

Among FRIENDS *of LBJ*

January 2004



Photo by Charles Bogel

**Luci Johnson and Lynda Robb View the
“White House in Miniature” Exhibit**
Story begins on page 21.

An Evening With Nellie Connally

On November 6, 2003, before an overflow crowd in the LBJ Auditorium, John Connally's widow Nellie shared her memories of the JFK assassination.

But she began with a still older recollection: "I can't tell you how good it is to be back home in Austin... For you who may not know, I was born in Austin and grew up here... It was just a few hundred yards from here that I experienced love at first sight, and I still remember it in vivid detail, even though it was more than sixty years ago.

"I was walking down the campus toward the Student Union Building, and I looked across at the other sidewalk... and I saw the best-looking fellow I ever saw in my life... He had black hair and brown eyes, and I thought, 'Hm. I wonder what I can do to attract his attention.' He kept walking up his side of the street, and I was walking up mine, and we got across from each other, and we just looked at each other. And John went his way, and I went mine, but I thought, 'Too bad for that fellow. He doesn't know his bachelor days are over.'"

Years later, when she returned to the Governor's Mansion after the Kennedy assassination, Mrs. Connally sat down to write her recollections of that tragedy. "I didn't write those notes for a book publisher," she said. "I wrote them for my unborn grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who might some day be interested in what happened to their grandmother and grandfather on that awful day." Once Mrs. Connally had committed those memories to paper, she forgot about them for over thirty years. She mused, "I had written these notes for these children yet to come, so I didn't have to worry about it."

But on July 4, 2002, Mrs. Connally appeared on the Larry King show, and publishers began to call. One was Bill Adler. "He hooked me up with a very creative new publishing firm called Rugged Land, and a dear old friend, Mickey Herskowitz, a writer.

"I never dreamed that my story would appear on the front page of the *New York Times*... Since that article ap-

peared, we have been besieged with requests for interviews. I can't do any more than they already have me doing. They'll just have to read—the—book."

Mrs. Connally did read an excerpt from her book, a harrowing account of the murder of a president and the nearly fatal wound to her husband. "We were

"More than anything, I had hoped Dallas, a conservative stronghold, would give the Kennedys a warm and friendly welcome. With great pride I beamed at our guests, at my husband, at our eager Texans cheering and waving, and knew that things could not be better...

"Our caravan gathered speed and



Ms. Connally signs the deed of gift that transfers the title to her notes to the LBJ Library.

two couples, in the pride of our lives. We were two women so proud of the men we loved. When *Air Force One* arrived in Fort Worth, soggy clouds still enveloped the Dallas airport. It was called Love Field. That day, November 22, 1963, the autumn air was filled with anticipation. Not everyone in Texas liked Jack Kennedy's policies, but you'd never know it from the enormous cheering crowd that came to greet him. As if on cue, the gray clouds parted, and the handsome young President appeared at the top of the stairs. He waved to the crowd, flashing that trademark smile, and they cheered and cheered. They loved him. We all loved him...

passed through downtown Dallas. It was scheduled to end at a local landmark known as the Triple Underpass, just beyond an old brick building, called the Texas Schoolbook Depository... Sooner than we could know, it would join Ford's Theater as a dark shrine in American history....

"We followed Elm Street toward Stemmons Freeway, heading for the Trade Mart where the President was to deliver his third speech of the day. The School Book Depository slipped by on our right, and the shadow of the underpass approached. We were almost at the end of our journey."

They were, indeed. At that point the journey ended in murder.

With perfect composure Mrs. Connally finished reading the balance of her horrifying account: the wild ride to Parkland Hospital, where pandemonium reigned in the halls, the immense loneliness which enveloped her as she waited helplessly to know whether the President and her husband were dead or alive.

For more details, readers are urged to follow Mrs. Connally's injunction: Read—the—book (*From Love Field: Our Final Hours with President John F. Kennedy*. New York: Rugged Land Press).

Mrs. Connally concluded by announcing that she was giving the original copy of her notes to the LBJ Library.

A member of the audience asked if she disagreed with the Warren report, the government's investigation into the assassination. Mrs. Connally replied, "I did disagree with the premise that the first shot went nowhere... and that the second one went through the President and also through John. That is not so." She and her late husband were adamantly consistent on that point, from the beginning.



Mrs. Connally wore this pink suit on that day in Dallas. She has donated it to the LBJ Museum.

Photos by Gary Phelps, LBJ Museum.

An Evening With Lynda Robb and Luci Johnson: Life in the White House

On December 18, Lynda Robb and Luci Johnson took the stage of the LBJ Auditorium to reminisce, before a crowd of the Friends of the LBJ Library, about their days as presidential daughters.

Ms. Robb recalled leaving The University of Texas only with great reluctance when she moved to Washington. But being a student of history, she decided to make the most of things by learning what famous people had lived in her room. Former President Eisenhower told her that he believed that the lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth had stayed there. Rather thin gruel, thought Ms. Robb, but nothing

ing into the Executive Mansion. It being the dead of winter, the girls decided to build a cheery blaze in their fireplace. When lit, the fire began belching clouds of smoke not up the chimney but into the room. Over the next week Ms. Johnson helped to repaint the room's walls, while trying to get the scent of smolder out of the rug.

What it was like to have the Secret Service watch over them? Ms. Johnson responded that the Secret Service is every teenager's mother's answer to prayer—and every teenager's nightmare. She had just gotten a driver's license, and had mighty

on me.... It's like having your big brothers on dates with you.... [But] the worst thing is taking your big brothers on your honeymoon."

Ms. Johnson mused that she saw more of her parents in the White House than she had ever seen of them before in her life, and that she actually got to see her father at lunch from time to time.

She also remembered that many times the last thing the girls heard as they tried to go to sleep was the chant of antiwar protesters, "Hey! Hey! LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" Sometimes that was the first thing they heard on awakening in the morning, as well.

What did the sisters miss most when they left the White House? That's easy, said Ms. Johnson: "The people. The domestic staff at the White House are incredible professionals. They make absolutely every administration feel that they *love them best*. They are extraordinary con artists."

How did their experience in the White House affect their attitude toward politicians? "I said I'd never marry one," responded Ms. Robb, now the wife of ex-Governor and ex-Senator Charles Robb. "I married a military officer, and after we had two children, he decided to go into politics. Now, do you think that's grounds for divorce?" When the laughter had died down, she continued, "We've been married thirty-six years now, and I still haven't quite made up my mind."

One day Ms. Robb was in the Oval Office when her father had a visitor in. The President called Mrs. Johnson and asked, "Bird, can I bring someone for lunch?" The speaker phone was on, and they all heard Mrs. Johnson's plaintive reply, "Oh Lyndon, we're having *hash*!" LBJ got his guest's reaction to that news and responded into the phone, "Lady Bird, President Truman says he *likes hash*."

