

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get acquainted with art, and I like to include them all in - Vermillion, South Dakota and Rosebud, Texas, and Verbena, Alabama - not just the east coast.

And there were a couple, the John Souchus of Minneapolis, both teachers, who between them, had rolled up a total of 60 years teaching art.

There were two Texas winners, Mrs. E. A. Smith of Houston, and a Miss Sybil Brown of San Antonio. We had lots to say to each other about my forthcoming trip to San Antonio. Kind words of about ^{how} the folks at home felt about us.

One of the most thrilling of all, ^{was} Mrs. Alvin Bipus, of Toledo, Ohio whose made it so interesting for children from kindergarten through the eighth grade, ^{to} go to the museums, that the average Toldeo child now makes six visits a year to the Museum. Art cannot exist in a vacuum, it's people liking it that makes it important, it seems to me. And my hat was off to Mrs. Bipus.

And then there was a Miss Marie Larkin. Her award was because she was an original thinker ~~and~~ in the field of art education for children. "One of the greatest needs of our society," she said, "is to teach people to be intelligently alone with themselves, and the art museum provides a source for all in that respect." That struck a very responsive chord in me.

All in all, it was a thrilling series of citations for various works in the world of art, and I was mighty proud to participate.

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We'd invited the Senators and the Congressmen of each of the award winners, and a great many of them were there. The Frank Churchs, the John Sherman Coopers (no surprise); the Peter Frelinghausens, they are usually present at anything that is art minded; Vance Hartke; Abigail and Gene McCarthy; the McGoverns; attractive, ^{young} William Morehead; the Hugh Scotts of Pennsylvania; Leonore Sullivan, ^{one of} ~~and~~ the women members who work at her job, in a very thorough fashion, it seems to me; and Mrs. John Tower.

^{There} ~~It~~ was a good representation of Congress there, to my surprise, since it was the middle of the afternoon.

I'd invited Mary's step-daughter and step-son-in-law, the Sidney Brodys, she's on the art Board in Los Angeles, California, at their wonderful museum.

And very patrician Mrs. Adeline Breeskin. There were quite a few of the donors of the Mellon Gallery there; various members of the Kress family, some I notice, came from Texas; and a brace of the Havermeyer family. And some donors to the White House too.

Young Richard Dietrich, but I was sorry I didn't get to meet the girl he's engaged to, the daughter of the Nicholas Biddle's - she was at home sick. There was Bobby ^{Lehman} ~~Neiman~~, who'd given me such an enchanting day, going through his own home in New York, it is really a museum.

^{The} And Charles Engelhard's; and Nancy Kefauver, who is decorating

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embassies.

And I had asked some friends of my own⁹ to see the White House in action! Mary Johnson Hazelton; Miss Genevieve Hendricks¹ and art group ought to be her cup of tea; and some young people, including the new in-law of the family, Molly Shulman, whose brother married Becky, her date Phillip Patman; Peggy Pickle and her date; and the extremely elegant daughter of Jane Engelhard, Mrs. Samuel Reid.

We asked art critics Mr. Tolbman¹⁴, Mr. Getline^{lin}, Mr. Winchester from Antiques Magazine. And museum directors¹ a cross section of people, who for love or money, or knowledge, are a part of the world of art.

After the last award was handed out, I received everyone in the Blue Room and then we went into the State Dining Room for refreshments. Irish Whiskey for St. Patrick's Day, the first time it's been served in the White House, I'll bet, and not a soul wanted tea. It was a smashing success.

I covered the room, visiting. Mr. Paul Mellon stood by me and introduced a great many of the guests, and I was one of the last to leave, myself, about

4:30.

With a bit of time to rest in between, before Charles and Jane Engelhard⁹ and Senator Mansfield and Maureen¹ came up⁹ with Lyndon. We weren't going to be able to go to their birthday party tonight, because I was going to the Mellon dinner. Lyndon had a book of American history[?] and a late picture for his birthday present.

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We had a half hour's visit, Jane Engelhard and Charles looked at the glossy of the Winslow-Homer. James Fosburgh had told them about it, but I'm no salesman, and I really think it's too expensive.

I am always amazed at how much Lyndon makes his time count, each moment. He was charming to Senator Mansfield. He truly likes for his own birthday to be noticed, and he was practically spooning the icing on the cake for Senator Mansfield's birthday, in the brief half hour we spent together.

There was just time to put on my lovely new dress, gold brocade from Pakistan, made up by Mollie Parness, and have a hair comb, before I left alone, for the Mellon dinner at the Sulgrave Club.

There were pictures as I entered but no coverage inside, a rule of the Club, which makes for a genuinely relaxed evening. The invitation had said a small dinner party, there were about a hundred!

The Cabinet, the Fowlers and the Udalls; from the Congress, Bill and Betty Fulbright; Clint and Henrietta Anderson, he's looking quite old, they are both my dear favorites; the George and Helen Mahons, he's on the Smithsonian Board I believe it is, and rather to my amazement, very often shows up at art gatherings.

