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Contact: press@whha.org



NEW Episode: *The White House 1600 Sessions* Podcast “Painting White House History”

White House Historical Association President Stewart McLaurin Discusses the Stories Behind Commissioned Paintings with Artist Peter Waddell

March 11, 2025 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association released a new episode of *The White House 1600 Sessions* podcast today about the Association’s specially commissioned paintings reflecting the history of the White House and its residents throughout different periods. In the episode, Stewart McLaurin, president of the Association, is joined by renowned artist Peter Waddell to discuss three of Waddell’s extraordinary paintings that are part of the Association’s collection: *A Vision Takes Form, 1796* about the construction of the White House; *Tiber Creek: The Bathers* which depicts a moment when President John Quincy Adams escaped a leaking boat; and *First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy at Malmaison, 1961* which shows Mrs. Kennedy visiting the home of Empress Josephine of France.

Peter Waddell, originally from New Zealand, is known for his well-researched depictions of the history and architecture of the nation’s capital. Beginning in 2004, the Association commissioned Waddell to create paintings of moments from White House history that were not visually captured definitively in their own times. Today, the result is over a dozen pieces of artwork that capture lesser-known moments of presidential life at the Executive Mansion.

“You can hear the birds, the wind rustling through the trees. These paintings—as you observe them—bring that moment in time to life,” McLaurin said. “They tell the rich and wonderful history of the White House.”

Waddell’s creative process starts with research and a vision. Since accuracy is foundational to his pieces, he works closely with a committee from the White House Historical Association to research historic details to include in his paintings. His commitment to depicting history accurately and meaningfully can be seen in how he approached the idea of showing how the White House was designed and built.

“I think the interesting message is the presence of George Washington on everything in Washington—every aspect,” Waddell said. “They knew they didn’t want tall buildings. People say Washington was inspired by Paris. Paris was inspired by Washington.”

President George W. Bush took an interest in Waddell’s work, recognizing the time and nuance behind his craft—an appreciation that deepened when President Bush himself took up painting as a

hobby. Now, Waddell's paintings grace cultural institutions and collections worldwide in a powerful testament to the impact of the art.

Peter Waddell's paintings for the White House Historical Association can be viewed [here](#).

The full video of this podcast episode is also available on the White House Historical Association's YouTube channel [here](#).

The White House 1600 Sessions podcast is available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

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

The White House 1600 Sessions

The White House Historical Association's President Stewart McLaurin is the host of *The White House 1600 Sessions*, the Association's official audio and video podcast devoted to exploring the history, cultural impact, untold stories, and personal accounts of America's most iconic residence and highest office.

About the White House Historical Association

The White House Historical Association was founded in 1961 by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to support her vision to restore and preserve the Executive Mansion and its legacy for generations to come. Mrs. Kennedy sought to inspire Americans, especially children, to explore and engage with American history and its presidents. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has contributed more than \$115 million to the White House in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit WhiteHouseHistory.org.

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