Of all their memories, Ms. Johnson concluded, the ones she treasures most are of the camaraderie they felt with other First Families who they came to know, a special fraternity which admits of no political divisions.



Luci Johnson, Betty Sue Flowers, and Lynda Robb, who promised herself she'd never marry a politician.

Photo by Charles Bogel.

daunted, she pursued the topic. The White House Curator, James Ketchum, finally ventured an educated guess that President Truman's mother lived there—and died there, too.

Ms. Robb wondered if that were apocryphal, but Curator Ketchum assured her that President Lincoln's son had indeed died in that room, and she also learned that President Lincoln's autopsy had been performed there. These unhappy revelations did not persuade her to decamp. Instead she found a primitive painting of two young tots and hanged it on the wall, naming it "the Addams children" after a popular television comic-horror series.

Ms. Johnson recalled having her friend Beth Jenkins over, soon after mov-

visions about where it was going to take her, much like a magic carpet. Not so. The Secret Service had its own ideas about where an auto with her in it might go, and at what rate of speed, too. "I remember having several dates who were pulled over and told that if they went one mile over the speed limit, that would be the last time they would drive with me. And that was usually the last time I went out with them.

"Later when my children would say to me, 'You—don't—understand!' I would say, 'How on earth could I understand? I had a bizarre adolescence. You're just stuck with me; I'm doing the best that I can.'"

Ms. Robb added, "We had a deal. I wouldn't tell on them if they wouldn't tell

From the Archives

Michael Gillette, then head of the LBJ Library Oral History Program, wrote a letter to Jay Taylor, one of LBJ's oldest friends, asking him to write something about his association with the President. This is Mr. Taylor's reply.

Amarillo, Texas
April 25, 1981

Dear Mr. Gillette:

Your request for me to write about President Johnson is very upsetting, as I feel totally inadequate to really write about all the nice things he did in Washington...

There is one thing I do know about the President that not too many people know and that is he liked to hunt and was a good hunter with rifle and shotgun... We went over to Wellington once to hunt bob white quail with some of our friends. Trying to keep up with a long-legged guy like him was some job for all of us. He hunted like he worked—at a trot. We came back into the friend's house to eat lunch and take a short nap. The President was sleeping soundly on the upper floor and everybody was afraid to wake him—including me. So I turned my two bird dogs loose and one of them jumped right square in the middle of the President, and started licking his face. He laughed and grabbed my dog around the neck and said, "That's the best waking up I ever had."

He invited us to Johnson City to hunt doves on his ranch and he organized it like he would a battle. He stationed all the hunters around a great big dam before the doves started coming. He got a big chair and sat on the top of the dam, talking to all of us with a bullhorn as the doves came in from the left and right and behind us and ribbed us when we missed a dove. Finally he said, "I am going to get my limit now. Your are on your own." He took his gun and sat under a tree. In no time at all he had his 12 doves....

When you hunt with a man for 35 years, you learn quite a bit about him. There was absolutely no pretense. He loved to hunt for the same reason I do—the companionship of nice people and getting out in the open air. He was a great hunting companion and a real friend.

Sincerely,

(s) Jay Taylor

[Mr. Taylor was chairman of Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas, president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, and a member of the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. He died in 1982.]

An Evening with Norman Lear

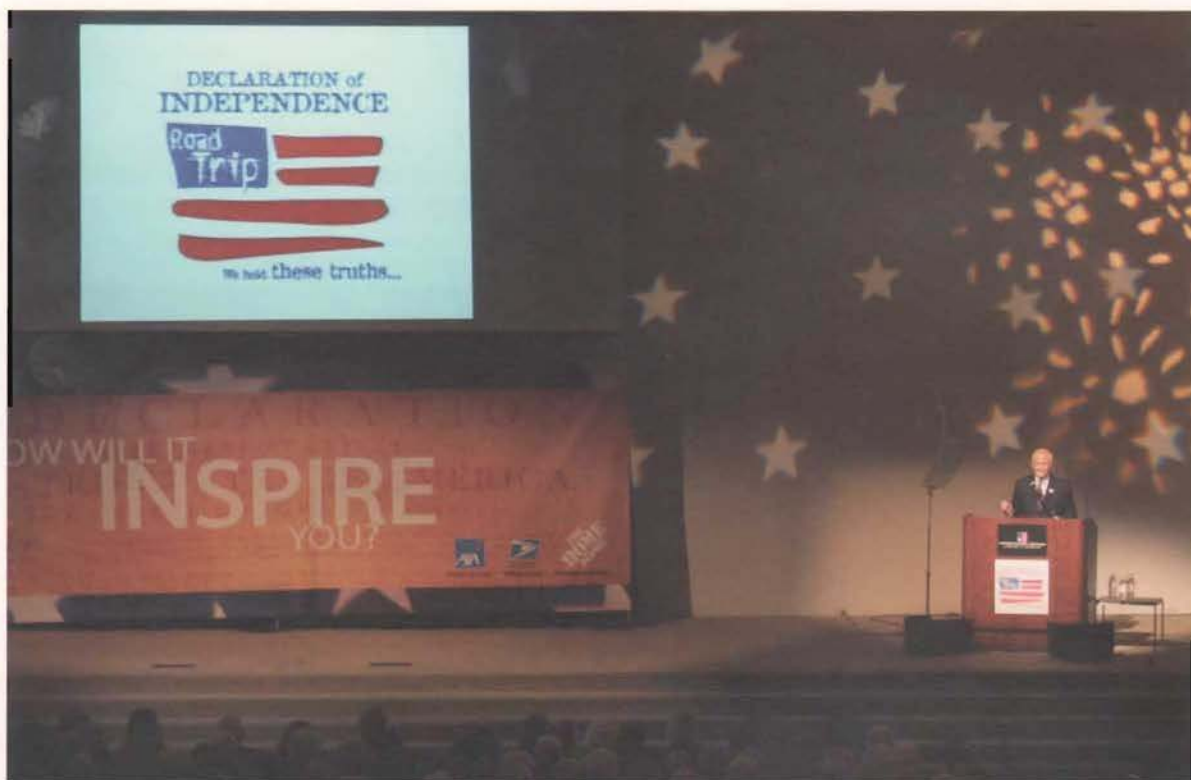
Norman Lear has brought the nation some of its most memorable television series, among them "All in the Family," "Sanford and Son," "Maude," "Good Times," and "The Jeffersons." His movie credits include "Fried Green Tomatoes," "Stand by Me," and "The Princess Bride." Currently, he is bringing the country closer to its roots by sending one of the original broad-side copies of the Declaration of Independence on a road trip throughout the country. Lear does not usually accompany the document on its travels, but on October 28, 2003, he made an exception for the LBJ Library.

