



Celebrity in Chief: A History of the Presidents and the Culture of Stardom

Kenneth T. Walsh

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It didn't take long for Barack Obama to make his mark as the biggest political star to ever occupy the White House. Over the course of his two terms in office, Obama has injected the American presidency deeper into popular culture than any of his predecessors. He and his wife Michelle have become iconic figures, celebrities of the first order. This book, by award-winning White House correspondent and presidential historian Kenneth T. Walsh, discusses how the Obamas reached this point. More important, it takes a detailed and comprehensive look at the history of America's presidents as celebrities in chief since the beginning of the Republic. Walsh makes the point that modern presidents need to be celebrities and build on their fame in order to propel their agendas and rally public support for themselves as national leaders so that they can get things done. Combining incisive historical analysis with a journalist's eye for detail, this book looks back to such presidents as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as the forerunners of contemporary celebrity presidents. It examines modern presidents including Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, and Theodore Roosevelt, each of whom qualified as a celebrity in his own time and place. The book also looks at presidents who fell short in their star appeal, such as George W. Bush, George H. W. Bush, Richard Nixon, and Lyndon Johnson, and explains why their star power was lacking. Among the special features of the book are detailed profiles of the presidents and how they measured up or failed as celebrities; an historical analysis of America's popular culture and how presidents have played a part in it, from sports and television to movies and the news media; the role of first ladies; and a portfolio of fascinating photos illustrating the intersection of the presidency with popular culture."

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