

MEMORIES OF THE MANSION

LECTURE AND BOOK SIGNING

Sandra D. Deal, Jennifer W. Dickey, and Catherine M. Lewis

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10:00 am - 11:00 am

The Georgia Archives

5800 Jonesboro Road

Morrow, GA 30260

Please RSVP to Jill.Sweetapple@usg.edu

678-364-3731



"Creating a More Highly Educated Georgia"

Memories of the Mansion: The Story of Georgia's Governor's Mansion



Meet the Authors

FIRST LADY SANDRA D. DEAL



Sandra D. Deal, the daughter of educators, has dedicated her life to encouraging childhood education. After teaching for more than fifteen years, she retired as a sixthgrade middle school teacher in Hall County. As first lady of Georgia, she has focused her energies on a range of issues. Through Read Across Georgia, she has visited all 159 counties in the state to encourage reading for children. Her With a Servant's Heart platform has encouraged statewide community service programs and volunteerism events. She serves as chair of the Governor's Office for Children and Family and co-chair of the Georgia Children's Cabinet. Sandra grew up in Gainesville and graduated from Georgia College and State University.

JENNIFER W. DICKEY



Dr. Jennifer W. Dickey is an associate professor at Kennesaw State University (KSU) and coordinator of the Public History Certificate Program. She has a master's degree in heritage preservation and a Ph.D. in public history from Georgia State University. She is the author of *A Tough Little Patch of History: "Gone with the Wind" and the Politics of Memory* (2014) and coeditor of *Museums in a Global Context: National Identity, International Understanding* (2013). Before coming to KSU, she served as the campus preservation specialist and the director and curator of Historic Berry at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. She has worked as a historian for the National Park Service and for the Historic Preservation Division of the State of Georgia.

CATHERINE M. LEWIS



Dr. Catherine M. Lewis is the assistant vice president of Museums, Archives & Rare Books, the director of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education, and a professor of history at Kennesaw State University. She is also a guest curator and special projects coordinator for the Atlanta History Center. She completed a B.A. in English and history with honors at Emory University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in American Studies at the University of Iowa. She has curated more than thirty exhibitions throughout the nation and has authored, coauthored, or edited thirteen books, including *The Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American History Museum* (2005), *Don't Ask What I Shot: How Eisenhower's Love of Golf Helped Shape 1950s America* (2007), and four documentary collections with the University of Arkansas Press.

Memories of the Mansion: The Story of Georgia's Governor's Mansion

BY FIRST LADY SANDRA D. DEAL, JENNIFER W. DICKEY AND CATHERINE M. LEWIS

Book Preface

Welcome to the beautiful Greek Revival mansion that has served as the Atlanta home for Georgia's governors since 1968. Designed by the Atlanta architect Thomas Bradbury, it sits on a hill surrounded by eighteen acres in the city's Buckhead neighborhood. Eight Georgia governors and their families have called this building home over the past forty-seven years. The mansion's outstanding collection of Federal period furnishings and decorative arts was inspired by items chosen by Jacqueline Kennedy as she redecorated the White House in the early 1960s. Most of the pieces of furniture on the first floor were created by American master craftsmen between 1800 and 1830. Resident governors and their families are privileged to share this special collection with the public during tour hours and with the numerous guests frequently entertained here. For me, serving as the official hostess of Georgia has been an honor and a pleasure. This book, with its history, pictures, and stories, is my way of saying thank you to the people of Georgia for such a privilege.

Georgia's seat of government, originally located in Savannah, has moved many times since Georgia, along with twelve other colonies, declared independence from Great Britain. Four cities—Savannah, Augusta, Louisville, and Milledgeville—served as official state capitals before the relocation of the capital to Atlanta in 1868. Before the construction of the current mansion, only the house in Milledgeville had been built for the exclusive use of the governor. During the first hundred years that the state government was based in Atlanta, Georgia's governors resided in houses that were acquired by the state to serve as the Executive Mansion; once, the official residence was in a private house on the outskirts of the city, and in another case in the Georgian Terrace Hotel. None of these makeshift solutions could satisfactorily accommodate the myriad public responsibilities of the state's top official. Finally, a century after the capital moved to Atlanta, a new governor's mansion, designed and built specifically to serve that purpose, opened on West Paces Ferry Road.

Exploring the Governor's Mansion and property was an experience that I will never forget. My curiosity was piqued when Nathan and I had the opportunity to move into the mansion and walk the grounds. I was astounded. Where did the columns that surround the tennis courts come from? Were they from a previous home? Who built the tennis courts and the two fountains? Who bought the beautiful "maidens of the seasons" that encircle one of the fountains? Who designed and built the terraces overlooking the fountain? Who built the swimming pool? Who was the Mrs. Smith who was born there, according to the mill grindstone? When did the furniture become part of the mansion's collection? There was so much to learn, and my curiosity got the better of me. (*cont.*)



Courtesy of Christopher Oquendo

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My predecessor, Mary Perdue, wife of Governor Sonny Perdue, had been kind enough to invite me to lunch, show me the family quarters, and tell me a little about the antiques that filled the house. Soon I began to ask questions of the employees and our wonderful volunteers, some of whom said they had served as docents for thirty years. I listened as they shared their knowledge and memories. I read and asked more questions. Joy Forth, the mansion manager, who had arrived three years before I did, helped me plan and invite all the previous governors and their wives for dinner. Most of them came, and I learned a little more, but not enough. Joy remembered that Kitty Farnham had been employed as the curator of the mansion and had completed the first inventory of the collection. We invited her to the mansion, and she kindly spent several hours teaching me about the house and its contents and provided me with even more materials to read.

I was particularly excited when I learned that former first lady Betty Sanders had served on the Fine Arts Committee that planned the mansion. Ember Bishop, my administrative assistant, made arrangements for us to visit with Mrs. Sanders. Although she answered many questions, I had more, so we visited the Georgia Archives. I continued to read and ask questions, and I eagerly shared what I had learned with the mansion's tour guides and anyone else who wanted to listen. Soon I concluded that what I really needed to do was to compile the information. I wanted to record the stories of the building and its contents, and also of the people who had lived here over almost a half century.

I learned so much about the mansion and its residents during the course of my research that I knew a book needed to be produced to preserve that history. I also quickly realized that I needed to engage professional historians to bring together all the rich stories of the mansion's past and the people who lived here. The Chancellor's Office of the University System of Georgia and Daniel S. Papp, president of Kennesaw State University, recommended that I invite Catherine Lewis and Jennifer Dickey, public historians at Kennesaw State University, to join me as coauthors. Well-known scholars who have published widely and are versed in Georgia history, they enthusiastically joined the team. They have been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. Lisa Bayer and the University of Georgia Press soon signed on, and the book was in full swing. Many institutions in the state have helped us tell this story, including the Georgia Archives, the Atlanta History Center, Special Collections at the University of Georgia, and Georgia State University, just to name a few. I am particularly grateful to Mrs. Sanders for agreeing to write the foreword for this volume. She and her husband, Governor Carl Sanders, who was governor from 1963 to 1967, played a critical role in helping get the mansion built, even though they never lived here.

We had three goals when we began this project: recount the history of all the Georgia governor's mansions, with specific focus on the West Paces Ferry Road mansion; document the rich collections in the mansion and share these resources with readers; and share behind-the-scenes stories from the eight first families who, so far, have known it best. We have been very fortunate that all of them were willing to help us, and we are grateful for the time and energy that they have devoted to this project. Working on this book has brought my coauthors and me great joy, and we hope that our enthusiasm is contagious. This history belongs to the people of the state of Georgia, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to share it.

Sandra Deal