He has undertaken this project, Lear says, as part of his three-stage love affair with America. That affair began when he was very young. His grandfather would take him to the parades on the Fourth of July, and on Armistice Day (today it is Veterans Day), and on the birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln (today we only celebrate Presidents' Day). The old man was an inveterate writer of letters to the president, Lear recalled, and he would read them to his grandson: "They all started off with, 'My dearest darling Mr. President: I want you to remember that'—and then he would give him some piece of advice. Even when he disagreed with the president, he would write: 'My dearest darling Mr. President: Didn't I tell you last week—?'" And often there would come an answer, in a little white envelope with "The White House" on the return address.

Lear helped his grandfather write to the Congress, too. "In those years," he related, "you could send a telegram to

every member of the Congress for a buck and a half, so long as it was the same ten-word telegram. You could cover the Congress for under two dollars. So I would collect dimes and quarters and pennies and so forth, and we would send a telegram and wait for the response; dozens

ends Falwell and Robertson and Swaggert started to use the media... when I heard Swaggert one day ask audiences to pray—he said it cannily, but the import of what he said was to ask them to pray for the demise of a couple of members of the Supreme Court. I just couldn't be-



"Norman Lear described his love affair with America."

Photo by Charles Bogel.

of pieces of mail from various corners of the government."

Then came the second stage: World War II. "I couldn't wait to get into it," Lear said. "I flew fifty-two missions in the European Theater. I often wonder how in one lifetime I could have been a kid sitting in a plane, looking at bombs falling, thinking about them falling on farms, not necessarily on soldiers, and being happy about it, and feeling good about it, and growing up to be somebody who can't *imagine* that kid sitting at the radio of a B-17, waiting for bombs to fall on, perhaps, innocent civilians."

"The third act of this lifetime [love affair with America]," Lear explained, "I think probably started with... the proliferation of TV evangelicals, when Rever-

lieve what I'd heard. In response I wrote and cast and produced a sixty-second television spot in which a working stiff, not unlike Archie Bunker, was... talking about... getting a ton of mail from ministers, and seeing them on television and hearing them on the radio, saying that whether you were a good Christian or a bad Christian depended upon your political point of view." And the man concluded, "That's not the American way."

Around that TV spot a national movement coalesced into People for the American Way, Lear said, which produced a two-hour television special emphasizing that "the flag and the bible are ours as much as they are anybody else's."

When Lear learned that Sotheby's

was auctioning one of the original broadside copies of the Declaration of Independence, he thought, "This is my country's birth certificate. If we can get it, we will somehow find the support we need to take it on tour." He was right. Within twenty-four hours of his acquiring the document, Lear said, he had phone calls from every presidential library, from the

Winter Olympics, from the Super Bowl, even from the World Wrestling Federation. Former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter are serving as co-chairmen of the Declaration of Independence Road Trip.

The document was on display at the LBJ Library from October 24 to

November 9, 2003. During that brief time, 11,000 school children visited the Library. Austin was the fiftieth stop on the document's national tour, which has included visits to the Bush, Carter, Gerald Ford, and Truman libraries.

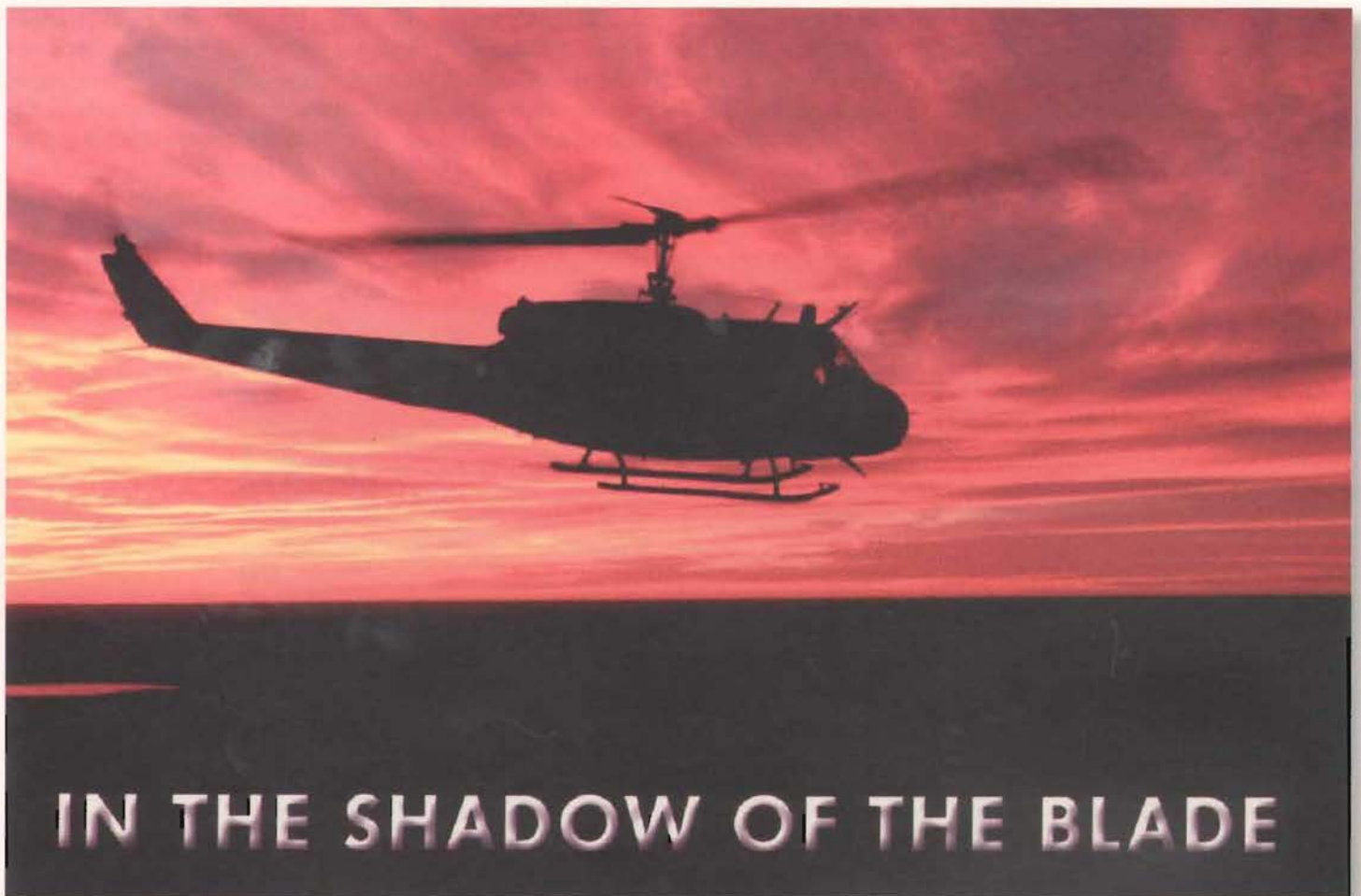


"Approximately thirty thousand visitors saw the Declaration of Independence exhibit, including eleven thousand schoolchildren."

