

AMONG FRIENDS *of LBJ*

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Lady Bird Johnson was honored in ceremonies in March by the Texas Legislature for her efforts to pro-

mote the use of wildflowers and protect the environment. "What I'm trying to do," she told the law-

makers, "is just as bipartisan as breathing."

*Credit: Austin American-Statesman
David Kennedy*



Library Mounts Work of Black Artists

An exhibition which proved to be immensely popular was "Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America," on display in the Library for a six-week period in the winter. Co-sponsored with Austin's Laguna Gloria Art Museum, the exhibit features more than one hundred paintings, sculptures, photographs and prints created in Harlem during the cultural explosion of the 1920s. During its stay, more than 51,000 visitors came to the Library to see it.

Corporate sponsor of the exhibition, which was organized in the Studio Museum in Harlem, was Philip Morris Companies, Inc.



Palmer Hayden, *The Subway*. c. 1930 oil on canvas, 31×26½. The State of New York/Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building Collection.

Bal Jeunesse by Palmer Hayden
Collection of Dr. Meredith Sirmans

Meta Warrick Fuller. Talking skull.
1937. Bronze, 28×40×15. The
Museum of Afro-American History,
Boston.



Symposium Probes Tension Between Presidency and Press

A political phenomenon of recent times is a growing antagonism between the White House and the correspondents who cover it. In March, a symposium co-sponsored by the Library and the National Press Foundation looked at this problem. Held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., it brought together some reporters who cover the White House (or have in the past), and Presidential press secretaries from the last five administrations.

On the correspondents' panel were Frank Cormier, for a long time with the Associated Press and now retired; Helen Thomas, United Press International and dean of the White House press corps; Marianne Means, Hearst Newspapers and King Features syndicate; James Gerstenzang, *Los Angeles Times*; Eleanor Clift, *Newsweek*; and Sid Davis, formerly with Westinghouse and NBC (and the only correspondent representing television: Sam Donaldson of ABC and Andrea Mitchell of NBC, were scheduled to take part, but were unable to attend).

Former press secretaries and deputies were George Christian and Joe Laitin from the Johnson Administration; Gerald Warren (Nixon); Jerald terHorst (Ford); Jody Powell (Carter); and Larry Speakes (Reagan).

Christian also moderated one of the

two panel discussions. The other moderator was Ron Nessen, once press secretary to President Ford, now with the Mutual Broadcasting System.

The discussion, as Marianne Means put it when it was over, may have generated "a little more heat than light. But we have tried. And if we did this kind of thing more often, had an exchange like this, maybe we would understand each other better."

Following are some of the issues that were raised—issues which have fed the alienation—and a flavor of the discussion they sparked.

Is the White House Press Secretary ever justified in lying?

An instance from the Carter administration was used as an example: when asked directly by a reporter whether the U.S. was planning a mission to rescue the imprisoned hostages in Iran, Jody Powell had said "No."

"I did flatly deny it," Powell acknowledged. "In a matter in which lives were at stake, it just didn't seem to me that I had the right or anybody else in government had the right to unnecessarily increase the difficulties or the odds against success."

Helen Thomas wasn't buying. "You didn't even have to answer the question," she maintained. "You could have just said, 'No comment.'"

Powell retorted: That "would have just set bells off all over [the reporter's] mind."

Even if Powell had leveled with the reporter and explained the circumstances, she insisted, "it probably would have been kept secret."

But what if it hadn't been?

Remembering that the rescue mission had ended in failure, Marianne Means recalled another "debacle" of recent history—the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba during the Kennedy administration. *The New York Times*, she said, discovered the plans for the invasion but acquiesced in President Kennedy's request that the story not be printed for security reasons. "But," she said, "Kennedy was known to say afterward that he wished they had printed it because [that] would have stopped the invasion."

"That," said Powell, "goes exactly to the heart of the matter. If indeed President Kennedy said that... I am sure he said it in jest. And I am sure if he were in a position to comment on it now, he would most vociferously dispute the idea that it is the responsibility of the Fourth Estate to make those sorts of decisions."

Defending Powell, Joe Laitin proposed that "there is quite a difference between lying to save someone's life and lying to save someone's skin."

A valid point, Helen Thomas agreed, "but I think reporters have been very responsible where lives are at stake. I think they can be trusted."

"They can be trusted," Laitin replied, "but you can't shift that responsibility. A spokesman for the Pentagon or the White House can't shift that responsibility from his own shoulders to a member of the press."

