



“Cocktails at The White House” By Dick LaBonté

With the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States, “Cocktails at The White House” reaches its 25th birthday. This is the fifth limited edition of the painting by Dick LaBonté. The artist originally produced the painting in the summer of 1984, when President Ronald Reagan was campaigning for a second term, and the first limited edition of reproductions ensued. When the senior George Bush succeeded to the Presidency, the artist added President and Mrs. Bush to the painting, and a new edition of reproductions was published.

Shortly after President Bill Clinton took office, members of the new President’s Georgetown University class urged LaBonté to rush the addition of the Clintons to the painting, in order that they might present a print to him at a Class Reunion at the White House in June of 1993. The gift delighted the new occupants of the White House who immediately began identifying their predecessors. Eventually, the print was given a place of prominence in the solarium of the private Presidential quarters.

The victory of George W. Bush in the election of 2000 was a convenience to artist LaBonté. By chance, there was empty space in the painting next to George, Senior, and Laura Bush would fit in nicely beside her mother-in-law. And so, a fourth edition of “Cocktails at The White House” was added to the thousands of prints already in homes and offices across the country.

Following tradition, Artist LaBonté had found a prominent place in the painting for President and Mrs. Obama.

Artist Dick LaBonté lives with his wife, Katie, in Bay Head, N.J. He is best known for his nostalgic “neo-primitive” paintings of life at the Jersey Shore. His book, “Dick LaBonté: Paintings of the Jersey Shore & More,” depicts about 150 of them.

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Guestlist

On the "Truman Balcony", Pres. James K. Polk, Sarah Polk, Edith Roosevelt, Elizabeth (Bess) Truman, Pres. Theodore Roosevelt, Pres. Harry S. Truman, Pres. Jimmy Carter, Rosalynn Carter, "Lemonade" Lucy Hayes, Pres. Rutherford B. Hayes, Pres. Millard Fillmore, Abigail Fillmore.

On the left staircase: Pres. Andrew Jackson, Emily Donelson (Mrs. Jackson's niece, Jackson's hostess), Frances Cleveland, Pres. Grover Cleveland, Pres. Martin Van Buren.

On the Porch: Angelica Van Buren (Van Buren's daughter-in-law and hostess), Lou Hoover, Pres. Herbert Hoover, Harriet Lane (Buchanan's niece and hostess), Pres. Warren G. Harding, Florence Harding, Pres. James Buchanan, Edith Wilson, Pres. Woodrow Wilson, Pres. Benjamin Harrison, Caroline Harrison, Pres. Gerald R. Ford, Elizabeth (Betty) Ford.

On the right staircase: Laura Bush, Barbara Bush, Pres. George W. Bush, Pres. George Bush, Pres. Ronald Reagan, Nancy Reagan.

In the coach: Grace Coolidge, Pres. Calvin Coolidge, Martha Washington, Pres. George Washington.

Left background: Pres. John Quincy Adams, Louisa Adams, Mary Arthur McElroy (Arthur's sister and hostess), Pres. Chester A. Arthur, Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson, Pres. Franklin Pierce, Claudia (Lady Bird) Johnson.

Center background: Pres. Andrew Johnson, Patricia (Pat) Nixon, Pres. Richard M. Nixon.

Left foreground: Pres. Ulysses S. Grant, Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Julia Grant, Pres. Zachary Taylor, Mamie Eisenhower, Pres. James Madison, Dolley Madison, Helen Taft, Pres. William H. Taft.

At the serving table: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Pres. Bill Clinton, Anna Harrison, Pres. William Henry Harrison, Julia Tyler, Pres. John Tyler ("Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too"), Pres. James Monroe, Elizabeth Monroe, Michelle Obama, Pres. Barack Obama.

Right foreground: Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Pres. Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, Pres. John Adams, Abigail Adams, Mary Lincoln, Pres. Thomas Jefferson, Jacqueline Kennedy, Pres. John F. Kennedy, Martha (Patsy) Randolph (Jefferson's daughter and hostess), Pres. James A. Garfield, Lucretia Garfield, Ida McKinley, Pres. William McKinley.

In the windows: Recluses Margaret Taylor, Eliza Johnson, Jane Pierce.