Photo by Charles Bogel.



A Traveling Vietnam Memorial



All who served in the Vietnam War will never forget the sound: "Whop. Whop. Whop. Whop; Whap-Whap-Whap-Whap; Whop. Whop. Whop...." It is the song of the HU1 helicopter, its rotor blades slapping the air, and there is no other melody like it.

Some Vietnam veterans can feel that throbbing, staccato refrain before they actually hear it. One former artilleryman in Austin, Texas recalled, "I was sitting in my living room one night years ago, when I suddenly alerted to a sensation I had not felt for a long time. And I blurted, 'What the hell? That's a Huey!' My wife looked at me like I had gone nuts; she didn't hear anything. But sure enough, in about half a minute here they came, not one but several in formation, perhaps a national guard or reserve unit in a summer training exercise at Ft. Hood."

The UH1 has become an icon of the U.S. effort in Vietnam. Several years ago Austin filmmaker Patrick Fries and his wife Cheryl decided to document its story. Their website says,

"On October 2, 2002, Director Patrick Fries and his Arrowhead Film and Video production crew lifted off on a documentary film mission to follow a restored Vietnam-veteran UH-1H 'Huey' helicopter on a 10,000-mile flight across the country. Accompanied by an aerial cinematography chopper and three support vehicles, the crew of *In the Shadow of the Blade* recorded more than 200 hours of interviews, reunions, and ceremonies inspired by the Huey's flight to small towns and major cities, backyards and farmyards, and memorials and military bases.

"More than fifty Vietnam helicopter pilots got to ride in the Huey's left seat. The chopper carried gunners, crew chiefs, infantrymen, nurses, Medal of Honor recipients and POWs, Red Cross 'Donut Dollies' and USO performers, Gold Star parents, wives, siblings, and children—including three children of pilots killed in action."

In the Shadow of the Blade premiered in the LBJ Auditorium on November 8. Director Cheryl Fries wrote this about the event:

"An estimated 700 veterans and families affected by Vietnam traveled to Austin for the film premiere. We counted 32 states represented, including Alaska and Hawaii. And it was such an important event for so many people who found their experiences validated



An overflow crowd in the LBJ Auditorium rose to pledge allegiance before the screening.

Photo by Robert Hicks

in the film. There were several 'behind-the-scenes' magical moments:

—James Johnson, an infantryman who charged through an NVA attack to retrieve his wounded sergeant Ron Corbin and crawled back with him on his back, met Corbin's widow for the first time on November 8 at the LBJ Auditorium. Johnson had come from Georgia. Nancy Corbin Corsiglia had traveled from Illinois. Johnson tells us he sleeps at night now for the first time in 34 years, because he has finally been able to deliver Ron's dying words to his widow.

—Austinite Bill Laurence, Jr. was surrounded in the audience by men who served in the

162d Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam, the same unit in which Laurence's father was killed in action. This was the first time Bill Jr. had ever met any Vietnam veterans, much less those who served with his father.

—Sitting next to Colonel and Mrs. Ben Purcell was Lynda Gammage, who wore Colonel Purcell's POW bracelet for years as a teenager. Colonel Purcell was held for six years in Hanoi; he was the highest-ranking U.S. Army officer released by the North Vietnamese.

"This is an independent film produced by a 'mom and pop shop;' we've struggled and scraped to make this film. What a wonderful



Kim Douglas Sistrunk, whose father was killed in action as a Vietnam helicopter pilot, takes the left seat as her dad's war-time comrades ride in the back. "I feel like I can move on now." Kim said after the ride.

Photo by Sarah Beal

gift it was for the LBJ Museum to sponsor our use of the facility for this important night, during which the vast majority of our film subjects came together for the first and probably only time to see what we all created together! And what an appropriate place to hold the event....

"As one of our veteran crewmembers, Bob Baird (2 tours/Huey pilot), said, 'The film is about healing and reconciliation. I can't imagine that anyone was more tortured and broken by that war than its Commander-in-Chief. It's nice to think that maybe he got some healing from this too.'"

www.intheshadowoftheblade.com



In the Shadow of the Blade's Huey 091 lifts Vietnam veterans into the skies over Houston, Texas.

Photo by Sarah Beal

Researcher Sets Milestone



By Robert Hicks,
Public Relations Officer

On October 3, 2002, Amanda Warnock, a graduate student in Latin American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, became the 10,000th researcher at the LBJ Library and Museum.

Her topic is "Alliance for Progress: De-industrialization of the U.S. and Development of Industry in Central America."

Deputy Director Tina Houston presented Ms. Warnock with a signed copy of *LBJ: The White House Years*, by former Library Director Harry Middleton, and a sample CD of President Johnson's telephone tape conversations.

Since the Library opened in 1971, researchers working in the archives have produced 786 books, 204 dissertations, 93 theses, and nearly 900 journal articles and conference papers.

Photo by Charles Bogel

The “Mayor of the Reading Room” Retires

Her customers, some ten thousand LBJ Library researchers who have benefited from her expertise, gave Linda Seelke the title in this headline. She retired from the Library staff on October 31, 2003, after serving since January 1969, two days after her 21st birthday. It is the only job she has ever had, except for one semester of typing tests for professors in the English Department at UT—and a college summer at the Donut King. In the navy she would be called a plank owner, which is the nickname for the first crew to serve a new ship. When Ms. Seelke came aboard, there was no LBJ Library, just a mass of files in the Federal Building in downtown Austin.

Ms. Seelke had three names while working at the Library. For the first six months, she was Linda Maxey, and from 1969 until 1997, she went by Linda Hanson.

Her first responsibility on the staff was to maintain President Johnson's Kardex file of friends' names, addresses, salutations (Dear Chub), and a brief description of their correspondence contents. She also kept President Johnson's Post-Presidential files.

“Once we opened for research,” writes Ms. Seelke, “archivists (including me) took turns in the Reading Room. I became a permanent daily RR Archivist in 1979, eventually becoming the Reading Room Team Leader.”

Putting it mildly, that is a modest summary of what Linda Seelke has accomplished in the last thirty-four years. Robert Dallek, author of a highly-respected biography of President Johnson, put it another way: “Linda is the sort of archivist that I hoped against hope I would find at the LBJ Library when I began my

research there. She mustn't be allowed to retire.”

Lloyd Gardner, a distinguished diplomatic and political historian, and Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University, wrote:

“One of the reasons—one of the main reasons—the LBJ Library is such a great place to work has always been people like Linda Seelke. She runs a great reading room, and shares her knowledge and good humor with researchers whose importunities, sometimes at least, would drive one to distraction.”