But, said Eleanor Clift, if that spokesman considers that his responsibility involves lying, he will pay for it. "You can [always] find justification," she said, "but there is a price you pay afterwards in terms of an erosion of trust."

The Changing Standards

Both moderators put it to the correspondents: Not so long ago, the private life of a public figure was considered off limits for a reporter. Now, as



Joe Laitin, Jody Powell, Gerald Warren, Jerald terHorst, Ron Nessen

George Christian phrased it, "higher standards [are] demanded of public officials," and, correspondingly, "we are lowering the standards" of what can be reported.

The correspondents acknowledged these new conditions. Said Sid Davis: "There were things that happened [15 or 20 years ago] that we wouldn't put on the air" that "would get on the air and in print today."

Why? The correspondents grappled for answers.

Frank Cormier remembered when a President or other official would insist that "everything was off the record," and the press would honor that stipulation. Then the line between off and on the record "got very fuzzy" (he thought LBJ had a lot to do with the fuzzing by giving mixed signals), to the point that now, "I guess anything is fair game."

Marianne Means and Eleanor Clift blamed "Vietnam and Watergate" for some of the change. "Reporters were lied to enough times," Eleanor Clift said, "that they have absolutely zero trust in what they are hearing." But also, she said, "the society has changed. . . . The interests of the people are in trash television and in the private lives of politicians."

"The rules," Marianne Means suggested, "have changed for everybody. . . . We are tougher on ourselves today [just] as we are tougher on the President. . . . In the old days. . . there was a great tradition: Reporters took free trips from people they were covering. The packages of booze would arrive at Christmas. . . . All these rules have changed for us. We have increased our standards. And in the process, we have increased the standards [of] those we cover." She had another explanation as well: "The more packaged the. . . politicians become, the more the press and the public feel that this is sort of a cardboard person; then the more pressure is on us to. . . see what the person is really like. . . . And that is when you get into the areas that we used to consider strictly private."

This drew a rejoinder from Powell: "I. . . recoil. . . at the thought that [such] packaging. . . would suddenly

cause [you] to begin writing about adultery. . . ."

"That's rather a loose interpretation of what I said," Ms. Means replied.

"I exaggerate," Powell admitted, "for the purpose of argument."

Despite the reasons, it was obvious that some of the correspondents themselves were uneasy about the changed conditions. "In the old days," Eleanor Clift said, "there was a clear rule. If it didn't interfere with [an official's] professional duties, it wasn't news. Now, I think we all squirm a little when we get into these areas."

White House Management of the News

Humorous reference was made to a sign that sat on Larry Speakes' desk when he was Reagan's press secretary: "You don't tell us how to stage the news and we won't tell you how to cover it." But behind the humor was a real point of contention. The Reagan White House, the correspondents charged, *had* tried—often—to stage news events.

Speakes admitted it. "It is important," he said, "that you make impressions." He cited an example in which the White House dramatized an upturn in housing starts by having President Reagan appear with carpenters on a housing project rather than behind a podium to make the announcement.

It was generally agreed that the demands of television account for

much of the staging. "It is more difficult to get a story on the air," Sid Davis said, "if it doesn't have a picture."

If that's the case, Nessen asked, what's the matter with staging? "If the way you communicate with the largest number of people is through television and you can't communicate on television unless you have some backdrop or symbol or picture, then wouldn't it be natural that a White House would play that game?"

Yes, said Eleanor Clift, "but it is our job to look behind that and figure out what they are doing."

Speakes acknowledged that there had been an extra purpose in the housing project set-up: ". . . We were able to take a little credit for housing starts turning around." And if the media were doing their job properly, James Gerstenzang maintained, "they would point out exactly" why that site was selected. "It is very helpful to the [public] to know why something is happening," he said, so they can leaven their knowledge of "what the President said" with the awareness that "there was an attempt to manipulate their view of the President."

It is not a situation that is likely to change. "Staging," asserted Gerald Warren, "is part and parcel of the White House operation today. There are very few events that will be unstaged. . . . If you don't stage things, you're going to have misguided signals coming out of the White House and



Helen Thomas, Sid Davis, Marianne Means

Symposium continued

you are going to have a lack of an agenda and you are not going to be using the bully pulpit the way you should."

Speakes summed it up this way: The key question is, "How can the modern Presidency cope with the modern media—and vice versa?"

