



Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum

www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov

Museum: 303 Pearl Street, NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

(616) 254-0400 fax (616) 254-0386

Press Release

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Contact: Kristin Mooney, Public Affairs
(616) 254-0374

Mrs. Betty Ford's 91st Birthday *Celebration includes lecture and birthday cake!*

Grand Rapids, Mich... How will Michelle Obama plan state dinners, luncheons, and receptions on top of raising two girls...with the help of a Social Secretary. Join Bess Abell, Maria Downs, and Laurie Firestone, all former Social Secretaries, as they discuss the social side of the nation's executive mansion on **Tuesday, April 7, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.** Reservations can be made by calling (616) 254-0384. A reception follows.

- **Bess Abell** was Mrs. Johnson's Social Secretary from 1963 through 1969. She also served as Mrs. Johnson's assistant through the vice presidential era.
- **Maria Downs** became Mrs. Ford's Social Secretary in October of 1975 and remained in the position until the end of the administration. Prior to becoming Social Secretary, Ms. Downs worked in the White House Office of Bicentennial Liaison.
- **Laurie Firestone** was named White House Social Secretary in 1988 by First Lady Barbara Bush. She also served as Mrs. Bush's Social Secretary during the vice presidential years.
- **Rick Albin**, political reporter for 24 Hour News 8 (WOOD) will moderate the panel.

Honoring Mrs. Ford's 91st birthday on Wednesday, April 8, 2008 the Ford Presidential Museum is free and there will be birthday cake for the first 750 visitors. Guests can take advantage of this opportunity to view *The White House in Miniature*.

The Gerald R. Ford Museum is open 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. daily. It is closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Admission is \$7.00 for adults, \$6.00 for senior citizens, \$3.00 for children 18-6, and free for those 5 and under. For information please call (616) 254-0400 or visit us on the web at www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov

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