Here is historian John Prados' salute: “For me, for more than two decades, Linda has been a reservoir of encouragement, a portal into the oral history and taped record of Lyndon Johnson's life, and a fountain of insight into the Johnson family. She will be sorely missed.”



July, 1972.



October, 2003. With husband Larry Seelke, granddaughter Abigail, daughter Shelly, and son Matt.

From the Age of Franklin to the Age of Gold: An Evening with H. W. Brands

In *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman wrote of himself, "I am large; I contain multitudes." Whitman would recognize a kindred spirit in Professor H. W. (Bill) Brands. Since receiving his Ph.D from The University of Texas at Austin in 1985, Dr. Brands has written seventeen books, which comes to just about a book a year. They cover a staggering range of topics. Here are some of the titles: *The Age of Gold*; *The Strange Death of American Liberalism*; *The First American* (a best-selling biography of Benjamin Franklin, and a finalist for the Pulitzer

Prize); *TR: The Last Romantic*; *What America Owes the World*; *The Reckless Decade*; *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War*; and *The Wages of Globalism* (a Choice Outstanding Academic Book winner).

Before taking his Ph.D, Brands earned a bachelor's degree in history from Stanford, and two master's degrees, one in liberal studies and one in mathematics (!). And somewhere in all this academic flurry, he spent a year as a traveling salesman.

Today Brands is a Distinguished Professor of History at Texas A&M.

On this evening he proposed to draw a line connecting two of his latest works: the history of the California gold rush, and his biography of Franklin. The connection that Brands makes is that in Franklin's time, Americans believed that one became successful by working hard, saving money, avoiding vice—in short, by heeding the aphorisms in *Poor Richard's Almanac* ("There are no gains without pains." "At the working man's house



H. W. Brands: "The Gold Rush was the greatest accident in American history."

Photo by Charles Bogel.

hunger looks in but dares not enter," etc.) The gold rush dramatically changed how Americans viewed success, and how one became successful.

As he was researching the Franklin book, Brands noted that although this remarkable man seemed to go from one success to another, a good deal of his good fortune was just that: good fortune, or luck. As a young boy he tried to find work in New York, failed, and went on to Philadelphia. There his life evolved in ways it never would have done in New York. When the colony of Pennsylvania later asked a mature Franklin to be its representative in London, he accepted, fell in love with the great city, and tried mightily to get his wife to join him there. If she had joined Franklin in England, he almost certainly would not have played the part he later did in the revolution. But she was deathly afraid of ocean voyages and refused to go. One can argue that Franklin, by marrying a woman who feared the sea, insured his place in American history. Luck and accident, Poor Richard notwithstanding.

The greatest accident in American history, Brands argued, occurred on January 24, 1848, when "on the middle fork of the American River, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California, James Marshall discovered gold. This was one of those things that,

twenty minutes before it happened, no one had any idea it was going to happen." Marshall wasn't looking for gold. He was digging a ditch for a sawmill race. His discovery fundamentally changed Americans' perceptions of California and the West, of politics, and of the critical issues of the day--and most importantly, it changed Americans' perceptions of themselves and what constituted success.

And not only that. Brands asserted that the California gold rush was the first event in modern world history; the first event to affect almost the entire world, almost simultaneously. Within months, people were coming to California from Chile, Australia, France, Belgium, from everywhere.

Brands pointed out that the political consequences of the gold rush were considerable. It was common knowledge during the war with Mexico that the slavery controversy in the United States, already a point of sore contention, would be sharpened with the acquisition of new territories at the war's end. Would slavery be permitted in the new territories, or not? Until now, the slavery question had been successfully compromised between the pro-slavery forces and the antis. But now the process of compromise would be severely tested. "California filled up with people far faster than anyone had ever expected," Brands noted, and all at once, or

so it seemed, the Territory of California had enough population to petition Washington for statehood—with a constitution that forbade slavery.

Hence the necessity for the Compromise of 1850. But then came the desire to build a railroad to California, which prompted the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which in turn destroyed the Compromise of 1850—and in a short time and as a direct result, there came the Civil War. Perhaps if there had been no gold in California, the nation would have had the leisure to work out a peaceful resolution of the slavery issue. But once gold was discovered, there was not enough time.

California gold had great impact on the American psyche as well. "When Americans went out to California," Brands said, "they had a particular model of material success in their heads." The model was Poor Richard, as noted above. But California seemed to indicate otherwise—that rewards tend to go to people who are willing to gamble. Success depended less on the quality of your character than it did on how well your luck held out.

That model still prevails in California, Brands believes, more than it does in Ben Franklin's Boston. That is why Silicon Valley happened in the West, and not in New England.



Tony Borawski, Irene Borawski, Karl Buesing, and Lala Niemeyer were among 25 LBJ volunteers who recently participated in the Race for the Cure for Breast Cancer in Austin.

A Memorable Evening With "Papa"