The Press and the Presidential Candidate

As moderator, George Christian brought the discussion around to "these two and three-year presidential campaigns with constant media coverage which just wear people out." The first question raised was: How accessible should a candidate be to the press?

"The [campaign] system," said Jody Powell, "without fail tends to punish accessibility and reward inaccessibility... Other than a good conscience, what is the benefit to a presidential candidate from being accessible and open and responding to questions, as opposed to set-piece speeches... particularly if his opponent is doing just [that]?"

Members of the press reacted differently to the question. Eleanor Clift agreed with Powell: "There is no cost to not having press conferences. It gets

[the press] angry, but the public doesn't seem to mind." Helen Thomas dissented: "I think there is a discerning public out there. I think there are a lot of questions that they really feel should be answered."

Gerald Warren cited the 1988 Bush-Dukakis campaign to support Powell's point: George Bush "stuck to his script and he repeated it over and over, while Governor Dukakis was being accessible and was stepping on his own message every day."

The cost of the campaign system, with its length and complexity, Speakes suggested, is that "the press finds it extremely difficult to cover... The public tires of it," and in the end, "the public honestly doesn't know what those candidates stand for."

Does that matter? "Does anybody remember what the major issues were between Ford and Carter in 1976?", Christian asked, "I don't."

"Lust, Poland, ethnic purity and the shadow of the pardon [of Richard Nixon]," Powell answered. "Which had a hell of a lot to do with what either of the two would be dealing with for the next four years."

"I don't think the people vote for candidates on the basis of issue score

cards anyway," Eleanor Clift maintained. "It has [more] to do with personality and character, which come through in unexpected ways that have nothing to do with press conferences."

Jerald terHorst pursued this point with a recollection from the 1980 campaign: at a rally in Florida, Ronald Reagan dropped the cards from which he was speaking. Someone picked them up and handed them to him, out of order. "He repeated everything he had said before in one fashion or another... Nobody cared... They cheered every time he had a good line... They didn't care what he said. They were just happy to be there with Ronald Reagan." Even when the press reported it, "it didn't make any difference at all."

"What kind of reporting does make a difference then," James Gerstenzang asked, "in terms of having an impact on the perception of a candidate...?"

The question was not answered directly, but a statement made by Jody Powell in another context suggested that with all the problems and frustrations, the public is nonetheless adequately served. "The people do come out [of a campaign]," he said, "with a fairly decent feel for what they are voting for. On the whole they sort of know what they are getting most of the time."

How Can the Press Do a Fairer Job Of Covering the White House?

George Christian posed this as the final question of the conference. It got a scattering of answers: a more "civil discourse in the White House briefing room" (Warren); an end to the "shout-



Keynoting the symposium was Marlin Fitzwater, press secretary to President Bush, and before that to President Reagan, who deplored "the 'pseudo-story,' in which (spokesmen) are somehow tricked into saying something embarrassing or in conflict with some other member of the admin-

istration... I chalk it all up to show biz. (Newspaper) editors and (TV) producers have determined that the stories out of the White House are big time ratings or front-page shazam. Therefore, they have over-staffed the White House to the point where pseudo-stories have to be written to fill up the day. (But in fact) there are not enough stories out of the White House to keep one honest person doing one day's work. (This) exaggerated preoccupation with the White House has forced stories to come from the President that should be coming from the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense or any one of the other Cabinet officials that help run the government. So: one of my pieces of advice to those who really want to improve the quality of White House journalism is: Back off..."



George Christian

ing at the President at the photo opportunities" (Cormier); "more substantive" and longer news programs on TV networks for the benefit of the "70% of the American people who get almost all their news from television" (Davis).

Some panelists thought that reducing the size of the constantly growing White House press corps would help, but no one had a plan to accomplish that (and not all agreed that it was desirable anyway).

Perhaps the most sweeping suggestion came from terHorst who in effect recommended that the press reappraise its sense of its own importance: "I get the feeling that there are press people who think they should be running the White House rather than reporting on (it) . . . In the country, people are not all that concerned . . . They say, 'Oh, my God, I've got school board problems, I've got city hall problems and now I've got to hear from so-and-so about the President's problems. And who elected him or her to tell me what's right or wrong about the world?'"



Larry Speakes



Moderator Nessen with correspondents James Gerstenzang and Eleanor Clift. Pictured at right are the former press secretaries.

