

NEWS RELEASE

3900 WATSON PLACE NW WASHINGTON DC 20016

For Immediate Release: February 18, 2009

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3900 WATSON PLACE CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY FEBRUARY 28 WITH REMINISCING, MEMORABILIA

3900 Watson Place NW, a Cathedral Heights cooperative situated near Cathedral and Wisconsin Avenues, which has been home to colorful characters ranging from “Hostess with the Mostes” Perle Mesta to Cold War General Curtis LeMay, is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this month.

When built in 1960, the two 3900 Watson Place NW buildings were known for their classic “mid-century modern” building style designed by renowned architect Harry M. Prince, who also designed the Carlyle Hotel in New York. Nearly all the 130 units feature 21 X 7 foot balconies overlooking spacious five-acre grounds, and many also have a view of the National Cathedral a few blocks away.

A 50th Anniversary Celebration will be held on February 28, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM, at the Co-op and will feature “archives” of interesting information and memorabilia about the buildings and their residents over the years, including:

- An original 1960 brochure boasts that “(H)ousewives who pride themselves on the beauty and efficiency of their kitchens” would be delighted with the modern, “scientifically designed electric kitchens”;
- Anecdotes about Mrs. Mesta, for whom four apartments on the top floor were combined into a large penthouse. Some long-term residents recall long lines for the elevators when Mrs. Mesta was entertaining, which was quite often! Her parties were a source for the Irving Berlin musical, “Call Me Madam”;
- Stories of notable residents, who have included Pulitzer Prize-winning author Haynes Johnson, Senator and former Ambassador to Japan Mike Mansfield (D-MT), Congressman Jake Pickle (D-TX), Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and Eleanor Lansing Dulles, sister of Allan (CIA) and John Foster (State Dept) and herself an influential economist who was instrumental in the rebuilding and modernization of Berlin after World War II; and
- Dog and cat stories compiled over the years in this pet-friendly urban cooperative, including ones involving General LeMay being remembered for his little, white dog.

During the Anniversary festivities, City Councilmember Mary Cheh will present a Council resolution honoring the Co-op and its residents. Also, former U.S. Chief of Protocol Jim Symington and his wife Sylvia will perform. They reside at Watson Place and are renowned for entertaining audiences for years with original songs celebrating and spoofing “official Washington.”