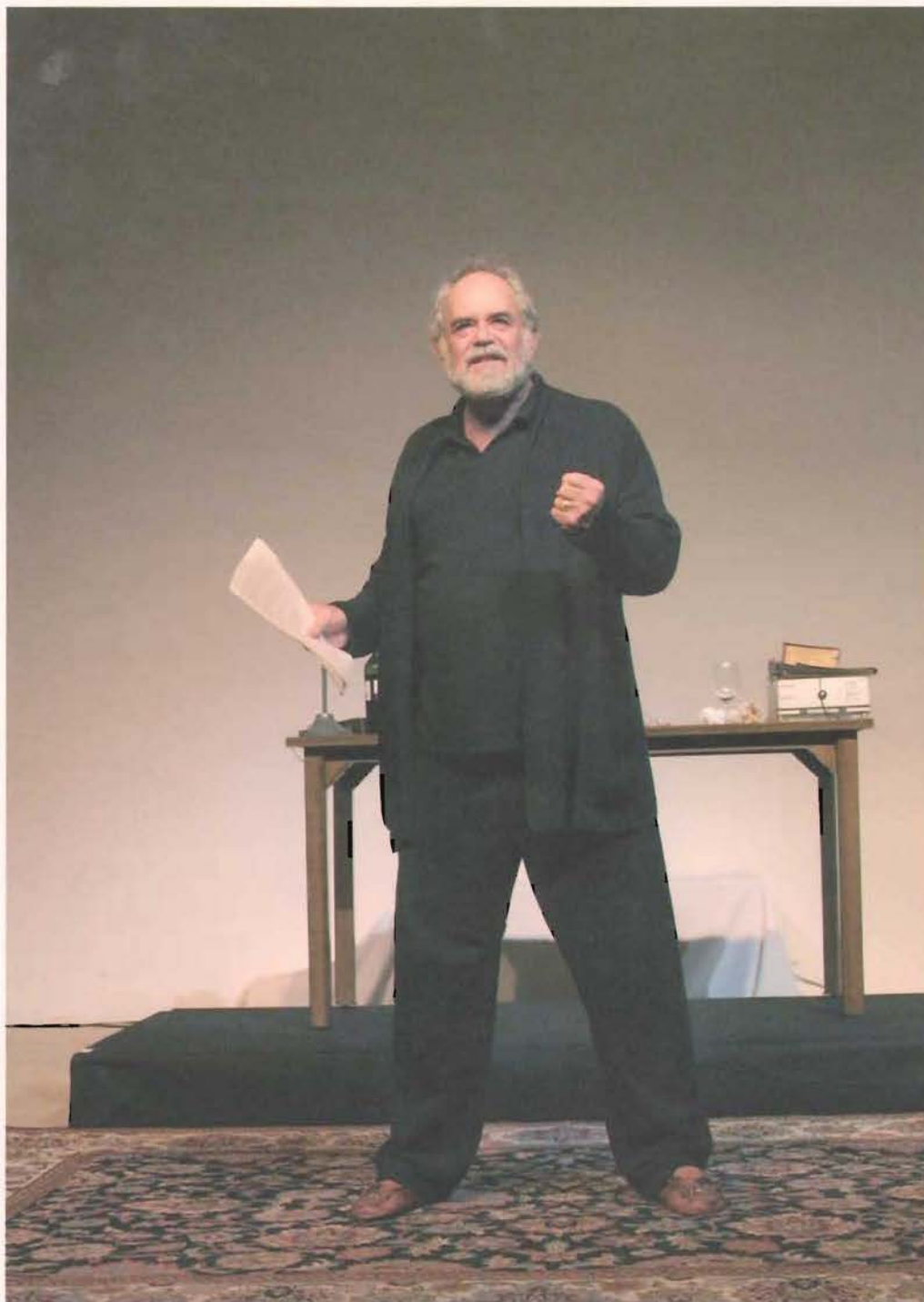
In 1994, to honor the then-Director of the LBJ Library and Museum, Lady Bird Johnson created the Harry Middleton Lectureship. In the next year former president Jimmy Carter came to the Library to give the first Middleton Lecture.

The term "lecture" is a bit misleading. Given Mr. Middleton's twin passions

for the theater and for literature, it is no surprise that in the past he has often preferred performances from those arts to traditional lectures. Famed Shakespearean Michael York has twice been the Harry Middleton lecturer. On October 22, 2003 Mr. Middleton again combined theater and literature when he sponsored a lecture by actor Laurence Luckinbill, in

his stunning one-man show, "An Evening with Ernest Hemingway."

Luckinbill has punctuated his wide-ranging movie and television career with a series of such presentations, in which he resurrects famous historical personae. Fifteen years ago he came to the LBJ Library to debut his interpretation of



At the end a gunshot, and sudden darkness.

Photo by Charles Bogel.

Lyndon B. Johnson. Many who saw Luckinbill's performance, and who knew the former president, said the actor's portrayal was eerie in its evocative strength.

Luckinbill has returned to the LBJ Auditorium stage several times since then, once as liberal activist lawyer Clarence Darrow (the defense attorney in the Scopes "monkey trial"), again as Theodore Roosevelt, and most recently to play the role of Hemingway. Choosing the best among his performances would be a challenge. But it is doubtful that any surpassed the power of Luckinbill's latest appearance, when he interpreted the man known to millions simply as Papa.

Luckinbill's Hemingway is in reverie, at the end of his life, teetering on the edge of suicide, conjuring up memories of friends, enemies, and lovers, some yet living, others on the far side of the chasm that divides the living from the dead.

To the still-living William Faulkner he says:

"[I] never trust a man with a southern accent; you know you could talk reasonable English... if you weren't a phony."

And to F. Scott Fitzgerald, now twenty years dead:

"... [Y]ou're just pissed that I'm still this side of paradise... Good title; I think I'll use it."

And finally speaking only to himself, he gives this assessment of his life:

"It was with the women that I loved that I quarreled so much that we finally, always, with the corrosion of the quarreling, killed what we had together. I loved too much; I demanded too much, and I wore it all out, and my life is over. But I've gone on living it again with different people and more money. Hadley, Pauline,

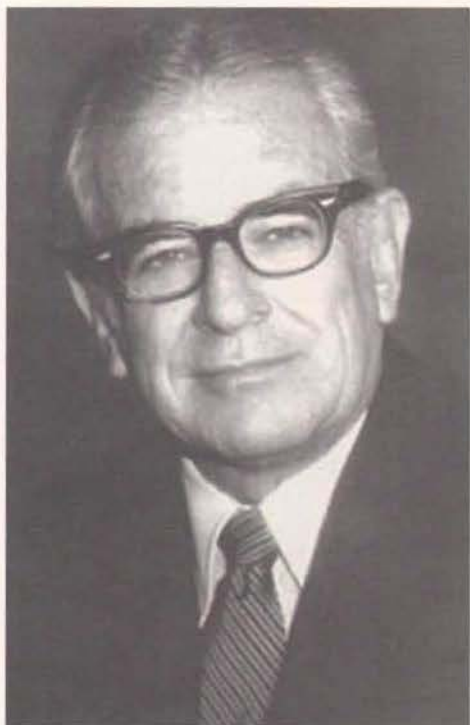
Martha, and now Mary, the longest, almost sixteen years...."

"Don't blame her. Don't blame her! If your talent is destroyed, you destroyed it yourself, by not using it, by betrayals of yourself and what you believed in, by drinking so much it blunted the edge of your perceptions; by laziness, by sloth, and by snobbery, by pride and by prejudice...."

"It's simple. It's simple. Like the old Indian told me up in Michigan, 'Long time ago good; now no good.'"

"And Old Suicides, as we called him down in Bimini, drinking himself to death and Big Harry trying to encourage him by telling him to go to New York City and jump off the highest part of the city into 'o-blivion.' I think he figured O'Blivion was an Irish neighborhood."

In Memoriam



Otis Singletary, Jr.
Director, Job Corps, 1964-1965



Miriam Middleton,
Spouse of former LBJ Library
Director Harry Middleton, with
Lady Bird Johnson

Afghans, Soviets, and the Congressman from Texas

Actor Tom Hanks bought the movie rights to the book. George Crile, who at CBS oversaw productions of "60 Minutes" and "60 Minutes II," wrote the book. Former East Texas Congressman Charlie Wilson—"Goodtime Charlie Wilson" to many—provided the raw material for the book: *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History*. On October 7, 2003, Messrs. Wilson and Crile came to the LBJ Library to sign copies of the book, and speak to the Friends of LBJ in attendance.