Evenings At The Library



Walt and Elspeth Rostow led a crowded auditorium on a tour of their eventful lives together—the daughter of rigid New Englanders and the son of socialist parents who met in the summer of 1937 in Paris on their way to a seminar in Geneva. After World War II—during which he served first with the O.S.S., and then with the U.S. and British Air Forces in London, and she read intelligence for the O.S.S. in Washington—they returned to Europe and married in Oxford. Writing a memorandum for the State Department outlining a proposed structure for post-war Europe led to Walt's working in the late 1940s for Gunnar Myrdal, then head of the new U.N. Economic Commission for Europe. In the 1950s both the Rostows taught at Cambridge, Mass.—Walt, the economist, in the Humanities department, and Elspeth,

the first woman to be taken into the M.I.T. faculty, in the economics department, a “shade odd,” as she put it, “because I had never taken a course in economics in my life, nor planned to do so. But I did teach economics . . . and found it exactly as I expected.”

During those M.I.T. years their family grew (a son, Peter, and a daughter, Ann) and Walt became acquainted with Massachusetts Senator John Kennedy. Coming back from a vacation in the summer of 1959, “we were carrying in the luggage,” he reported, “and the phone rang, and it was Kennedy, asking if I was prepared to work with him because he had pretty well decided to run.” That led to the Washington years of the 60s, with Walt stationed in the Kennedy White House and State Department and later serving

as adviser to President Johnson, and Elspeth teaching at American University.

Then came the 70s and 80s at the University of Texas. Not included in their chronicle, but in the minds of many in the audience, were Walt's prodigious production of 17 books to add to the 12 turned out earlier, and Elspeth's six-year deanship of the LBJ School of Public Affairs during which she brought it into the front ranks of preparatories for public service.

Elspeth brought the recital to an end by quoting from Churchill: “The journey has been enjoyable and well worth making—once.” “That's Churchill speaking,” she said. “Actually, I'd be glad to do it all over again.” Then they concluded the evening with a piano duet of the old hymn, “Blessed Be The Tie That Binds.”

Jonathan Kozol, author of *Death at an Early Age* and *Rachel and Her Children*, painted a grim portrait of the homeless in America, and particularly the 500,000 children "whose only crime is to be born poor" and whose lives, if they survive infancy, is a bleak struggle for survival in a world "where the sun never shines." The problem, he maintained, "is only going to be [solved] with a substantial amount

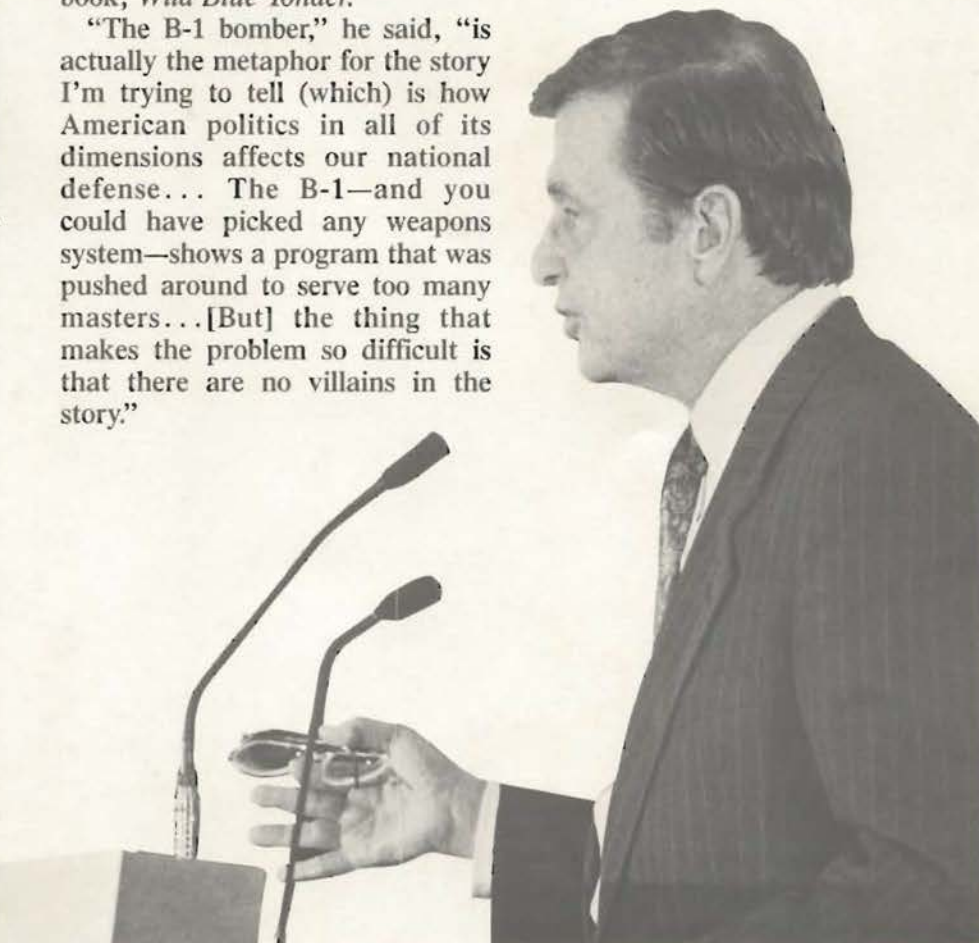
of federal money." *Is money really the answer?* That question, maintained Kozol, who said he hears it often, is "just extraordinary... Who would suppose that money could possibly be the answer to destitution, food the answer to hunger, doctors and nurses the answer to illness?... Only when it comes to human justice do we question the utility of cash."



