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THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEW Episode: *The White House 1600 Sessions* Podcast

"Painting the Presidents: From Washington to Trump"

White House Historical Association President Stewart McLaurin and Artist Salvatore Catalano Explore Presidential Portrait Exhibit at The People's House: A White House Experience

November 18, 2026 (Washington, D.C.) – The White House Historical Association today released a new episode of *The White House 1600 Sessions* podcast. Stewart McLaurin, president of the Association, joined by artist Salvatore Catalano, explore a special temporary exhibit, *Portraits of the American Presidency*, newly installed at The People's House: A White House Experience. The award-winning museum experience, which is located one block from the White House and has welcomed over 600,000 visitors since opening in September 2024, is operated by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Association with the mission of making White House history more accessible to all.

Catalano is an artist and educator whose career includes collaborations with renowned organizations including Scholastic and The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. He has illustrated books, postage stamps, and billboards, in addition to creating hundreds of portraits of notable public figures in American and Italian culture. His nuanced artistry is on full display in his portraiture work, at The People's House, as seen in the presidential portraits representing 47 presidencies commissioned by John Rogers, chairman of the Association, to further the nonprofit's educational mission.

"The White House collection has grown to include portraits of every president, and since 1965, the White House Historical Association has helped fund the official portraits of presidents and our first ladies," said McLaurin. "This exhibition approaches that story in a wonderful and different way."

Catalano uses bold color and creative interpretation to bring every presidential portrait to life, pairing each with a thought-provoking quotation from a president to convey his character, leadership, or life. This is exemplified in President Warren G. Harding's portrait, created to look like a telegraphic image, reminding visitors of his career as a newspaperman. President Ulysses S. Grant's portrait

highlights his military career, with his depiction featuring a military uniform accompanied by the quote, "I've never advocated war except as a means of peace."

"I am not a historian. I look at people as people," said Catalano. "I try to imbue these portraits with that humanity and the reality that brings them to life."

During this episode, Catalano discusses the inspiration behind the creation of the portrait series, specially timed to America's Semiquincentennial. The artist also shares his own American story, tracing his love of art back to a book about Italian Renaissance artist Raphael that he received a child of Sicilian immigrants in Brooklyn.

The exhibit is now open at The People's House: A White House Experience, located at 1700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20006. Free timed entry passes are recommended and can be reserved here.

The portraits featured in the exhibit have also been published in a hard cover book, *Portraits of the American Presidency*, which is sold at The White House History Shop located at The People's House or at the Association's online store.

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

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

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
Founded in 1961 by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, the White House Historical Association is the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization entrusted with preserving and sharing the history of the White House. Supported entirely by private philanthropy and the sale of educational books and products, the Association reaches millions of students, teachers, and lifelong learners through research and scholarship initiatives, public programming, and the authoritative titles published by its independent press. Throughout each presidency, the Association works with the Offices of the First Lady and the White House Curator to acquire and preserve historic objects for the White House Fine and Decorative Arts Collection. The Association also operates The People's House: A White House Experience, a free, immersive, educational museum in Washington, D.C., which welcomes hundreds

of thousands of visitors annually. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit WhiteHouseHistory.org.

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