And there were every so many donors to the Gallery - Havermeyers, and Kress'; and Mrs. Chester Dale - to quote Charlotte Curtis "elegant, Diamond and emerald decked"; the Norman Cousins, we spoke of Jack

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Valenti. They said, "He's a voracious reader" with obvious admiration. .
And the French Ambassador and Madam^{Lucet} all the paintings are French
impressionists, it's so fitting for them to come. The Winthrop Aldrich^s;
a charming museum curator, Mr. Robertson of Virginia, who made me
want to come down to Virginia, to see what he's done.

next

I loved sitting to Paul Mellon at dinner, who talked about the genesis
of the National Gallery, his father's collecting, his decision to turn it over
to the country. My own personal vignette of memory is hearing Bob Jackson
talk about it, back when Lyndon, I think, was a Congressional secretary, in
early '35. Somehow or other, working for Senator Tom Connelly, he had
seen the pictures that would become a part of the Gallery.

It was a deliciously, beautifully done dinner, and then toasts, a few
but good. The most amusing by Mellon himself, whose often called retiring
or shy. Tonight he was delightful - he talked about the comic strip "Peanuts".
Snoopy, his dog, was on top of his doghouse, and voices were wafted up to
him, through the door. After other remarks, one of the voices says, "Look
over there. I bet that something you never expected to see." And another
voice says, "Fantastic." After which Snoopy says, "I can always tell when
they have come to my Van Gogh." And then he went on to a limerick, made
up by himself, which I liked because it also covers my predicament.

"I never with confidence know, if Van Gogh is Van Gock or Van Gogh, I
admit to my shame, this ^{Chamelon} ~~camelion~~ name, makes my hi-brows feel terribly
low. But a friend of mine said off the cuff, You might say that his name was
Van Guff, But regardless I fear, What he did to his ear, Was playing a little

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too rough."

The opening was scheduled for about nine thirty. We were late getting there, in fact, it was close to 10:20 when we arrived. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon and Johnnie Walker arriving with me. We went up in the elevator, which didn't run the night of the Mona Lisa opening. John Walker says he still has a Mona Lisa ulcer.

And there in that magnificent gallery to see the 200 or more canvases, were about 9000 people, filling the halls, and rooms, and courtyards, listening to the three orchestras. It was a great spectacle. I tried to rise to the occasion. I had worn my inaugural coat over my ^{Ruby} ~~Lube~~ Khan gown, and it was a sort of a cinderella deal, because I was going to try to get it off on the earliest morning plane to Lynda Bird in Hollywood, so she could wear it that night for a cocktail party.

I was escorted along by John Walker, and Mr. and Mrs. Mellon, Mrs. ~~Ella~~ Mellon Bruce, who had been the co-hostess at the Sulgrave, had not come along to the Gallery. She had been ill. Many of the guests did not come to brave the crowd. I, happily, had already seen all the paintings, had absorbed all the beauty, and so could just look and respond to, I hoped, the crowd. I signed the guest book - the most recent official signer was Britain's Princess Margaret, last November.

Then we toured the long marble halls. Occasionally I waved at people I knew; the Oscar Cox^{er}, Rena Weisl, Mrs. John Davis Lodge. Mrs. Mellon

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looked really stunning, her hair a beautiful mass of curls, done, I later read in the paper, by Kenneth, famous to a lot of people. And wearing, so Charlotte Curtis said, quite viciously, "a shimmering turquoise and white Balenciaga dress, that wouldn't stay snapped in back, diamond and pearl jewelry, and false eyelashes." There are times when I think it is worth it to stay just a mouse, in the world of fashion.

It was purely a public show. About 45 minutes of flashing bulbs, smiling and greeting, walking and making, I hope, appropriate remarks, saying goodbye to John Walker with "I can congratulate you on a marvelous quarter of a century beauty and service for the Gallery." And one of the nicest things I remember was a toast to Andrew Mellon, who, after all, made it all possible.

And then goodnight to John Walker and the Paul Mellons, with great gratitude. It had been a glowing evening in my life.

And back at the White House a little past eleven. Lyndon laughs a little bit at my forays into the world of art. I ^{have} had genuinely enjoyed them, but perhaps they consider me totally alien.

There was an interesting article in the New York Times about Congress and the arts by Howard ^{the} Tribman. "Honeymoon continues with emphasis on philosophy rather than expenses." To judge by last week's hearings before Senate Appropriations Sub-committee in Washington, Love, as Wintergreen predicted in Of Thee I Sing, is still sweeping the country. Senator Gale McGee of Wyoming was in the chair as Committeemen, representing the majesty of

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the Senate. I gathered ^{from} ~~that~~ Tolbman that the amiable climate toward art is very praise worthy, but may not amount to much, in the sums involved, and also fears that they might ~~be~~ meddle in how the grants are spent.

Ch
type
I had a moment with Mrs. Mellon, to tell her that the Magnolia Soulangeana ^{is} fuller than the rose garden, were full of fat, soft, fuzzy buds, a few of them showing a little purplish pink, but that one in the Jacqueline Kennedy garden looked like a bare, drear skeleton. She said, "Let's get together and talk about it, the planting all over the grounds." I'd love it.

All in all, it was a day precious to me, afforded entirely by my role here in the White House, and not earned by my knowledge or myself.

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