William Cunningham, president of the University of Texas at Austin, gave a report on the State of the University. In the question period that followed his presentation, he talked about his eleven year old son John: "There have obviously been some problems because I don't spend as much time with him as I'd like to, but at the same time he's gotten to do some things that most kids do not do." He told of a recent experience when he took John with him to a speaking engagement in a small town in north Texas. After his presentation, his son raised his hand for a question. "I tried to avoid it, but he kept on raising his hand, so I finally said, 'OK John, what do you have in mind?' And he said, 'What are you going to do about the University's need for molecular biology?'"

Nick Kotz recounted the complicated history of the controversial B-1 bomber, the subject of his recent book, *Wild Blue Yonder*.

"The B-1 bomber," he said, "is actually the metaphor for the story I'm trying to tell (which) is how American politics in all of its dimensions affects our national defense... The B-1—and you could have picked any weapons system—shows a program that was pushed around to serve too many masters... [But] the thing that makes the problem so difficult is that there are no villains in the story."



Library Directors, Advisory Committee Meet



Directors of all the Presidential Libraries assembled at the LBJ Library for a meeting with a special committee appointed by Archivist of the United States Don Wilson to advise on the relationship between the Libraries and the Foundations which support them. At left, Wilson (in center) convenes the assembly. Flanking him are David Eisenhower, representing the Eisenhower family; Martin Allen, an associate of President Gerald Ford; LBJ Library Director Harry Middleton and Richard Smith, Director of the Herbert Hoover Library.



Claudine Weiher, Deputy Archivist of the United States



Tom Johnson, President of the LBJ Foundation Board of Directors; Caroline Kennedy, representing the Kennedy Library Foundation, and William vanden Heuvel, President of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.



William Emerson, director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; Clarence Lyons, in charge of the Richard Nixon papers project at the National Archives; and John Fawcett, Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries.

Research Grants Awarded to Twenty-nine Scholars

Twenty-nine scholars have been selected as the 1988-89 recipients of grants to study in the LBJ Library. The funds, totaling \$23,375.00, are made available by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation by virtue of a grant from the Moody Foundation to help students, teachers, and writers use the Library's resources by providing support for travel and living expenses.

Those receiving grants-in-aid and the titles of their proposed projects are: Joachim M. Arenth, "The U.S.-German Relations in the Johnson Era (1963-1969)"; David M. Barrett, "The Evolution of President Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam Advisory System, 1965-68"; Denise Bostdorff, "The Johnson Administration's Strategies for the Construction of Public Message & Management of the Media During the Crisis of Tonkin Gulf"; Kitty Calavita, "Administrative Discretion: An Analysis of the Immigration & Naturalization Service"; Gregory A. Caldeira, "Lobbying the Senate: Confirmation and Rejection of Nominations to the Supreme Court"; David L. Chappell, "Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965"; Robert

