

# Clintons prepare for moving day

**Gary Walters, 30-year White House veteran, manages the president's home; he remains loyal to the first family's comforts.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — On Inauguration Day, in a frenzied but carefully choreographed four hours, Bill and Hillary Clinton and their household goods down to toothbrushes will be moved out of the White House.

As the inaugural parade flows by outside, a new presidential family will be moved in, right up to stocking the pantry with their favorite foods and snacks.

Standing at the intersection of coming and going streams of furniture and crates, watching as teams of workers empty closets of one president's pinstripes and fill them with another's, will be Gary Walters, a 30-year White House veteran whose title of chief usher is an inheritance from the 19th century.

The move is wrenching for all concerned and Walters, 53, has commonsense rules, starting with the obvious "Don't panic!" and ending with the catchall, "Be prepared for anything!"

This year's move is made more difficult by the long uncertainty over the identity of the new president.

But the chief usher's rules decree that even in this chaotic political season the staff is "blind to politics."

Emotional farewells, however, are OK — even expected.

"The emotional strain cannot be exaggerated; this staff has literally lived with the outgoing family for four to eight years," Walters said.

By late afternoon, when the new first couple walk from the inaugural reviewing stand on Pennsylvania Avenue, Walters will be waiting at the North Portico.

He is the mainspring of the professional staff that makes the White House a precision instrument for the president and first lady who live there.

Both a big-picture and a detail person, Walters manages a historic house that is at once national symbol, presidential office, ceremonial arena, family home and a museum filled with treasures viewed by more than a million people a year.

At a recent conference on White House history, former presidential press secretary Marlon Fitzwater described him this way: "If you have to wake the president and tell him Iraq has fired a Scud missile at Israel, you call Gary Walters. If you want to know where they put Gorbachev's coat, you call Gary Walters. And if you want to know if the president is awake and in a bad mood, you call Gary Walters."

"And by the way," Fitzwater added, "he will tell you if the president is awake, but he won't tell you about the president's mood. He's a man who keeps confidences."

Walters is just the latest keeper of presidential confidences in a 200-year-old tradition that began when John Brierley, President John Adams' chief steward, arrived in the fall of 1800 to make the cold and barnlike house a home.

Inauguration Day is the supreme test. "There is no more complex or demanding time," Walters said at the conference, sponsored by the White House Historical Association.

He explained that regardless of the outcome of this or any election the staff remains loyal and committed to the comfort of the outgoing first family until noon on Inauguration Day.

But after that is rule is, "We will adopt the new family's routine, and not the other way around."

The move begins when the new and old first families leave together for the Capitol,

*"We need to know what they bring with them so that when they depart they take ... nothing that belongs to the government."*

Gary Walters  
White House chief usher

shortly before noon on Jan. 20.

Pre-positioned moving vans move up to the South Portico. Teams of workers move furniture and boxes in — and out. Upstairs there are packers and unpackers. Teams of "placers" position new furniture and hang clothes in newly emptied closets.

The two aims, Walters said, are that "the departing family be as much at home on inaugural morning as is humanly possible" and that "the new first family comes into a White House which has been transformed into their home."

That means "their clothes in the closets, not in boxes," he said. "Their furniture in the place they have designated and even their favorite foods and snacks in the pantry."

One of the most important activities of the day, Walters said, is the preparation of an inventory of everything the new first family brings to the White House with them.

"We need to know what they bring with them so that when they depart they take everything that belongs to them and nothing that belongs to the government," Walters said. It all has to be done in four hours.

"I get to answer all the questions and be a kind of traffic cop," Walters said.

"Eight years ago this was an amazing feat," he said. "I had lost my voice to laryngitis and had to write everything on a pad of paper."

# Illinois' poet laureate dies at age 83

**Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about the black community in her famous poems.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Gwendolyn Brooks, who promoted an understanding of black culture through her candid, compassionate poetry and became the first African-American to win a Pulitzer Prize, has died of cancer. She was 83.

She wrote hundreds of poems, had more than 20 books published, and had been Illinois' poet laureate since 1968.

Her poetry delved into poverty, racism and drugs among black people.

"I believe that we should all know each other, we human carriers of so many pleasurable differences," she said in a recent interview. "To not know is to doubt, to shrink from, sidestep or destroy."

