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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum  
to open a new special exhibition,  
"The Spirit of the Gift: Gifts of State and Affection,"  
*April 25, 2015 through December 31, 2015*  
with a reception and exhibit preview  
-- free to the general public --  
Friday, April 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.  
beginning in the Henry A. Wallace Center  
at the FDR Presidential Library and Home**

HYDE PARK, NY -- The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum will open a special exhibition, "The Spirit of the Gift: Gifts of State and Affection," with a public reception and exhibit preview on Friday, April 24, 2015. The reception will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Henry A. Wallace Center, followed by an exhibit preview in the William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery in the Library and Museum. This event is free and open to the general public.

In his First Inaugural Address Franklin Roosevelt called the Presidency a gift. The people, he said, had bestowed it on him so he could serve as the "instrument of their wishes." "In the spirit of the gift," he proclaimed, "I take it."

This was the first of thousands of gifts FDR accepted during his 12 years as America's Chief Executive. Each gift reflected, in some measure, public faith that he was fulfilling his inaugural pledge. These tributes came from government leaders and celebrities -- but chiefly from everyday people. They ranged from opulent state gifts to handmade offerings.

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"The Spirit of the Gift" showcases a range of items that were gifted to the President and First Lady from notables such as Joseph Stalin, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Walt Disney, Roy Rogers, Shirley Temple, and the Dalai Lama of Tibet. The exhibit also features gifts from everyday people like the Polish airman who built a Spitfire aircraft model from pieces of a downed German warplane, and Luella Smith of Inglewood, California, who stitched a colorful vest with hundreds of buttons that she sent to FDR in 1944. "I want you to have your picture made in it and a photo sent to me to put on my stand," she wrote the President, "so that I can admire my boy in the White House."

### **Gifts to President Barack Obama**

The centuries old tradition of Presidential gift-giving continues today. "The Spirit of the Gift" also showcases a few of the many thousands of gifts presented to President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. These gifts include an oil painting by Helen Skelton depicting President Obama in a pose reminiscent of FDR -- with fedora hat and cigarette holder -- and a chew toy sent to President Obama's dog, Bo, by "Larry the Cat," the official mouser of 10 Downing Street, the residence and office of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The Roosevelt Library worked with the Presidential Materials Division of the National Archives and Records Administration on the loan of these objects for display in this exhibition.

"The Spirit of the Gift: Gifts of State and Affection" opens to the general public on Saturday, April 25, 2015 in the William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery in the FDR Presidential Library. Regular Library and Museum hours and admission apply. The exhibition is scheduled to run from April 25 through December 31, 2015.

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Please contact Cliff Laube at (845) 486-7745 or email [clifford.laube@nara.gov](mailto:clifford.laube@nara.gov) with questions about the event.

### **Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum**

As generations of Americans that have no personal memory of the Roosevelt Era emerge, it is more critical than ever that the lives and legacies of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt be preserved and presented to new generations. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum stands ready to serve as a visible and valuable resource for children and families, educators and students, and an international audience seeking to understand the past to make a better tomorrow. With a newly renovated building and new permanent museum exhibits the Library seeks to honor President Roosevelt's vision in dedicating his Library to the American people. The Roosevelt Library is one of thirteen presidential libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration. For more information about the Library or its programs call (800) 337-8474 or visit [www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu).

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