Dallek, "Lyndon B. Johnson: The Making of a President, 1908-1960"; Rekha Datta, "Long Term Foreign Policy Decision-Making: U.S. Policy Toward South Asia, 1954-1971"; Anne B.W. Effland, "The Development and Administration of Federal Programs for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, 1960-1973"; Aimee J. Frank, "Welfare, Work and Poverty: Public Policy Since the New Deal"; John Garofano, "The Cycle of Intervention in American Foreign Policy"; Ning Gu, "China Policy in the Johnson Administration"; Charles V. Hamilton, "A Political Biography of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr."; Dona C. Hamilton, "NAACP and the National Urban League: Social Welfare Policy, 1933-1986"; Jane Holl, "From the Streets of Washington to the Roofs of Saigon"; Yeun Foong Khong, "The Lessons of the Past in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: The Case Of America in Vietnam, 1961-68"; Judith Fay Kornberg, "Alternatives in Sino-American Relations, Rapprochement and Foreign Policy Decision Making: U.S. Relations With the P.R.C. from its Establishment to Normalization"; Janet M. Martin, "Women in the Executive Branch"; Bruce Murphy,

"Justice as Politician: William O. Douglas and the Johnson White House"; Kevin V. Mulcahy, "The National Security Advisor: Walt W. Rostow and Lyndon B. Johnson"; Julie L. Pycior, "Lyndon Johnson, Mexican Americans, and the American Saga"; James Ralph, "Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement"; Brian Ripley, "Group Processes and Foreign Policy Decision Making in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations"; Adrian W. Schertz, "Kennedy's and Johnson's policy toward West Germany"; Melvin Small, "The Media and the Antiwar Movement"; Roger Smith, "The United States and the Non-Proliferation Regime"; Elizabeth Smith, "Pornographic Politics 1970-1986"; David Stebenne, "Arthur J. Goldberg, New Deal Liberal"; and Terry Sullivan, "You Can't Make Him Go: LBJ and the Congress."

A committee of UT scholars composed of historian Lewis Gould (chairman), Richard Schott of the LBJ School, and Bruce Buchanan from the Government Department determine for the the Library the award winners.



The Ozarks Chorale, select choir of the University of the Ozarks, sings in the Great Hall on its annual spring tour through the Southwest. The Chorale is directed by Dr. Michael Farrell, son of Library Docent Pat Caton.

Connally Papers Come To Library

Recent acquisitions by the Library include:

—the papers of John B. Connally, former Governor of Texas, Secretary of the Treasury and long-time associate of LBJ;

—the papers of Otto Eckstein, member of the Council of Economic Advisors in the Johnson administration;

—the papers of Robert L. Hardesty who, in addition to his services as staff assistant to President Johnson, was a reporter, Press Secretary to Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe, Chairman of the Board of Governors

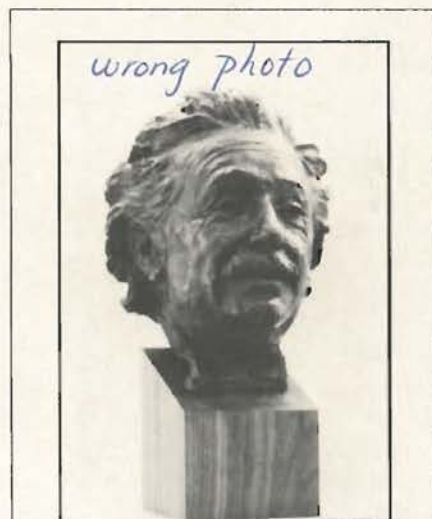
of the U.S. Postal Service and President of Southwest Texas State University;

—the papers of Dr. George W. Davis, former pastor of the National City Church in Washington, D.C.;

—additions to the papers of George E. Reedy, one-time press secretary to LBJ;

—Original material from *Lady Bird Johnson and the Environment* by Lewis Gould;

—Material from Adrian A. Spears, Judge Homer Thornberry, Joseph H. Moore, and Stephen Horn.



The image of Albert Einstein is among 39 portraits by Sculptor Robert Berks of men and women who have shaped contemporary history. They will be featured in an exhibition, "Biographies in Bronze," which will run from April 28 through November 26.



Mrs. Johnson meets at the LBJ Ranch with the Library's supervisors to learn the status of Library activities. Clockwise from Mrs. Johnson are Library Director Harry Middleton; Walt Roberts (standing), who operates the muse-

um's gift shop; Dorothy Territo, consultant to the LBJ Foundation, who coordinates the Library's social activities; Mike Gillette, in charge of Oral History and Acquisitions; Supervisory Archivist Tina Houston, Assistant Director

Charles Corkran, Administrative Officer Barbara Jensen; Museum Curator Gary Yarrington, Kiran Dix (back to the camera), in charge of volunteers; and Larry Reed, Foundation Assistant Director.

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The LBJ Library is one of eight presidential libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration.

