

National Archives Nixon Library Opens New Watergate Gallery

New Permanent Museum Gallery Opens Today at the Nixon Library

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Yorba Linda, CA...

Today, Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero opened "The Watergate Gallery," a permanent exhibition at the National Archives Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum. This new exhibition, designed to help today's visitor make sense of the web of personalities, actions and intentions at the heart of the Watergate scandal, chronicles the events beginning in June 1971, with the leak of the Pentagon Papers and the formation of a clandestine White House group known as the Plumbers, and ending with former President Richard Nixon's public explanations of Watergate after he left office.

The Richard Nixon Library [www.nixonlibrary.gov] is located at 18001 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda, California. The library is open daily 10 AM to 5 PM, Sundays 11 AM to 5 PM.

The Gallery, through documents, White House tape recordings, and oral histories, addresses issues such as abuses of governmental power, secret Presidential taping, and the role of the three branches of government and the media in this constitutional crisis. The exhibition features a timeline of Watergate events with eight interactive screens that draw from the White House tapes and 131 oral history interviews done by the Library with key players like G. Gordon Liddy, Bob Woodward and Charles Colson. The Gallery includes Watergate's legislative legacy and an interactive resource center of documents, oral histories, excerpts from the White House tapes, and television coverage from the era, allowing visitors to decide how well our system of government worked and what lessons there are for us today.

"This exhibit opening today inspires us to think about whether or not Watergate changed how Americans think about electoral politics, the Presidency and the exercise of Presidential power," said Archivist Ferriero. "We have used documents and recordings from our Presidential, Congressional, and Special Prosecutor's records and the reflections of many involved in the era including President Nixon to provide the narrative detail of the tangled events that became known as the Watergate scandal. The events of Watergate led Congress to enact legislation on ethics in government, foreign intelligence surveillance, campaign reform, privacy, ownership of Presidential records, and the establishment of the National Archives as an independent agency. Watergate is but one chapter in the complicated legacy of our 37th President."

Ron Walker, Chairman of the Board of the Richard Nixon Foundation said, "Once again, visitors to the Nixon Library will have the opportunity to evaluate a particular interpretation of Watergate. Watergate is one chapter in Richard Nixon's long and consequential career. We hope that those who visit the Library to see the new exhibit will also explore the Library's many other presentations -- and visit our web site at www.nixonfoundation.org -- so they can gain a fuller understanding of the remarkable life and legacy of the 37th President of the United States. In the words of President Clinton at President Nixon's State Funeral, 'may the day of judging President Nixon on anything less than his entire life and career come to a close.'"

The Watergate Gallery includes a timeline that is organized around six themes: Abuse of Power; Dirty Tricks and Political Espionage; The Cover-Up; Investigations; The Fight Over the Tapes; and Why Watergate Mattered. These topics are explored in the timeline through 46 segments from the Library's new oral histories, the White House tapes and news coverage from the era.

The Gallery also includes thematic exhibits on presidential taping, on the 18 ½ minute gap, the Supreme Court and U.S. v. Nixon, Watergate's Legislative Legacy, and the Frost/Nixon interview. In addition, the Gallery offers visitors the Watergate Resource Center, an archival resource, where they can examine much of the historical background, listen to news media coverage and oral histories from significant individuals of the era, The Gallery, which draws upon Watergate-related materials released by the Nixon Library in recent years, provides new insights into the affair. Visitors to the Gallery are encouraged to add their reactions and reflections to a digital guest book.

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For more information, contact the National Archives Public Affairs Staff at 202-357-5300.

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