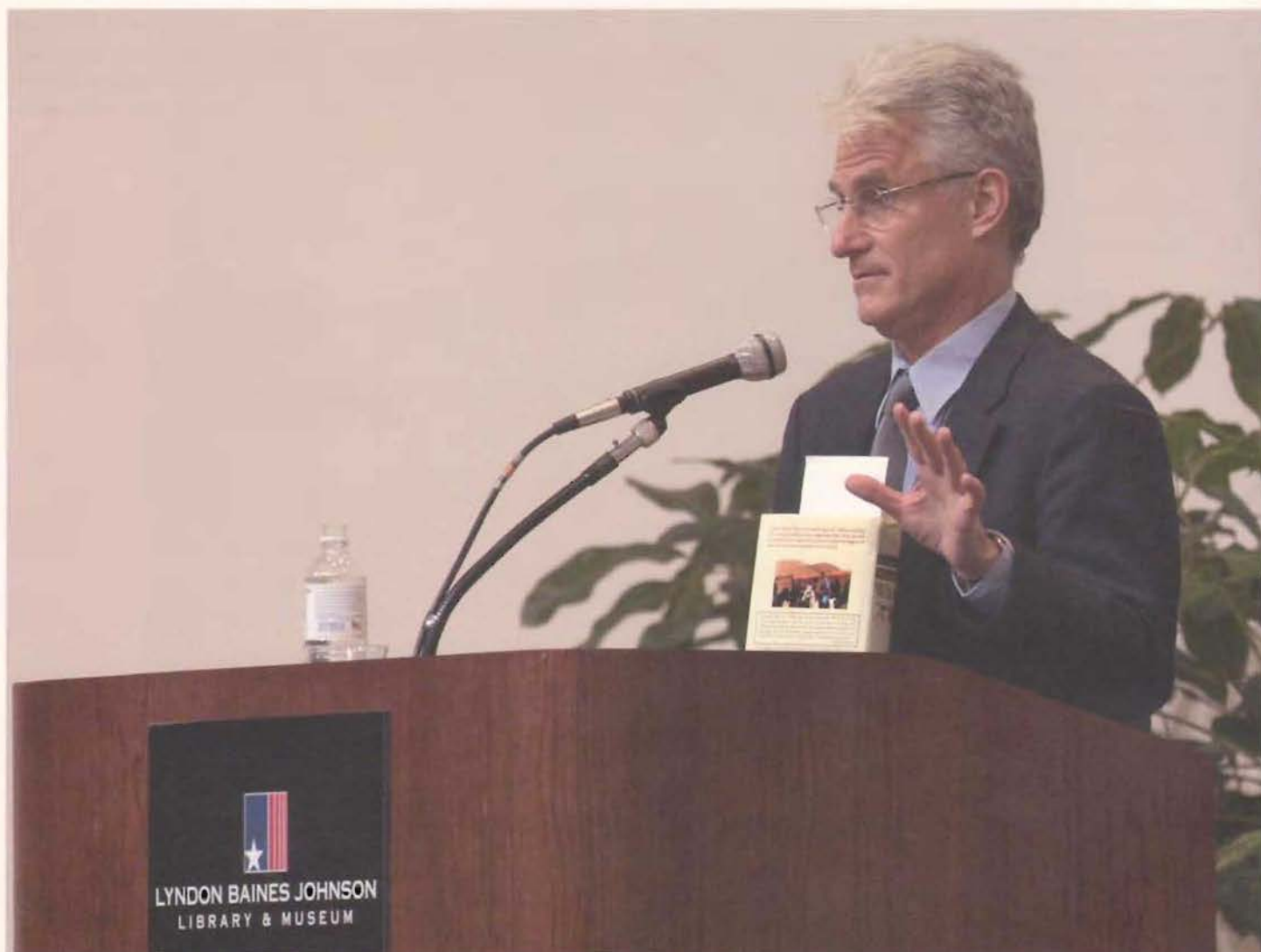
In introducing Congressman Wilson and Mr. Crile, LBJ Library Director Betty Sue Flowers noted that Wilson had been

a member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, and a thoroughgoing anti-communist and Cold Warrior. His role in the war between Afghan mujahideen and Soviet invaders was the key to the Afghani's success in foiling their enemy, which in turn contributed materially to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. (This was no unmixed blessing; another result was to leave huge quantities of arms in the hands of hundreds of thousands of Muslim fundamentalists.)

Mr. Crile led off by observing that the *New York Times* once summarized Congressman Wilson simply as the "greatest party animal in Congress." And Crile

admitted that Wilson indeed had lived a much drawn-out period of adolescence. While other politicians cultivated images as sober, well-behaved custodians of the public's business, Wilson rather gloried in his playboy reputation—which served him well as cover during his secret career opposing the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Crile noted that two events in the last fifteen years have profoundly changed America's perception of the world. One was the sudden, unforeseen disappearance of the Soviet Union, and the other was the equally sudden and seemingly inexplicable emergence of militant fundamentalist Islam, which has replaced the Soviets as our international enemy.



George Crile spent more than a decade researching the "biggest covert operation in history."

Photo by Charles Bogel.



Congressman Wilson: He provided the Stinger missiles that forced the Soviets out of Afghanistan.

Photo by Charles Bogel.

The "biggest party animal in Congress," Crile argued, is near the center of both events.

Congressman Wilson began his presentation by reading from a review of *Charlie Wilson's War* that had an interesting perspective on himself and his works:

The main character in this rattling good yarn, Charlie Wilson, was a U.S. congressman when the Cold War was raging. Rarely can the prefix 'honorable' have been less appropriate. The man was a drunken, shiftless, ignorant, lying, drug-taking, zipper-flipping, corrupt, power-crazed cretin. His only value was his ability, through membership on influential congressional committees, to move large sums of money, legally and often otherwise, as subsidies to purchase weapons

and equipment for groups fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan. The fact that most of the cash was wasted meant nothing to him.

When the laughter from the audience subsided, Wilson continued in a more sober vein: "Nobody will ever know what the poor, barefoot tribesmen and shepherds of Afghanistan did for the West." On Christmas, 1979 the great Soviet shock army had been turned loose on Afghanistan, he observed, a country in which most people had never seen a tank. "We all thought," he said, "that this would be another Soviet conquest; that within five or six weeks the country would be pacified. It would be another satellite like Hungary or Poland or Czechoslovakia." But after six weeks, the Afghans were still in the field, using World War I-era rifles. Wilson and others proposed to CIA Director William Casey that the U.S. should be supplying them

with more modern weapons. Casey agreed, and "We began the greatest effort at what I call 'noble smuggling' that ever took place."

