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## NEW Episode: *The White House 1600 Sessions* Podcast "The Honey Fitz: A Presidential Yacht"

*White House Historical Association President Stewart McLaurin explores Honey Fitz, the Presidential Yacht, with Owner Charles Modica and Captains Gregory Albritton and Katelyn Kiefer*

May 20, 2025 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association released a new episode of *The White House 1600 Sessions* podcast today about *Honey Fitz*, a yacht once used by five U.S. presidents from President Harry Truman to President Richard Nixon. In the episode, Stewart McLaurin, president of the Association, travels to Jupiter, Florida, where he is joined by Charles Modica, philanthropist and owner of *Honey Fitz*, as well as Captain Gregory Albritton and Captain Katelyn Kiefer, for a tour of the yacht and a discussion about the history of the iconic vessel.

The 94-year-old yacht is famously known for its use by President John F. Kennedy, who selected the name *Honey Fitz* in honor of his maternal grandfather, John Francis Fitzgerald. *Honey Fitz* took several names that were inspired by presidential families throughout the years: President Eisenhower named it *Barbara Anne* after his granddaughter, and President Richard Nixon named it *Patricia* after his wife, First Lady Pat Nixon.

"You can just feel the echo of history in this space and what may have transpired here," said McLaurin from the main salon of *Honey Fitz*. "It's really amazing, and it's beautiful down to every last detail."

After years of being passed down the presidential lineage, *Honey Fitz* was eventually decommissioned and sold to a private owner in 1971. Today, it has been lovingly restored by Modica to reflect its condition when used by the Kennedy family. Captains Albritton and Kiefer did extensive archival research and used presidential photographs and logbooks, along with sketches and notes created by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, to replicate the designs of the Camelot era.

"Even the couches in the main salon have been duplicated and replicated to Mrs. Kennedy's drawings of them," said Modica. "Everything around the vessel is back to the original manufacturer, in some cases, or replicated through photographs."

McLaurin tours *Honey Fitz* with Captain Gregory Albritton and Captain Katelyn Kiefer, who have both been with the boat since before the restoration. Albritton and Kiefer share their unique roles in

shaping and sharing history while exploring the vessel—including the helm, main salon, and decks of *Honey Fitz*.

“I found it to be a very unique situation that we were put in. It’s not often that crew and captain are placed with the opportunity to get as involved in a restoration as were given the chance to,” said Kiefer. “Greg and I did mechanics. He did plumbing. I think it also gave us a great opportunity to know the boat inside and out. That’s a great thing for your crew and a captain to know.”

McLaurin, Albritton, and Kiefer also discuss many of the vessel’s historical elements, including the blue-and-white upholstered furniture designed by Mrs. Kennedy, and a folding map table that stored equipment for the Secret Service, as well as the original dome lights that were rechromed during the restoration and are still used today.

“During the restoration, any time that we were taking things apart, we used as much as we possibly could to keep the boat original,” said Albritton.

*Honey Fitz* is an enduring symbol of a long legacy of U.S. presidents using yachts, beginning from President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880 to President Jimmy Carter selling the *U.S.S. Sequoia* in 1977. Restored and revered for its significance near and far, *Honey Fitz* is one in an important series of vessels that are at the helm of White House history.

The full video of this podcast episode showing the tour of *Honey Fitz* 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 in both audio and video formats.

For more stories about how presidents spent their time away from the office, please refer to the Association’s publication *Away from the White House: Presidential Escapes, Retreats and Vacations* by esteemed journalist and writer Lawrence L. Knutson.

For more information, please contact [press@whha.org](mailto: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](http://WhiteHouseHistory.org).

