

# White House portraits of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush moved from prominent space to rarely used room

By [Jeff Zeleny](#) and [Kevin Liptak](#), CNN

Updated 10:21 PM ET, Fri July 17, 2020

**WASHINGTON (CNN)** — The [official portraits](#) of former Presidents [Bill Clinton](#) and [George W. Bush](#) were removed from the Grand Foyer of the White House within the last week, aides told CNN, and replaced by those of two Republican presidents who served more than a century ago.

White House tradition calls for portraits of the most recent American presidents to be given the most prominent placement, in the entrance of the executive mansion, visible to guests during official events.

That was the case through at least July 8, when President Donald Trump welcomed Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The two stood in the Cross Hall of the White House and made remarks, with the portraits of Clinton and Bush essentially looking on as they had been throughout Trump's first term.

But in the days after that, the Clinton and Bush portraits were moved into the Old Family Dining Room, a small, rarely used room that is not seen by most visitors.

That places the paintings well outside of Trump's vantage point in the White House. In their previous location, the pictures would have been seen daily as Trump descends the staircase from his third floor private residence or when he hosts events on the state floor of the White House. Now, they hang in a space used mainly for storing unused tablecloths and furniture.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The portrait of former President Barack Obama is not [expected to be unveiled for a formal ceremony during Trump's first term](#), a sign of the bitter relationship between the 44th and 45th presidents. Trump has accused Obama of unsubstantiated and unspecified crimes, and has questioned whether Obama was born in the US for years.

Trump has -- less frequently -- similarly disparaged Bush and Clinton. In his book, former Trump national security adviser John Bolton wrote Trump "despised" both Bush presidents, and people familiar with the conversations say Trump has lambasted George W. Bush as "stupid." Trump has similarly castigated Clinton, the husband of his 2016 presidential rival, Hillary Clinton, and suggested he was a bad president.

Trump has not spoken to either man extensively as president, though he did greet them both in person during the funeral of George H.W. Bush in December 2018.

The Bush portrait has been replaced by that of William McKinley, the nation's 25th president, who was assassinated in 1901, and the Clinton portrait has been replaced by one of Theodore Roosevelt, who succeeded McKinley, three people who have seen the portraits this week tell CNN.

Trump has shown more of an affinity for those predecessors than his more recent ones. He asked early in his term about reversing an Obama-era name change for the tallest mountain in the United States, from Denali back to Mount McKinley. And this summer he decried a decision to remove a statue of Roosevelt from outside the Museum of Natural History in New York that some said symbolized racial discrimination.

"Ridiculous, don't do it," Trump said.

Photographs of the new portrait locations were reviewed by CNN, showing the Clinton and Bush portraits now hanging in the Old Family Dining Room, a small space off the grand State Dining Room. The Old Family Dining Room is barely used in the Trump administration, aides said, and was taken off the list of locations visited during White House tours before the pandemic closed the executive mansion to the public.

"President and Mrs. Trump did not want that room showcased on public tours," a separate official said, adding that the room had essentially become a storage room during the last three years.

The Old Family Dining Room had been renovated in 2015 by Michelle Obama, with donations from the private White House Historical Association, and for the first time was open to public for viewing. The room, which was established by President and Mrs. John Quincy Adams in 1825, was decorated with modern art, including "Resurrection" by Alma Thomas, the first Black female artist to be part of the permanent White House collection.

Search CNN...