It wasn't enough, Wilson observed. The Afghans continued to resist but were still losing; their villages being savaged, often from the air. The turning point came on September 26, 1986, when President Reagan, against the unanimous advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, decided to send the Afghans what they needed most: a weapon that could deal with the potent Soviet armed, and armored, Hind helicopter, which with impunity could attack and destroy the most remote Afghan villages. The antidote to it was the Stinger missile, and its impact was immediate. Soviet Hind pilots found that they could no longer operate safely at altitudes below twenty thousand feet. This was decisive. It took another thirty months of murderous guerilla warfare, but on February 15, 1989 the Soviet army ignominiously marched out of Afghanistan.

Wilson argued that this debacle broke the morale of the Red Army, and crippled its influence in the Kremlin. Nine months later the Berlin Wall began crumbling before the onslaught of West German sledge hammers. The Soviet generals advised President Mikhail Gorbachev that a military solution to the German problem was possible. Gorbachev rejected their counsel, something earlier Soviet presidents might not have dared to do. Because of the Red Army's failure in Afghanistan, Wilson believes, the Soviet bloc now began to unravel. "For one of the few times in history, flesh and blood triumphed over fire and steel." America can be proud of the part it played in this story, but "the big part was the people that shed their blood without fear, without trembling, without concern."

Future Forum Hosts Noted Analyst



David Phillips, on the right, Deputy Director of the Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations, was the guest speaker at a Future Forum gathering in the LBJ Library recently. Mr. Phillips gave his views during a dialog with Forum Board member Shannon Bangle, on the right.

Mr. Phillips believes that Iran is making steady progress toward true representative democracy, and in the future might well be a partner with the United States in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Photo by Charles Bogel.

A Future Forum Musicale

The invitation to Future Forum members read;

"Please join us [on October 14, 2003] as we explore "The State of Austin Music"—a joint event presented by the LBJ Library Future Forum and KLRU's Associate Producers Circle. If you have been hoping to see the Austin City Limits Studios in person, here is your chance! We will have a panel discussion on the State of Austin Music, followed by a chance to view the State of Austin Music up close and personal, with performances by some of Austin's great musicians. There will also be drinks and food. Come for a great evening of fun."

<http://www.lbjfutureforum.org>



Photo by Charles Bogel]

Christmas from the White House



Liz Carpenter, former press secretary to Lady Bird Johnson, examines the exhibit.

Photo by Charles Bogel

After twice being featured at the White House, Ronald and Mary Seeley's Presidential Christmas collection can be seen at the Johnson Library and Museum from October 18, 2003 through February 16, 2004. The exhibit contains more than 200 White House greeting cards, illustrations, gifts, and other holiday memorabilia spanning much of U.S. history, particularly the 20th century.



Photo by Kendra Mayer, LBJ Library Web Assistant

Official White House gift print for 2003. Personally signed by the President and Mrs. Bush.



A Festive Board



On December 10, a hundred LBJ Library and Museum docents and volunteers gathered on the Library's eighth floor for their annual pot luck Christmas dinner party.

Photo by Charles Bogel.



An Alumnus Reports

Former LBJ Museum Curator Gary Yarrington sends this:

"A bronze sculpture of mine has been accepted in a prestigious... equine exhibition at the National Sculpture Society at 237 Park Avenue, New York City. The exhibition opens March 22 and continues through July 30. The sculpture's title is 'Baroque 2003.' A cast of the sculpture was purchased from the 'Sculptors Dominion Invitational' last May in San Antonio."

Mr. Yarrington works in the studio of his North Austin home.

Photo by Gary Yarrington

A Distinguished Visitor



President Vicente Fox of Mexico gave an address at the LBJ Auditorium during a recent three-day visit to the U.S.

Photo compliments of the Mexican Consulate, Austin.

From the Photo Archives



December 22, 1964. At the LBJ Ranch, the President meets with his top military advisers to craft the next Defense Department budget. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara is seated with the

President. Standing are: General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff of the Army; Admiral David L. McDonald, Chief of Naval Operations; General Curtis E. LeMay, Chief of Staff of the Air Force;

General Earl G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs; Cyrus Vance, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and General Wallace M. Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corps.

The White House—In Miniature

Central Texans have the chance to get an inside tour of the President's house without the hassles of traveling to the nation's capital. The White House in Miniature exhibit is on display at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum until February 16, 2004.

Created on a scale of one inch to one foot, The White House in Miniature is a

remarkable creation with captivating detail. Featuring exact representations, this miniature mansion is a large, 60 feet long by 20 feet wide replica that took John and Jan Zweifel and a dedicated corps of volunteers more than 35 years to research, design, and construct.

From the tiny working telephones, hand-carved chairs and tables, crystal

chandeliers, portraits exactly like those that grace the White House's walls and miniature carpets that reproduce the originals stitch by stitch—each nuance of the White House is painstakingly reproduced to capture the elegance of one of the world's most recognized residences.



Luci Johnson shares a White House memory with her cousin, University of Texas Law School Professor Phillip Bobbitt.

Photos by Charles Bogel.



The State Dining Room



The Blue Room.



The Oval Office

I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LBJ LIBRARY

- ☐ **General Membership** \$65 per person annually
(\$130 per couple)
- ☐ **Senior Citizen Membership** \$50 per person annually
(\$100 per couple)
- ☐ **Sustaining Membership** \$200 annually
(Accumulative toward Lifetime Membership)
- ☐ **Lifetime Membership** \$2,000
- ☐ **Corporate Membership** \$5,000 annually
(Please call 478-7829 for Corporate Membership information)
- ☐ **Enclosed is my check.**

Name _____ (please print)

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Please make checks payable to: The Friends of LBJ Library
2313 Red River
Austin, TX 78705-5702

Coming Events:

- February 6 "Ideas in Action: a Colloquium Celebrating Walt Rostow's *Concept and Controversy: Sixty Years of Taking Ideas to Market*. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., LBJ Library 8th Floor, Atrium and Brown Room. Open to the public, by ticket.
- February 24 An Evening with Greg Curtis, *Texas Monthly* editor and author of *Disarmed: The Story of the Venus de Milo*. 6:00 p.m. A Friends of LBJ Event; reception to follow.
- March 25-27 Civil rights symposium, sponsored by the LBJ Foundation and the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Participants include Bill Moyers, Jack Valenti. Registration fee required. Contact Kristie Kimbell, 512-471-3200; www.utexas.edu/lbj/civilrights
- March 6-April 25 Special exhibit, "Bob Hope: American Patriot."
- April 13 An Evening with Joseph A. Califano, Jr. A Friends of LBJ Event; LBJ Auditorium, 6:00 p.m., reception to follow.
- May 29-September 5 Special Exhibit: "The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden."

Among Friends of LBJ is a publication of the Friends of the LBJ Library.

Editor: Ted Gittinger

Writers: Cheryl Fries, Robert Hicks

Research Assistance: Robert Hicks, Claudia Anderson

Photography: Charles Bogel, Gary Phelps, Sarah Beal

www.lbjlib.utexas.edu

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