Dr. Jifunza Wright, who was Brooks' attending physician, said the poet died Sunday at her home, surrounded by friends and family members who had been taking turns reading to her.

Her Pulitzer was awarded in 1950 for her second book of poetry, "Annie Allen."

One of her most famous poems is "We Real Cool," from

the 1960 collection "The Bean Eaters." The short poem sums up hopelessness in eight lines: "We real cool. We/Left school. We/Lurk late. We/Strike straight. We/Sing sin. We/Thin gin. We/Jazz June. We/Die soon."

Brooks continued to write throughout her life and had completed her most recent volume of poems late this summer, her agent Carolyn Aguilera said.

"Her activity regarding her creative muse was very high," Aguilera said. "She continued to speak and read and do all sorts of appearances."

In 1989, Brooks received a lifetime achievement award from the National Endowment for the Arts. She was named the 1994 Jefferson Lecturer by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the highest honor bestowed by the federal government for work in the humanities.

Brooks was born in Topeka, Kan., in 1917, but grew up in Chicago.

She began writing at 11 when she mailed several poems to a community newspaper in Chicago to surprise her family. Her early works were mostly autobiographical, detailing the death of friends, her relationship with her family and their reaction to war and racism.

After a number of her poems had been published in Chicago's black newspapers, Brooks sent

19 poems to a list of publishers. "I said to myself, I'm going to go straight down that list until somebody takes these poems," she said.

Harper & Bros., now HarperCollins, was at the top of the list. Its editors suggested she needed more poems, then published the collection in 1945 in a book called "A Street in Bronzeville."

"Annie Allen" followed four years later.

Brooks often referred to her works as her family, which also included black people in general.

"If you have one drop of blackness blood in you — yes, of course it comes out red — you are a member of my family."

But she was quick to point that she wasn't exclusionary, noting that she had the liveliest interest in other families.

Brooks was also known as a tireless teacher, promoter and advocate of creative writing in general and poetry in particular.

"She mentored literally three generations of poets — black, white, Hispanic, Native American," said longtime friend, poet and literature professor Haki Madhubuti, who founded the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Creative Writing and Black Literature at Chicago State University. "She was all over the map sharing her gifts."

## Law & Order

### Freshman cited for having makeshift marijuana pipe

The smell of marijuana smoke in a Selleck Quadrangle hallway led University Police to a drug arrest early Monday morning.

A residence assistant in Selleck 8200 called police shortly after 2 a.m. after smelling smoke, University Police Assistant Chief Bill Manning said.

When an officer arrived, he got permission to search the room and found a plastic bottle that had been converted into a makeshift pipe with drug residue on it. No drugs were found.

Police ticketed 18-year-old UNL freshman Weston Rowe for possession of drug paraphernalia.

### Piña colada party ends with MIP citations in Abel

Three underage women were cited for possessing alcohol in Abel Residence Hall on Saturday night after police caught them sipping piña coladas.

A community service officer reported the women, and

University Police found a 750-milliliter bottle of Bacardi rum and piña colada mix in the third-floor room at 11:30 p.m., Manning said.

Police ticketed UNL freshmen Ella Washburn, 19, Jill Johnson, 18, and Lindsay Kohmetscher, 18, as minors in possession of alcohol.

### Noise draws police to find 54 beer cans in Abel room

Five women were ticketed for alcohol violations early Saturday morning in Abel after noise complaints summoned police to the ninth-floor room.

A CSO was responding to noise complaints at 12:20 a.m. and spotted open beer cans in the room and called an officer, Manning said.

Police found five open beer cans, 19 unopened and 30 empty cans in the room.

UNL freshman Summer Latham, 18, sophomore Sarah McCracken, 19, freshman Lisa Heck, 19, freshman Rebecca Moran, 18, and freshman Alysson Dietrich, 18, were all ticketed for being minors in possession of alcohol.

Compiled by Josh Funk

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Share this classic tale with your family and friends! The holidays aren't complete without this enduring and beloved story of Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim and all the necessary Christmas spirit(s). The script is written by Jeffery Scott Elwell, chair of UNL's Department of Theatre Arts, adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens.

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